



# Weekly Legislative Update

03.29.24

Dear {{FirstName or 'Friend'}},

This week, [the nation reflected](#) on the heartbreaking and senseless loss of six lives at the Covenant School last March. This tragedy has [profoundly impacted and infinitely changed](#) our Nashville community. Our thoughts are with the families who lost loved ones and all of those who have been impacted by this loss. As we reflect on that solemn day, The Education Trust - Tennessee reaffirms our commitment to ensuring that every student in Tennessee can thrive in a physically safe, emotionally supportive, inclusive classroom and community.

Signaling that the end of the 2024 legislative session is near, Governor Bill Lee released his supplemental budget to his FY 24-25 proposed budget. A supplemental budget requests additional funds for state departments, proposals, and legislative priorities. Paramount to education advocates, Governor Lee's supplemental budget did not allocate additional dollars for a universal private school vouchers proposal even though both the [House and Senate proposals](#) exceed Governor Lee's earmarked \$144 million. [SB503](#), the Senate proposal for universal private school vouchers, will be heard in the [Senate Finance, Ways and Means Committee](#) on Tuesday, April 2 at 8:30am CT.

The House K-12 Subcommittee closed after hearing its last calendar on Tuesday evening. The committee considered a short calendar including:

- [HB2181](#), which would generate TISA funding for students with IEP to attend preschool programs.
- [HB2679](#), which extends an existing school turnaround pilot program that provides funds for an individual school to contract agencies for turnaround support.
- [HB2285](#), which allows the Commissioner of Education to grant a temporary teacher license for required courses with an end of course exam after consideration of key criteria.

The [House Higher Education Subcommittee](#) also closed after considering a regular calendar and the highly anticipated scholarship themed calendar. The committee passed [HB2184](#), a [2024 Ten for Tennessee](#) awardee, that permanently establishes [tnAchieves'](#) highly successful [COMPLETE Grant](#) program. [HB2184](#) moves to the [House Education Administration Committee](#) to be heard on Wednesday, April 3 at 1:30pm CT. Shout out to [tnAchieves](#), a member of the [Tennessee Alliance for Education in Equity](#), for leading the advocacy strategy on this bill!

[In a surprising shift](#), the House chamber decided to take up the Senate companion to [HB1739](#), rather than move forward with their compromise regarding Tennessee State University's board of trustees. The Senate companion, [SB1596](#), vacates the entire board of Tennessee State University, Tennessee's only public historically Black college or university. Despite fierce opposition, the bill passed the House Chamber in a 66-25 vote. Notably, the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury [released an audit](#) of the university detailing further financial and budgetary concerns as the House chamber convened for their floor session on Thursday morning. On Thursday evening, Governor Lee announced the appointment of [eight new members](#) to TSU's board.

In partnership,



**MaKenzie L. Mosby, MPP**  
Senior Manager of Government Relations for Tennessee



## On Our Radar

[HB0902 / SB0461](#)  
Rep. Hurt / Sen. Watson

As introduced, establishes the future of work commission to govern the activities of the Tennessee education and workforce data center established in the department of finance and administration's office of evidence and impact to collect, conduct research using, respond to public records requests for, and publish reports regarding certain education and workforce data to create a web-based platform to provide an overview of progress from education into the workforce.

[HB0785 / SB0750](#)  
Rep. White / Sen. Massey

As introduced, requires the department to create and implement a promising futures program to provide scholarships to children who are not school age to assist them in developing early language and literacy skills in a high-quality early care and learning program; redirects, from the lottery for education account to an account administered by the department to provide funding for the promising futures scholarship program, a certain percentage of the privilege tax collected from sports wagering licensees for certain fiscal years.

[HB1664 / SB1715](#)  
Rep. Warner / Sen. Hensley

As introduced, authorizes a law enforcement agency to assign a law enforcement officer to serve as a school resource officer at a school within a local board of education's control that has not entered into a memorandum of understanding with a law enforcement agency to assign a school resource officer to the school.

[HB1183 / SB0503](#)  
Rep. Lamberth / Sen. Johnson

As introduced, extends from October to November, the time within which a public institution of higher education that receives funds from the distribution of credit cards to students or any percentage from the use of cards bearing the college or university name or logo must report the amount of such funds or percentage received as well as how the funds were expended during the previous fiscal year to the education committee of the senate and the education administration committee of the house of representatives.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



## What's Happening

**House Floor Session**  
Monday, 4/1/24, 3:00pm  
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

**Senate Floor Session**  
Monday, 4/1/24, 3:30pm  
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

**Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Committee**  
Tuesday, 4/2/24, 8:30am  
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

**House Education Administration Committee**  
Wednesday, 4/3/24, 12:30pm  
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

**Senate Floor Session**  
Thursday, 4/4/24, 9:30am  
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

**House Floor Session**  
Thursday, 4/4/24, 10:00am  
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



## Noteworthy

**Podcast: Remembering Covenant, One Year Later**

Last year, in the wake of the shooting, students showed up to the state capitol steps with signs in hands, carrying the message that they wanted their legislators to do something about the violence. [WPLN This Is Nashville](#), invited a group of high school students to share what they and their classmates were going through.

[Listen here](#)

**Listen: The \$190 billion in emergency funds given to schools during the pandemic is ending**

Principals and superintendents talk to [NPR](#) about how students are faring four years after the pandemic shutdowns began. We also hear what schools plan to do when pandemic-related federal aid runs out.

[Listen here](#)

**Op-Ed: As we honor The Covenant School victims, I carry the grief I feel at losing my sister**

Erin O'Hara Block is a volunteer with Alive Hospice and the Nashville School Board Member for District 8. In [her piece](#) in The Tennessean, she talks about her experience with grief after losing her sister and reflecting on the loss at The Covenant School.

[Read more](#)

**Timeline: How the private school voucher movement gained momentum in Tennessee**

Check out [this piece](#) in Chalkbeat to get a closer look at where the march to universal vouchers began, and how it arrived at this pivotal point in Tennessee.

[Read more](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Legislative Advocacy Hub](#)

