



# Weekly Legislative Update

2.24.23

Dear {{FirstName or 'Supporter'}},

Questions and concerns around third- and fourth-grade retention legislative proposals continued to hold the attention of advocates, district leaders, educators, and lawmakers alike at the General Assembly this week.

Wednesday's House Education Administration Committee hosted a packed hearing room to hear from an influential roster of testimonies and public comment submissions regarding the retention law, including TN Commissioner of Education Dr. Penny Schwinn, former MS Superintendent of Education Dr. Carey Wright, Dr. Deborah Reed of the UT Reading Research Center, the superintendents of Trousdale, Lenoir City, and Collierville Schools, and a host of other advocacy and philanthropic leaders in the education space. You can view the committee hearing on retention [here](#). Though committee members did not directly debate or vote on any of the proposed bills, it was announced by House K-12 Subcommittee Chair [Kirk Haston \(R-Lobelville\)](#) that his committee is postured to begin considering the nearly 20 pieces of retention legislation on March 7th.

Retention conversations also continued in the public arena beyond the walls of Cordell Hull and its committee rooms, with various stakeholder groups offering data, research, and discussing the potential implications of the law on both state and local outcomes. The Education Trust in Tennessee's own P-12 Policy Analyst [Breanna Sommers](#) joined a panel of advocates and local elected officials to discuss the state of play on retention on WPLN's This Is Nashville yesterday afternoon, offering expert insights on what's at stake for English learners, students with disabilities, students of color, and students from low-income families. You can check out their conversation [here](#), and also review our regularly-updated [retention legislation tracker](#) and [Cost of Retention memo](#).

In other legislative news, [conversations](#) rose to a fever pitch around the leadership, housing concerns, and financials of Tennessee State University (TSU) between the institution's administration – namely, President Glenda Glover – and the office of TN State Comptroller Jason Mumpower. The state's only public, land-grant HBCU, TSU has recently been included in a [national dialogue](#) around the [chronic underfunding](#) of predominantly Black colleges and universities across the U.S. South. In a recent hearing convened by a legislative ad-hoc committee, the university alleges its housing crisis is a symptom of historic financial underinvestment by the State of Tennessee, while the Comptroller's office highlights concerns around institutional scholarship practices and decision making among the TSU's leadership. To learn more, check out the [Comptroller's Office of Research and Education Accountability special report on Tennessee State University](#) and [TSU's official response](#), both published this week.

Next week, we'll be back at the Capitol and following movement on several legislative proposals, including bills that seek to [expand eligibility for TN Reconnect](#), [increase career and college access pathways in our state's rural districts](#), and a proposal to [make changes to current maximum class size limitations in P-12 classrooms](#). To see all of the education-related legislation Ed Trust is actively tracking and other key information, please be sure to check out the "On Our Radar" section, our updated bill tracker, and the committee calendars each linked below. We also encourage you to [register for Monday's webinar](#) taking a deep dive into Governor Lee's proposed budget for FY24, with expert insights provided by Mandy Spears Pellegrin, Deputy Director at [The Sycamore Institute](#).

In partnership,



**Reggie Nash**  
Assistant Director, External Relations - Tennessee



## On Our Radar

**HB1114/SB0968**  
Rep. Lafferty / Sen. Powers

Expands eligibility for the Tennessee reconnect grant to include students who completed high school or obtained a GED® or HiSET® diploma during the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school year, and who are at least 21 years of age by January 1 of the academic year in which they enroll in an eligible program of study.

**HB1411/SB1117**  
Rep. Fritts / Sen. Bowling

Requires an LEA to obtain a student's parent's or legal guardian's consent to allow the student to participate in instruction, an activity, evaluation, assessment, survey, or analysis offered by the student's LEA.

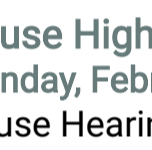
**HB0424/SB1221**  
Rep. Stevens / Sen. White

Authorizes a person who teaches under a temporary permit to satisfy the clinical experience required of candidates of an educator preparation provider for licensure if certain requirements are met.

**HB0849/SB0999**  
Rep. Haston / Sen. Yager

Enacts the "Rural Schools Innovation Act"; requires the department of education to establish a two-year pilot program for rural districts to partner together to expand access to high-quality, robust college and career pathways.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



## What's Happening

**House Higher Education Subcommittee**  
Monday, February 27th, 3:00pm CT  
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

**House Floor Session**  
Monday, February 27th, 5:00pm CT  
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

**Senate Floor Session**  
Monday, February 27th, 4:00pm CT  
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

**Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Committee**  
Tuesday, February 28th, 8:30am CT  
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

**House Education Instruction Subcommittee**  
Tuesday, February 28th, 9:00am CT  
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

**House K-12 Subcommittee**  
Tuesday, February 28th, 4:30pm CT  
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

**House Departments & Agencies Subcommittee**  
Wednesday, March 1st, 9:00am CT  
House Hearing Room II | [Committee Homepage](#)

**House Finance, Ways, and Means Subcommittee**  
Wednesday, March 1st, 10:30am CT  
House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

**House Civil Justice Committee**  
Wednesday, March 1st, 12:00pm CT  
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

**House Education Administration Committee**  
Wednesday, March 1st, 1:30pm CT  
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

**House Transportation Subcommittee**  
Wednesday, March 1st, 1:30pm CT  
House Hearing Room III | [Committee Homepage](#)

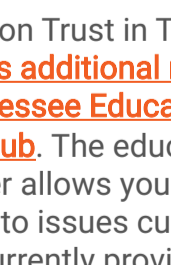
**Senate Education Committee**  
Wednesday, March 1st, 3:00pm CT  
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

**Senate Floor Session**  
Thursday, March 2nd, 8:30am CT  
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

**House Floor Session**  
Thursday, March 2nd, 9:00am CT  
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



## Noteworthy

**Resource: Education Issue Tracker**

The Education Trust in Tennessee released [this additional resource](#) on the [Tennessee Education Advocacy Hub](#). The education issue tracker allows you to take a deep-dive into issues currently on our radar, currently providing resources on 3rd grade retention.

**Youth-Only Event (Virtual): Become a Legislative Pro: Tracking Bills and Taking Action**

Are you a student that is looking to deepen your legislative knowledge and explore resources to support your advocacy efforts? Join The Education Trust in Tennessee as we review pressing educational legislative issues we will encounter during the 113th TN General Assembly, and ways to take action and stay engaged! Register [here](#).

**Report: From Antiquated to Equitable: How Tennessee Overhauled Its State School Funding Formula**

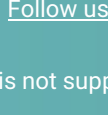
[Bellwether](#) just released [this report](#) on the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) and its passage. Learn more about this change to the state's funding formula last year to better meet the needs of nearly 1 million students.

**Event (Virtual): Understanding Tennessee's Education Budget with the Sycamore Institute**

[Register](#) to join The Education Trust in Tennessee and Mandy Spears Pellegrin, Deputy Director of [The Sycamore Institute](#), on February 27th at 1:00 pm CT to learn more about Governor Lee's proposed budget and the important education implications it has for our students and school communities.

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Check Out Our Policy Agenda](#)



The Education Trust

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