



Weekly Legislative Update

02.09.24

Dear {{FirstName or 'Friend'}},

This week kicked off with Governor Bill Lee's 2024 [State of the State Address](#), an annual state tradition where the state's chief executive shares their legislative agenda and [budget priorities](#) for the upcoming year. As expected Governor Lee highlighted his key education priority this year, the universal private school voucher program, however, key components of the program such as accountability metrics and funding sources for his proposal remain unclear. Other education investments include a recurring \$261 million dollars into the [Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement \(TISA\)](#), a recurring \$17 million dollars into the [outcomes-based funding \(OBF\) formula](#) for higher education in Tennessee, and \$ 8 million dollars to hire 114 school-based behavioral health liaisons. To learn more about education investments for this fiscal year, please join the Education Trust Tennessee and [The Sycamore Institute](#) for [Understanding Tennessee's Education Budget](#) webinar on Monday, February 26th at 2 PM - 3 PM CT / 3PM - 4PM ET.

The controversial [HB 1605](#) (Rep. Gino Bulso R), which bans certain flags in public schools, was heard again in the K-12 Subcommittee to consider a series of amendments that addressed the concerns of the committee's leadership, however, the intent of the bill remains unchanged. Despite strong opposition from advocates, HB 1605 passed to the House Education Administration Committee. In addition to considering membership appointments to the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission and various governing bodies in higher education, the House Education Administration Committee passed [HB 1632](#) (Rep. Gino Bulso R), which gives parents the right to sue public schools over the enforcement of the Age Appropriate Materials Act of 2022, to the House Finance, Ways, and Means Committee despite a lack of clarity around which parents would be eligible to sue.

The Senate Education Committee considered the widely supported [SB 1672](#) (Sen. Becky Massey-R). [SB 1672](#) that would lower the minimum age for the [Tennessee Reconnect](#) grant from 23 to 21, an initiative that allows adults to pursue a post secondary credential. [Despite questions about persistence to college and fiscal concerns](#), SB 1672 passed to the Senate Finance, Ways and Means. Committee members also heard a [powerful and well-received testimony](#) from Paige, a senior at Nashville School of Arts on the benefits of conflict resolution programs in support of [SB 1726](#) (Sen. London Lamar-D) which would require the LEAs to implement conflict resolution programs for 1st-6th graders. Due to a pending amendment, [SB 1726](#) was rolled to the next committee calendar and will be heard next week.

As I reflect on the power of Paige's testimony in the Senate Education Committee, I invite you to join the Education Trust Tennessee for [Engaging Youth in Legislative Advocacy](#) on Monday, February 12 at 4 PM - 5PM CT/ 5 PM - 6 PM ET to learn best practices on engaging youth in advocacy, how to address barriers organizations face when trying to integrate youth voice into advocacy efforts, and hear directly from students and organizations on the ground in Tennessee who have been leading youth advocacy campaigns effectively.

In partnership,



MaKenzie L. Mosby, MPP

Senior Manager of Government Relations for Tennessee



On Our Radar

[HB1631 / SB1708](#)

Rep. Bulso / Sen. Hensley

As introduced, clarifies that a private school serving students in any of the grades pre-K through 12 is authorized to adopt a handgun carry policy for the private school's property.

[HB2882 / SB2923](#)

Rep. Todd / Sen. Bailey

As introduced, requires, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, each local education agency and public charter school to provide students with age-appropriate and grade-appropriate instruction on firearm safety.

[HB2132 / SB1672](#)

Rep. Powers / Sen. Massey

As introduced, reduces, from 23 to 21, the minimum age required for a student to be eligible for the Tennessee reconnect grant.

[HB2826 / SB1726](#)

Rep. Camper / Sen. Lamar

As introduced, requires the department, using existing resources, to develop a conflict resolution program that may be adopted and implemented by LEAs and public charter schools to assist students in any of the grades K-12 in developing the skills necessary for nonviolent conflict resolution.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



What's Happening

House Higher Education Subcommittee

Monday, 2/12/24, 3:00pm

House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Floor Session

Monday, 2/12/24, 4:00pm

House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session

Monday, 2/12/24, 4:00pm

Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

House Education Instruction Committee

Tuesday, 2/13/24, 9:00am

House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

House K-12 Subcommittee

Tuesday, 2/13/24, 4:30pm

House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Instruction Subcommittee

Wednesday, 2/14/24, 12:00pm

House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Education Administration Committee

Wednesday, 2/14/24, 1:30pm

House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Education Committee

Wednesday, 2/14/24, 3:00pm

Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session

Thursday, 2/15/24, 8:30am

Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

House Floor Session

Thursday, 2/15/24, 9:00am

House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



Noteworthy

Webinar: Engaging Youth in Legislative Advocacy

Join The Education Trust – Tennessee on Monday, February 12th from 4:00 - 5:00 PM CT / 5:00 - 6:00 PM ET for a [Gearing Up Advocacy Training](#) to learn how to engage youth in legislative advocacy. This training will discuss best practices on engaging youth in advocacy, how to address barriers organizations face when trying to integrate youth voice into advocacy efforts, and hear directly from students and organizations on the ground in Tennessee who have been leading youth advocacy campaigns effectively.

[Register here](#)

Toolkit: Ensure Better Learning Experiences for Muslim Students

Check out this [advocacy toolkit](#) created by the [American Muslim Advisory Council](#) (AMAC) that provides easy access to tools that AMAC and muslim organizations across the country have created to support Muslim students in their schools.

[Learn more](#)

Article: Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee budgets \$144 million for statewide school vouchers

Check out [this article](#) in [Chalkbeat](#) about [Governor Bill Lee's State of the State Address](#) on Monday, February 5th, and his \$52.6 billion [proposed budget](#).

[Read more](#)

Report: The Education Freedom Scholarship Act and Private Schools in Tennessee

Take a look at [this report](#) published last week by the [Sycamore Institute](#), an independent nonpartisan Public Policy Research Center that works to help Tennesseans understand the complex issues impacting our state by providing accessible, reliable data and research. The report explains what we know about Gov. Lee's voucher expansion proposal, highlights differences with an existing program, and provides current and data on Tennessee's current private school landscape.

[Read more](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Legislative Advocacy Hub](#)

