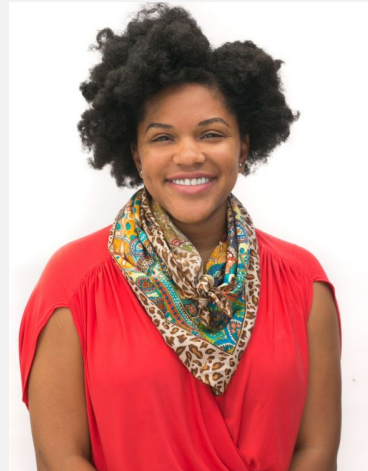




We are RALLY

Who we are



**Ashley Burns
Nascimento**
Director



Sarah Sifuentes
Senior Account
Executive

We are issue advocates

RALLY is an advocacy communications firm with a record of driving progress around complex political and social problems.

We have worked with a variety of state coalitions and national education campaigns, many **explicitly centering racial equity**.

Organizations we work with include...



Goals for today

- + Understand the current education media landscape, both nationally and within Tennessee
- + Identify opportunities and challenges within this media environment
- + Review fundamentals of engaging with media
- + Develop storytelling examples and strategies

National Media Analysis

A black and white photograph of a person with curly hair, seen from behind, shouting into a megaphone. They are wearing a white t-shirt with a large graphic on the back. The scene is set on a bridge with a metal grate floor, and a suspension bridge structure is visible in the background. Other people are partially visible in the background.

Methodology

The data for this analysis comes from **3,416 pieces of content** published online between **January 1, 2020 and June 24, 2021**.

Media coverage was identified by Quid, a natural language processing software. The data was generated from a search of terms focusing on **public education funding** in the United States.

The data sets included **text-based content** of the following types:

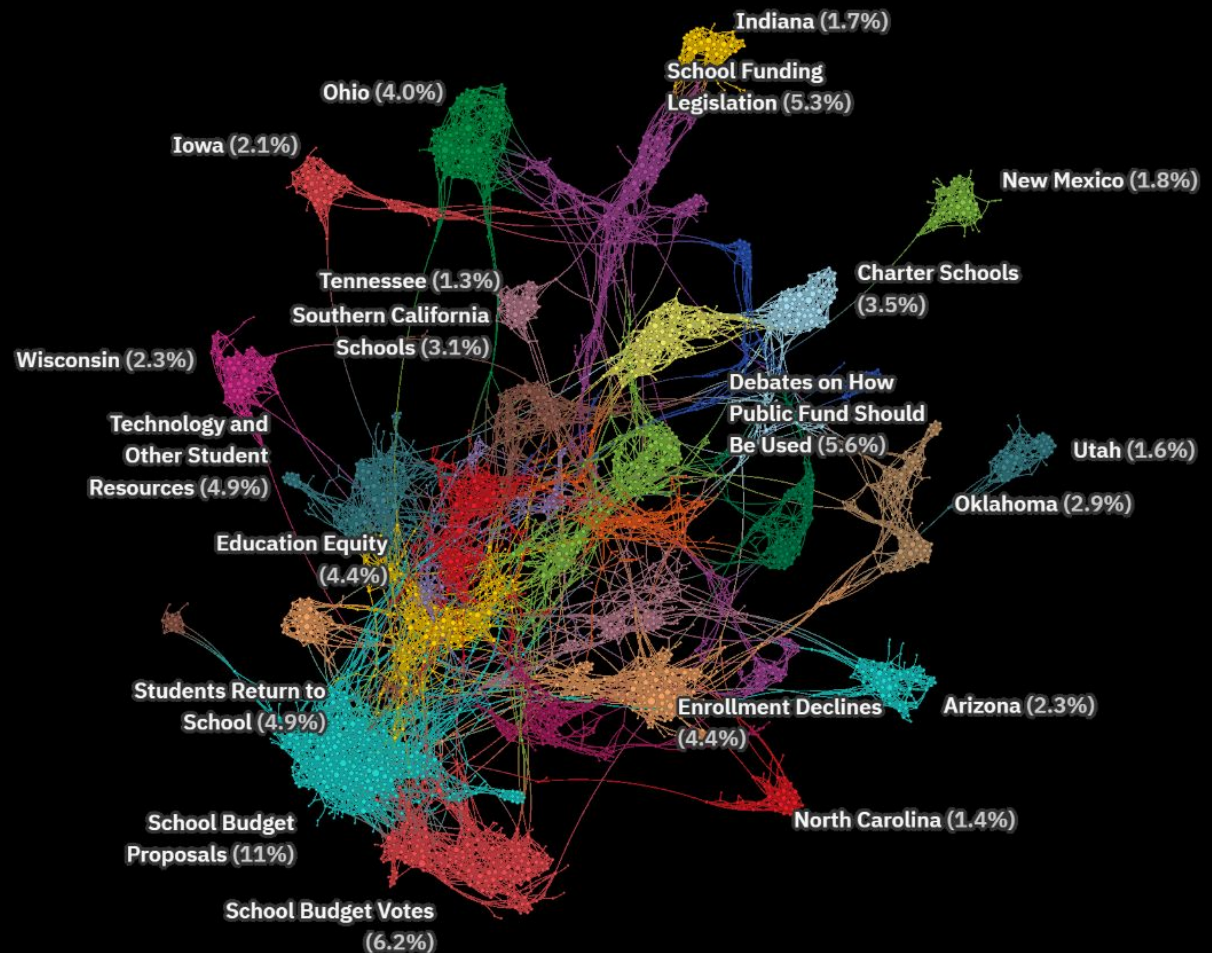
- + **National** media outlets
- + **Statewide** media outlets
- + **Local** media outlets
- + **Blogs** and **internet-only** content
- + **Press releases**
- + **Social media metrics** (the number of times an article is shared on Facebook)

This media analysis **does not include** media that **cannot be found online** (radio-only, print-only, broadcast-only) or media coverage in **languages other than English**.

3,416 stories on education funding are organized into a network of coverage.

Each dot is an individual story and each collection of dots of the same color is a cluster of stories aligned according to the similarity of language used in each. Cluster proximity indicates how much language they share.

The map shows broad topics largely clustered in the center of the network and specific state conversations around the perimeter.

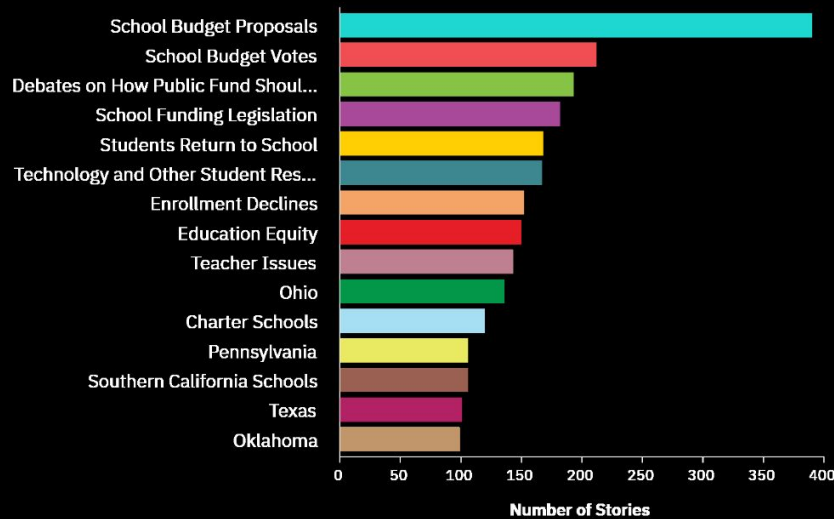


Biggest topics

School Budget Proposals is the most covered topic, followed by specific budget votes.

Headlines from articles in the School Budget Proposals and School Budget Votes clusters focus on dollar figures and percentages, less than real-world needs or outcomes.

Top Clusters by Number of Stories



Fort Edward school board proposes new school budget with 15.5% tax hike

Michael Goot Jul 2, 2020 7

NEWS

Schools seek \$102 million budget, 4.11% spending increase

Macklin Reid

Jan. 16, 2020 | Updated: Jan. 20, 2020 10:15 p.m.

Georgia educators stand in solidarity against proposed \$1 billion budget cut

Watchung school budget calls for 2 percent tax increase

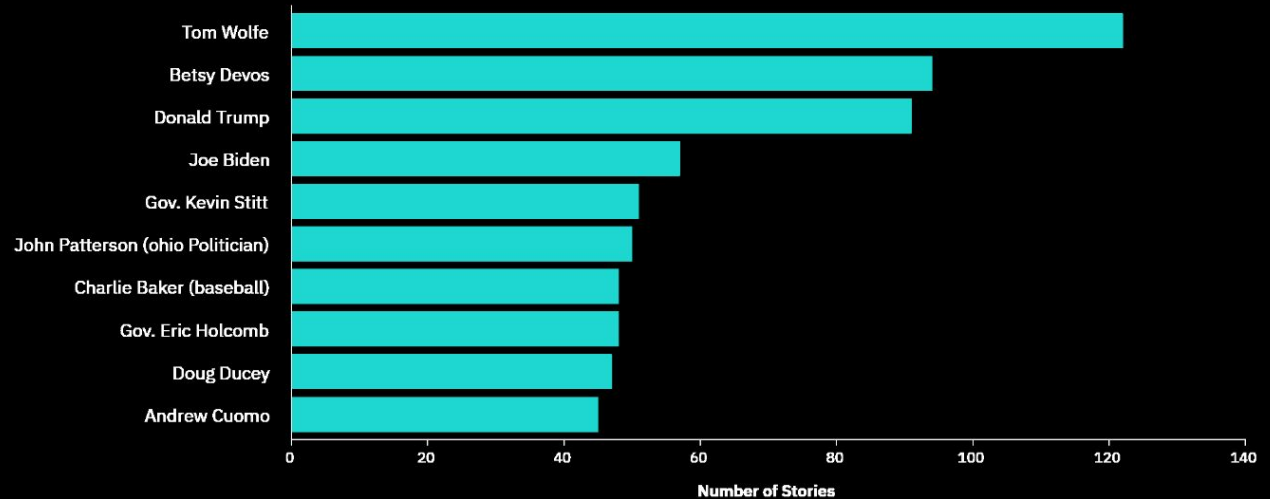
By ALEX PARKER-MAGYAR Editor Apr 2, 2021 0

Key voices

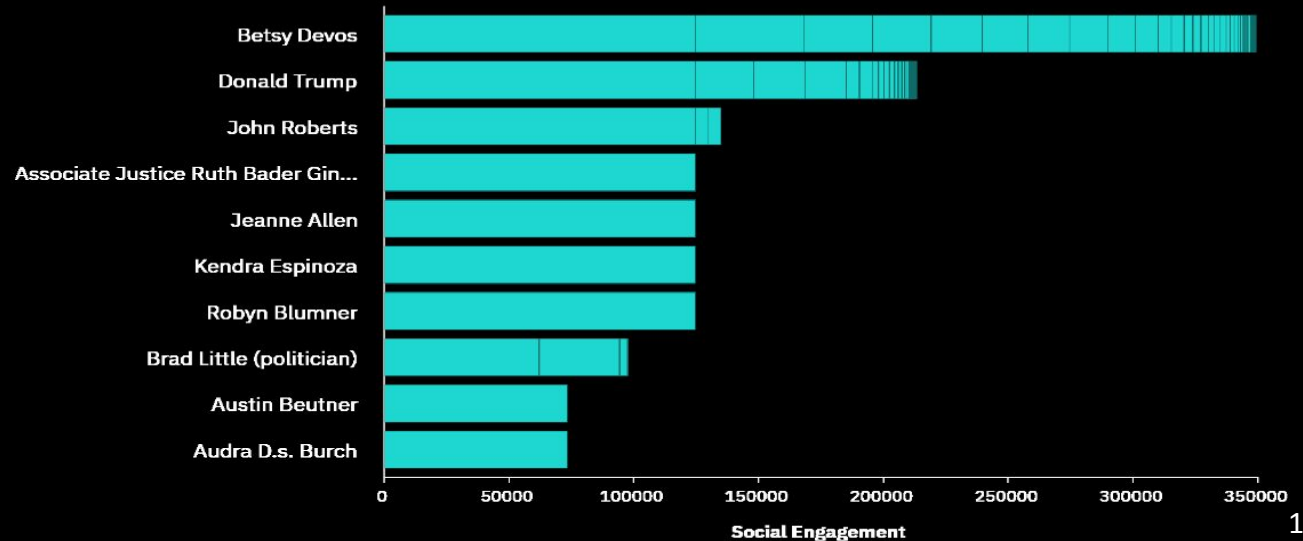
Unsurprisingly, Governors, Trump, and DeVos lead overall mentions in education funding.

Coverage including DeVos, however, saw by far the most engagement on social media. The judges and legal plaintiffs involved in funding legal battles are also among the most engaged with.

Top People Mentioned by Number of Stories



Top People Mentioned by Social Engagement



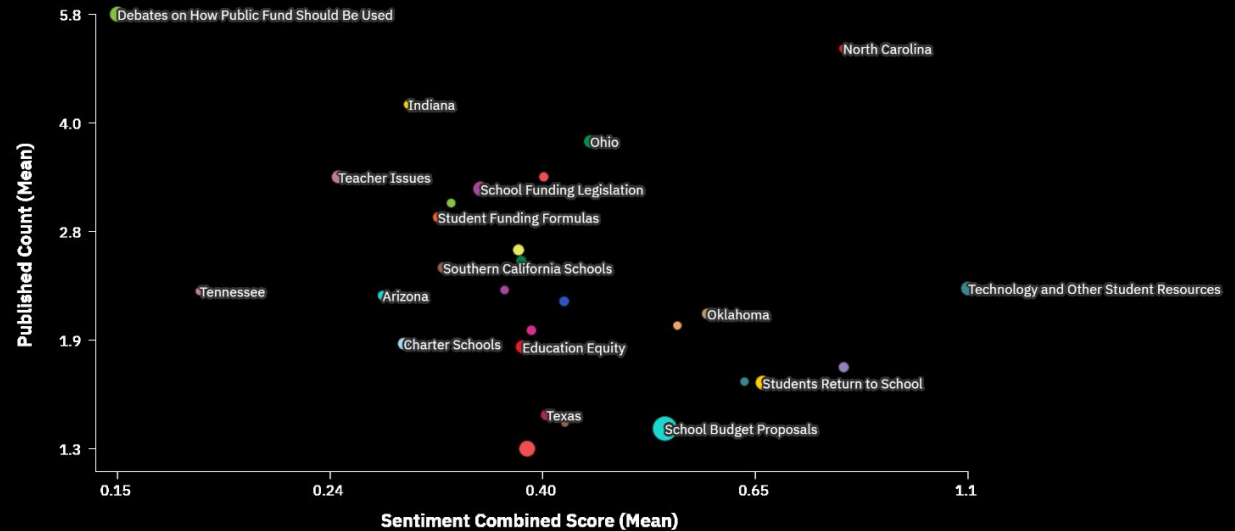
Coverage Sentiment

Sentiment score allows us to understand how audiences and reporters interact with more positive and negative coverage.

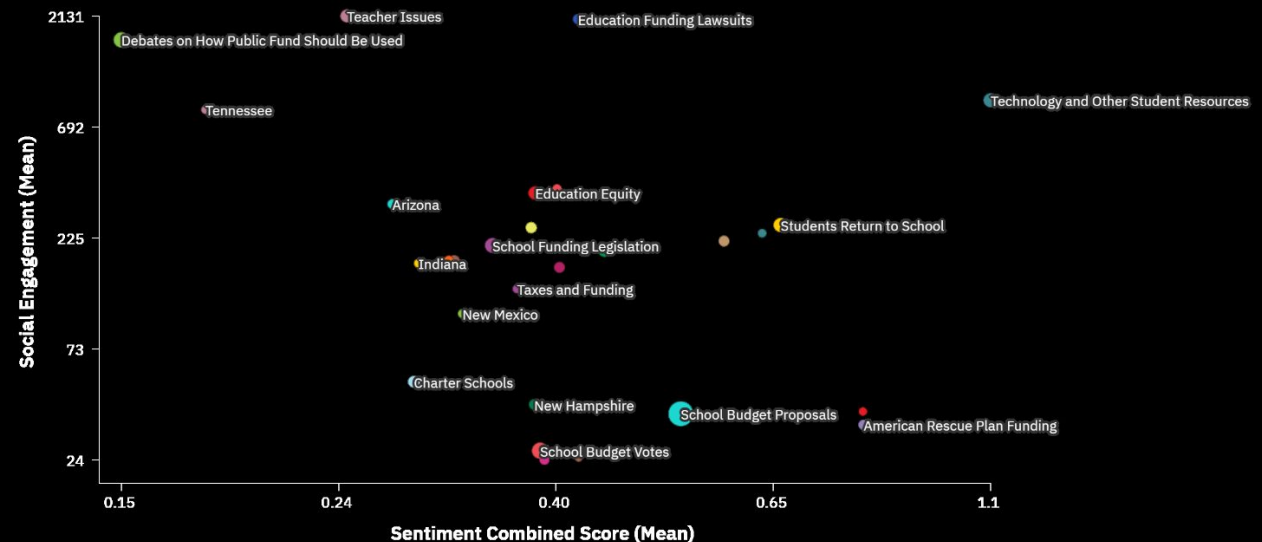
These maps indicate negative coverage drives interest among both the media and its audiences.

Higher/more positive sentiment scores suggest a story will be published less. Topics with lower sentiment scores see higher engagement on social media, with a few notable exceptions.

Published Count x Sentiment Score



Social Engagement x Sentiment Score



This understanding of the national media landscape provides **key implications** for how we **talk about education funding**:

- + **Regional language nuance** divides coverage.
- + There's a clear **bias toward negativity**, but **positive examples** may be able to break through.
- + Education coverage is **heavy on jargon** and **complexity**, light on relatability.
- + **Governors drive conversation** in every state.

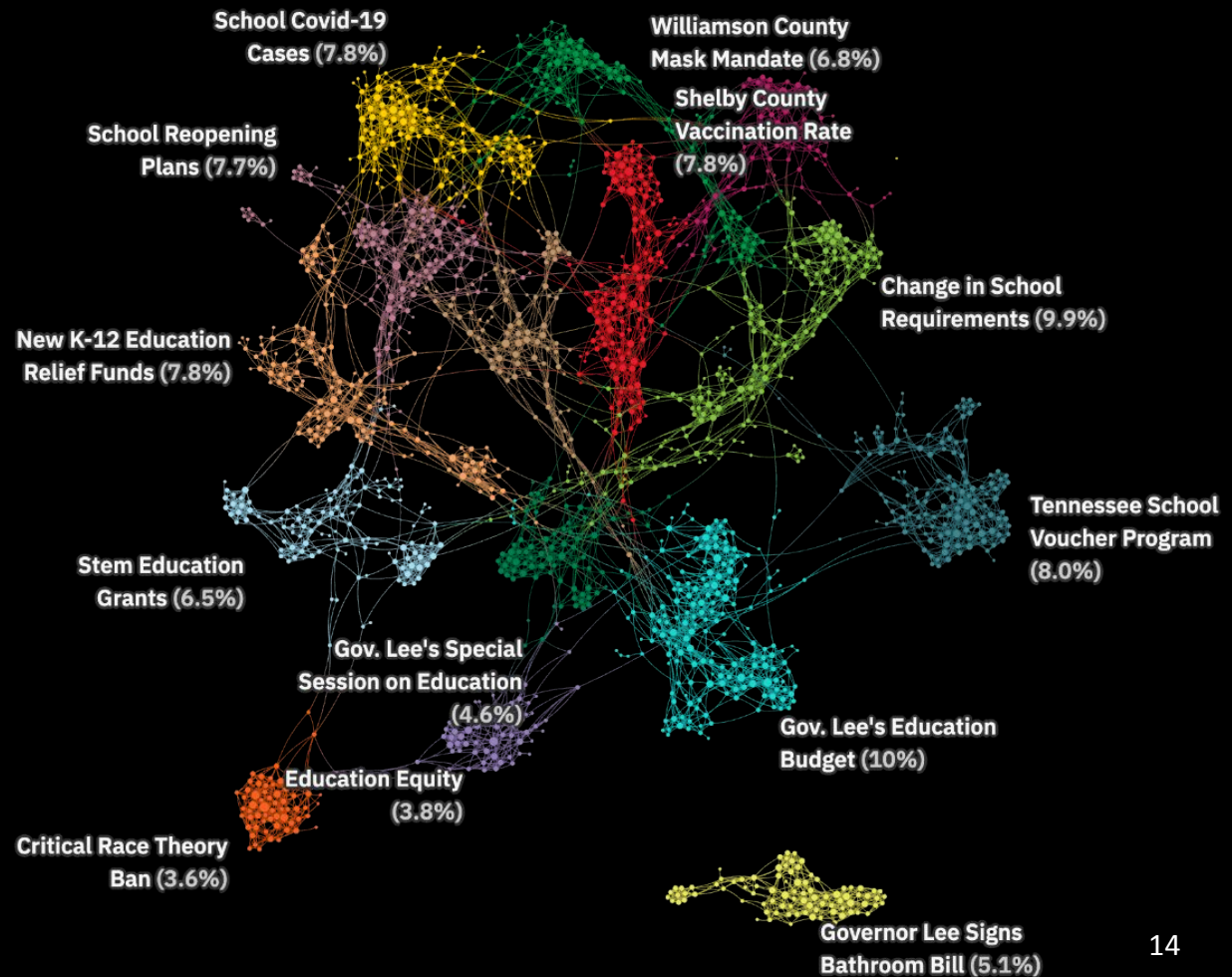


Tennessee Media Analysis

1,711 stories on public education in TN are organized into a network of coverage.

Each dot is an individual story and each collection of dots of the same color is a cluster of stories aligned according to the similarity of language used in each. Cluster proximity indicates how much language they share.

The map shows key topics that rise to the top, including the dominance of stories related to Governor Lee.



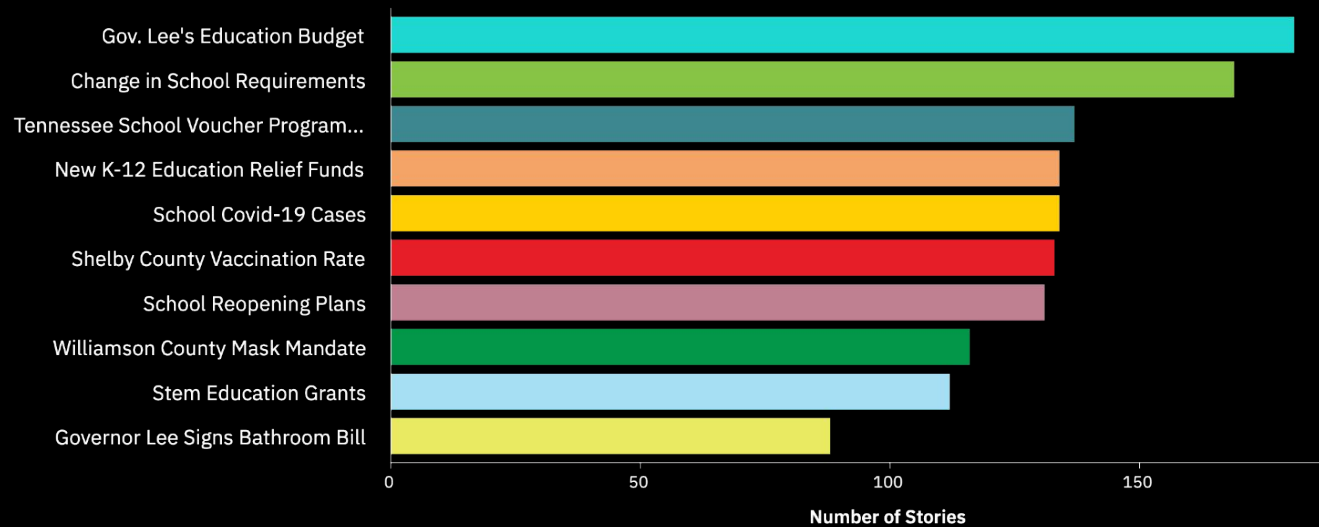
Biggest topics

The timeline of coverage shows an increase in coverage of the state's education budget at the start of the pandemic and the beginning of the fall semester.

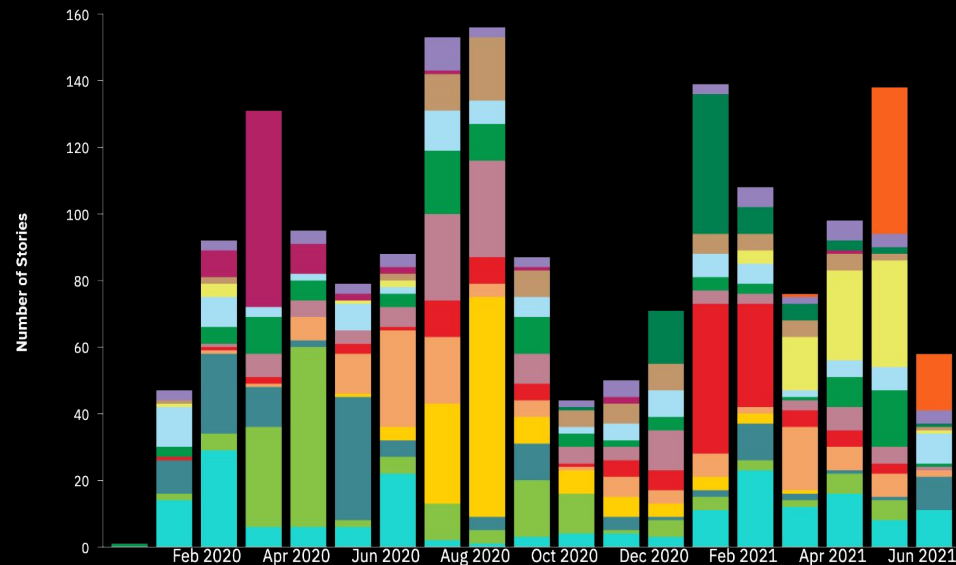
School re-opening and COVID cases also caused increased coverage of education during the.

In more recent months, the education funding through the CARES Act has also generated significant coverage.

Top Clusters by Number of Stories



Volume of Stories Over Time by Cluster

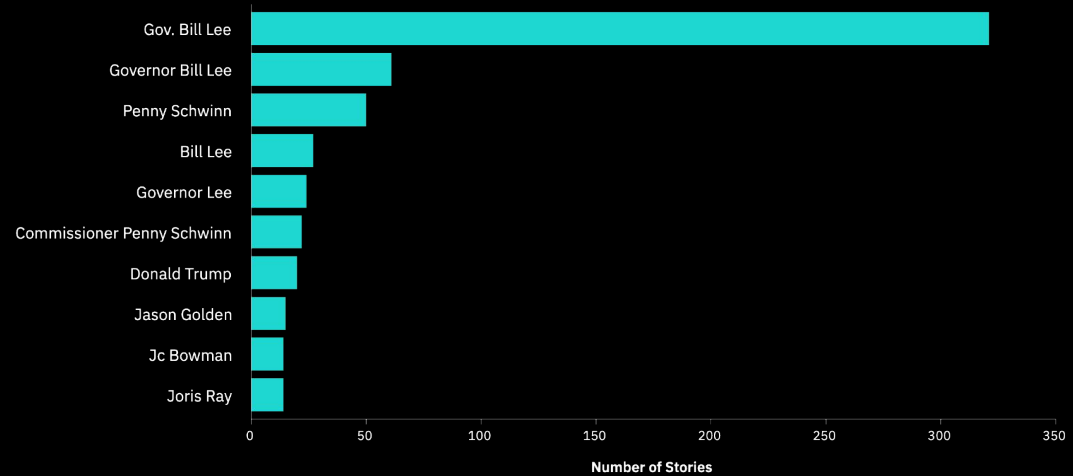


Key voices

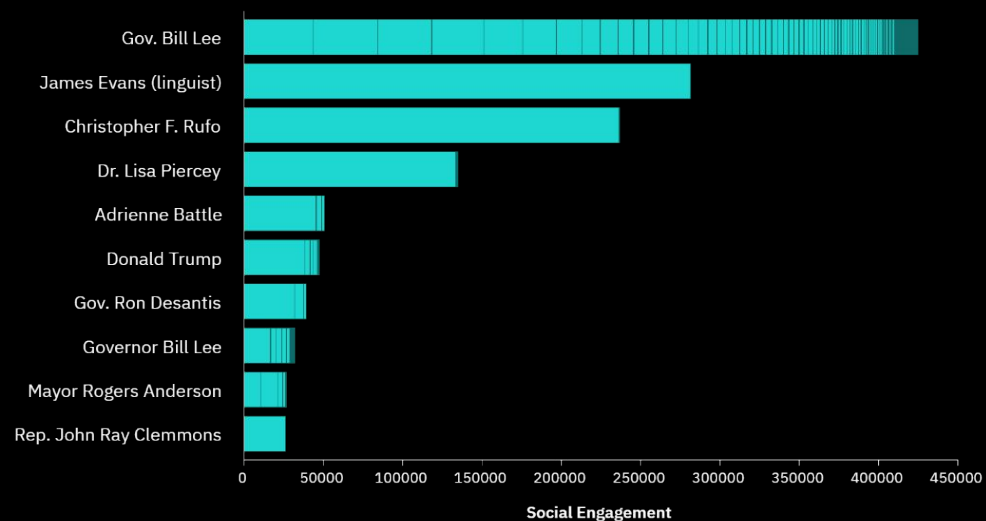
Similarly to national education funding coverage, Governor Bill Lee is mentioned significantly more than any other state education leader.

The second highest covered spokesperson is Penny Schwinn, Tennessee's Education Commissioner.

Top People Mentioned by Number of Stories



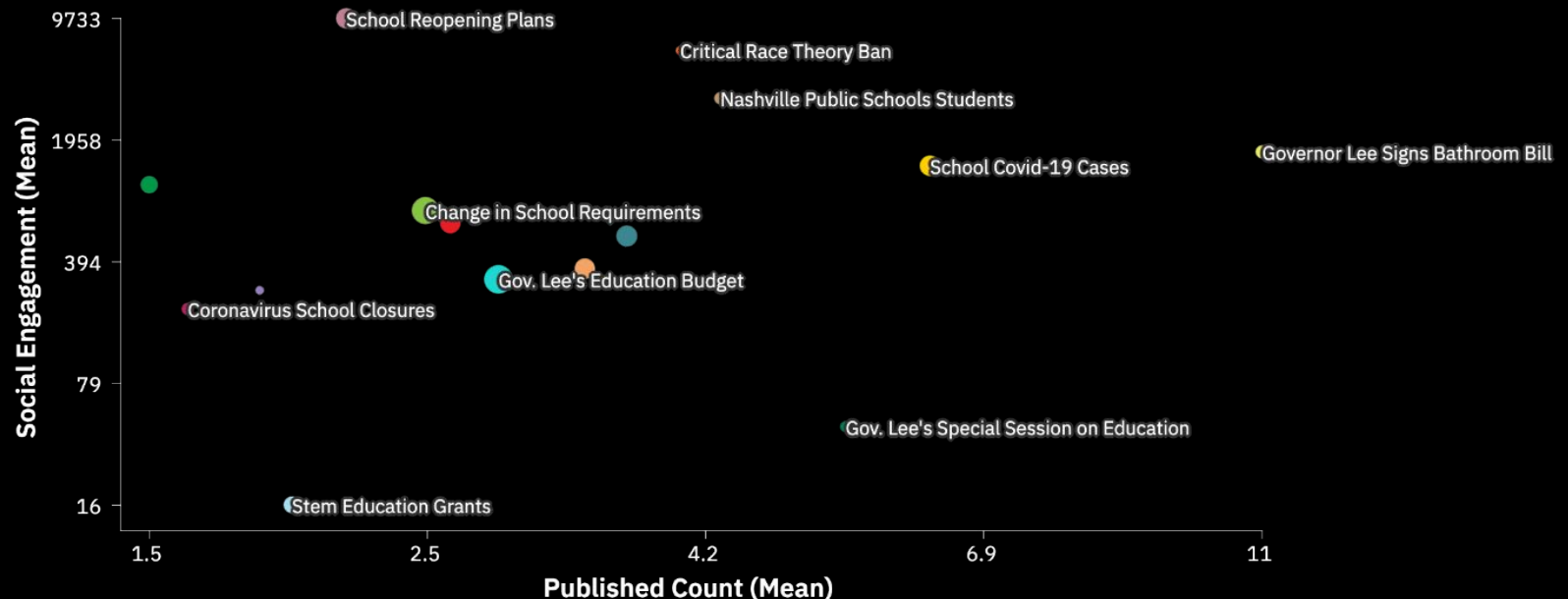
Top People Mentioned by Social Engagement



Stickiest topics

Tennessee's more controversial education issues—the Bathroom Bill and Critical Race Theory Ban—are among the stickiest topics, seeing high rates of publishing and high engagement on social media. Issues of funding tend to draw less attention overall. Coverage of the latest education budget, by comparison, has received less media and public attention overall.

Social Engagement x Publish Count

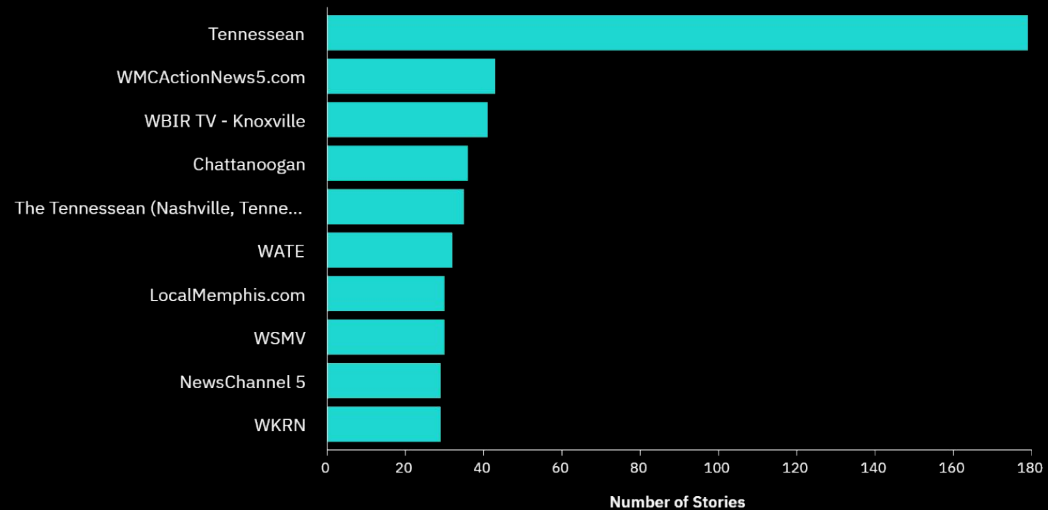


Key reporters & outlets

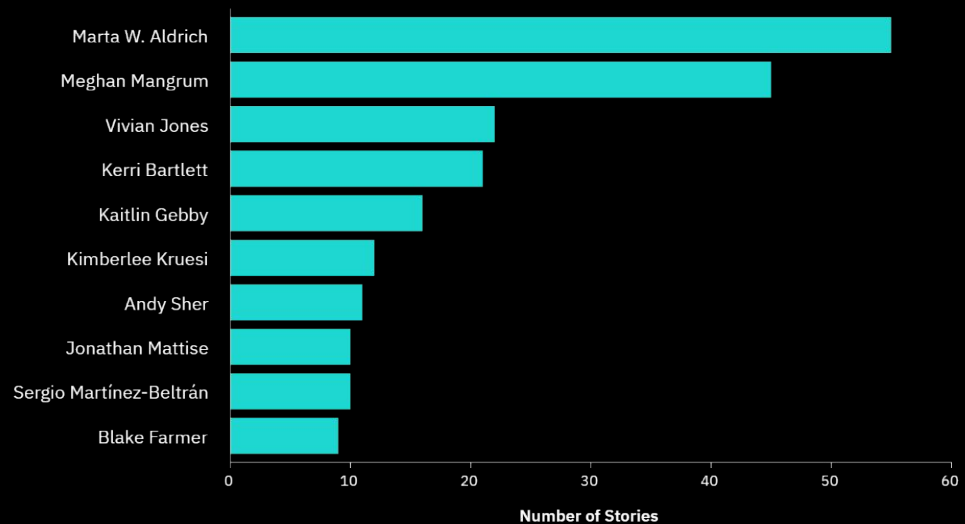
The Tennessean produces by far the highest volume of coverage on public education in Tennessee. Local broadcast outlets also feature considerable online coverage.

Leading reporters come from a range of outlets, including Chalkbeat and the Tennessean.

Top Outlets



Top Reporters



Key implications of education media coverage in Tennessee include:

- + **“Equity”** is now **more mainstream** but still a newer conversation overall requiring context and calibration.
- + **School choice** controversy puts a **focus on funding**.
- + **Budget coverage** often focuses on the **complex**. **Humanizing stories** may pull more people in.

Questions?

A black and white photograph of numerous pencils of various brands and colors, arranged horizontally. The pencils are sharpened and show signs of use. Brands visible include Faber-Castell, Pentel EnerGel, and others. The pencils are arranged in a slightly overlapping manner, creating a sense of depth and texture.

Why is the media important to telling your story?

Is our messenger.

Can affect our reputation.

Wants what's new, different, and controversial.

Skews negative.

Wants mostly to inform — though most reporters are not experts in the topic they're reporting on.

What are the different types of media?

Print

- + Longer, more detailed interview
 - + Potentially more knowledgeable reporter
 - + Questions repeated in different ways to get a response
 - + Chance to correct misstatement
-

Audio

- + Emphasis on delivery: voice, inflection, and pace
 - + Need to speak “visually”
 - + Okay to use notes, but don’t read
-

Video

- + Short, simple answers are crucial
- + Emphasis on body language and technique

What are some important terms?

Off the Record

On Background

Not for Attribution

On the Record

What are the rules of an official interview?

- + Know that there's no such thing as an "official" interview.
- + Anything you say before, during, or after the "official" interview—including any telephone or email exchanges—can be quoted in a story.
- + If you don't want to be quoted, be sure that you tell the reporter that it's off the record before you say it.

Pivoting is essential to telling your story

Shaping the conversation requires navigating challenging discussions.

Avoid getting trapped in a question by acknowledging + *redirecting* to what you want to talk about.

- + “That may be the case, but...”
- + “I hear what you’re saying, but the main consideration is...”
- + “What’s really issue is...”
- + “While that’s one view, don’t forget that...”
- + “That’s not accurate. The truth is...”
- + “That’s unclear. Let me tell you what we’ve been seeing...”

Telling your story effectively

For each talking point, prepare the 3 S's: **story, statistics, sound bites.**

Example Message: *Though education is often perceived as the great equalizer in America, our education system has promised opportunity while denying many students the essential resources needed to flourish.*

Example Story: "In Tennessee, we lobbied for increased investment in technology in schools so students are able to stay connected to teachers and their fellow students when being in the building isn't possible. As a result, every student in the state has access to reliable internet and a computer."

Statistic: "Nearly 500,000 Tennesseans do not have fast enough internet access at home to support online learning."

Sound Bite: "Without access to technology, students are being denied access to the education they deserve."

Example Message: *We can't go back to the pre-pandemic status quo, which was failing communities across the state. We must reimagine and rebuild an education system that meets student needs from Greenville to Brownsville.*

Example Story: "Students, parents, and teachers across the state rallied at the capitol, demanding that legislators center the experiences of students of color in reforming our state's education spending system. Lawmakers responded to this pressure, passing the first update to our state's funding formula in decades that will bring us closer to an education system that works for every child."

Statistic: "In 2019, 53% of students scoring below basic on the state's reading language arts assessments were students of color."

Sound Bite: "2020 revealed disparities in our education system that we can't unsee. Our children are counting on adults to change this reality."

Building Reporter Relationships

How do you establish relationships with reporters?

Be a resource:

- + Don't only reach out when you have a story to pitch.
- + Keep the relationship warm with news tips, newsletters, interesting trends (on a sporadic basis).
- + Offer connections to other sources, recommend other people they should speak with.

Make it easy:

- + Respond in a timely manner. Reporter deadlines are tight and if someone doesn't respond right away they move on.
- + Follow through on requests.
- + Keep your commitments to interviews, background briefings, etc.

The basics of social media

What to consider to broaden your message online

Clarify your target audience

Determine the platform:

- + Facebook: most used channel
- + Twitter: fast-paced, instantaneous info
- + Instagram: visual content
- + LinkedIn: professional
- + Snapchat: skews heavily younger

Create your content:

- + Mix up your content
- + Be brief and casual
- + Write in an active voice

Build engagement:

- + Add value to your audience (e.g., content that benefits them, too)
- + Interact with your audience
- + Participate in trending conversations related to your space
- + Use hashtags to make yourself discoverable (but be careful not to overuse)

Questions?

Appendix

How do you play the interview game?

It's a game.

- + Inject your message wherever possible.
- + Don't wait for the right question — it may not come.
- + Answer the question you wish you were asked.

Put it in your own words.

- + It's your story to tell.

Don't waste any answers.

- + Today's wasted answer may become tomorrow's quote.

How do you answer tough questions?

Answering tough questions is as easy as the ATMS:

A – Address

- + You can answer off-topic questions by acknowledging the question and moving on. “That’s a good question, but ” or “Interesting...”

T – Transition

- + Transition or bridge from their question to your answer.

M – Message

- + Your messages and message supports.

S – Sell

- + Sell your message by inserting a closing call to action.

What are some helpful interview tips to keep in mind?

Avoid jargon, complex statistics, and hard-to-understand concepts.

- + These can potentially derail your interview.

Stick to what you know, and don't guess.

- + If you're wrong, your credibility will be at stake.

Be concise.

- + 1 thing in 10 seconds = Control
- + 10 things in 30 seconds = No control

Speak in complete sentences.

- + Begin each answer with a complete sentence that includes relevant parts of the question.