



Weekly Legislative Update

4.14.23

Dear {{FirstName or 'Supporter'}},

The adjournment of the 2023 legislative session of the 113th Tennessee General Assembly is drawing nearer, as committee activities continue to conclude and final budget conversations kick into high gear. Lawmakers are expected to continue discussions on priority budget items over the weekend and into early next week, with many Capitol watchers speculating that session could wrap up as early as next Friday. The legislature's expedited timeline continues to draw heightened attention to the statehouse, as questions remain on the future of [Governor Lee's call for legislation to restrict access to guns](#) following his signature of [Executive Order #100](#) on Tuesday. Both formerly-expelled House Democrats, [Rep. Justin Jones](#) of Nashville and [Rep. Justin Pearson](#) of Memphis, returned to the General Assembly this week after unanimous reappointments by their respective county governments. The representatives, who were expelled following their protest for gun reforms on the House floor after The Covenant School tragedy, have continued their calls for [swift legislative action](#).

On Wednesday, the House Education Administration Committee, the final education committee with calendared business this session, concluded its work for the year. HB433, an [amended bill](#) that seeks to expand the Lee Administration's ESA program to include Hamilton, Madison, and Knox County schools, passed out of committee on a voice vote after [much debate and discussion](#). Reps. [Ron Gant](#) (R-Piperton), [Harold Love, Jr.](#) (D-Nashville), [Sam McKenzie](#) (D-Knoxville), and [Todd Warner](#) (R-Chapel Hill) each voted against the legislation's advancement. An [amendment to HB306](#), legislation that would restrict sports participation in private schools for trans students, passed out of the committee to expand the state code's language allowing private schools to set their own firearms policies to include those with pre-K classes. [HB251](#), legislation that would establish a scholarship for college students committing to teach special education classes in-state for at least three years, also passed successfully out of committee.

On the House floor, [HB1295](#), a bill sponsored by House Democratic Leader [Rep. Karen Camper](#) of Memphis and supported by Ed Trust TN and Stand For Children, passed with no opposition and bipartisan support. Its Senate companion (SB884) carried by the upper chamber's Democratic Leader [Sen. Raumesh Akbari](#), also passed the floor 26-3. The bill requires the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) to commission a study on national best practices around 9th grade success and early interventions to increase high school graduation rates.

Also in the Senate, the Finance, Ways, and Means Committee undertook discussions on both retention and school safety legislative proposals. [SB274](#), the Administration and leadership's bill around school safety including building reinforcement mechanism for new builds and remodeling measures for existing school buildings, passed from the finance committee and eventually cleared the Senate floor unanimously with a 32-0 vote yesterday. [SB300](#), the remaining retention bill, was caught in hefty debates on benchmark testing and additional requirements for schools and districts. The bill, carried by Senate Education Committee Chairman [Jon Lundberg](#) (R-Bristol), eventually passed out of the Finance Committee and is scheduled for full Senate consideration on Tuesday, April 18th.

Next week, finance and appropriations conversations around the state's budget will continue while education advocates continue to track legislation headed for full floor consideration, including bills opposed by Ed Trust seeking to [reform the governing board of Tennessee State University, our state's only public HBCU](#), to enact [ESA expansion](#), and that would [allow public school teachers to carry concealed weapons in public K-12 schools](#). To see all of the education-related bills Ed Trust is actively tracking and other important information on movement at the Tennessee General Assembly, please be sure to check out the "On Our Radar" section, our updated bill tracker, and the committee calendars each linked below.

In partnership,



Reggie Nash
Assistant Director, External Relations for Tennessee



On Our Radar

[HB0433 / SB0012](#)
Rep. White / Sen. Gardenhire

As introduced, expands the eligibility criteria for an education savings account to include students zoned to attend a school in an LEA with at least five schools, instead of at least 10, identified as being in the bottom 10 percent of schools in 2017 and identified as priority schools in the 2015, 2018, and 2021 priority school cycles.

[HB0841 / SB1059](#)
Rep. Lynn / Sen. Hensley

As introduced, removes the educational justification of a person possessing obscene material if the person is at a school building, bus, school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field, or other property owned, used, or operated by a local education agency.

[HB0727 / SB1443](#)
Rep. Fritts / Sen. Roberts

As introduced, requires a student's parent or legal guardian, or the student if the student has reached the age of majority, to provide a written, informed, and voluntarily signed consent to the student's LEA before the student may receive instruction through the LEA's family life curriculum, participate in a survey, analysis, or evaluation, or receive health services provided through a coordinated school health program.

[HB1202 / SB1325](#)
Rep. Williams / Sen. Bailey

As introduced, authorizes a faculty or staff member of a school to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds subject to certain conditions, including obtaining an enhanced handgun carry permit and completing annual training.

[Review Our Bill Tracker](#)



What's Happening

House Government Operations Committee
Monday, April 17th, 1:30pm CT
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session
Monday, April 17th, 4:00pm CT
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

House Floor Session
Monday, April 17th, 4:00pm CT
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

House Finance Ways & Means Subcommittee
Tuesday, April 18th, 9:00am CT
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

House Finance Ways & Means Committee
Tuesday, April 18th, immediately following FWM subcommittee
House Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session
Tuesday, April 18th, 1:30pm CT
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

House Floor Session
Wednesday, April 19th, 8:30am CT
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Committee
Wednesday, April 19th, 8:30am CT
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session
Wednesday, April 19th, 1:30pm CT
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

House Floor Session
Thursday, April 20th, 9:00am CT
House Chamber | [House Homepage](#)

Senate Finance, Ways, and Means Committee
Thursday, April 20th, 8:30am CT
Senate Hearing Room I | [Committee Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session
Thursday, April 20th, 8:30am CT
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

Senate Floor Session
Friday, April 21st, 8:30am CT
Senate Chamber | [Senate Homepage](#)

[House Committee Calendars](#)

[Senate Committee Calendars](#)



Noteworthy

Resource: Sycamore Institute: Summary of Gov. Lee's FY 2024 Amended Budget

Check out [this resource](#) from The Sycamore Institute on Governor Bill Lee's amended budget for FY 2024. The changes add \$510 million - or 1.7% - in new spending from state revenues. [Read more.](#)

Article: CNN: Memphis sends Justin J. Pearson back to the Tennessee House days after GOP lawmakers ousted him

Check out [this article](#) from CNN about the reappointment of Representative Justin Pearson back to the Tennessee General Assembly with a 7-0 vote. It also discusses the reinstatement of Representative Justin Jones as an interim member of the TN House after the Nashville Metro Council vote unanimously in favor. [Read more.](#)

Article: Chalkbeat TN: Governor calls for Tennessee law to keep guns from 'dangerous people' after Nashville school shooting

Check out [this article](#) from Chalkbeat TN about Governor Bill Lee's call for gun restrictions aimed at people experiencing mental health crisis in the wake of the Nashville school shooting, including an [executive order](#) to strengthen background checks. [Read more.](#)

Brief: Ed Trust: How School Discipline Impacts Students' Social, Emotional and Academic Development (SEAD)

Check out [this article](#) from The Education Trust about the impact of school discipline on students' social, emotional, and academic development. It discusses evidence-based approaches schools must adopt to create physically safe and emotionally supportive environments for all students. [Read the full brief.](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Check Out Our Policy Agenda](#)



The Education Trust

11 Willow Street, Suite 11, Nashville, TN 37210
202.293.1217 | [edtrust.org/Tennessee](#)
[Find your Legislator](#) | [Follow us on Twitter](#) | [Contact Us](#)

(Unsubscribing is not supported in previews)