

TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE

LEGISLATIVE REPORT | February 25, 2019 | VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

Pull-out poster

pgs. 4-5



Higher ed remedial report missed key issues, solutions

A report to the General Assembly by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) showed a portion of Tennessee high school graduates need assistance in math and reading in college. While headlines blared Tennessee schools fail to prepare students for postsecondary work, a deeper look at the data painted a different story.

“More Tennessee students than ever are going on to college because of the tremendous opportunity provided by free community college through the Tennessee Promise and the dedication of school counselors across the state,” said TEA President Beth Brown. “Many of these students are first-in-their-family college attendees with lower incomes than traditional college graduates. We should be proud of where we are and that a college path is open to more.”

Brown notes the report never mentioned low education funding, high poverty rates and other key factors, instead looking at teacher quality and earlier remedial help. “They weren’t looking to cast blame, but they missed important factors that didn’t provide real solutions.”

Tennessee, one of 20 states requiring all students to take the ACT, is 6th in average ACT scores of those states, while 39th in K-12 funding nationally. Of the five states with higher state average scores, all have far fewer students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Tennessee also leads the nation for students completing the FAFSA federal student aid forms.

“We do more with every education dollar. Instead of looking to peel off dollars for vouchers, let’s invest in our schools and students. We can get them where they need to be.”

Lee proposes \$40 million for school resource officers

Governor Bill Lee announced a \$40 million new investment in school safety focused on school resource officers to better protect teachers and students, and prepare against the threat of violence. For years TEA supported increased SRO funding as good policy and an alternative to arming teachers as school security.

Approximately 500 Tennessee schools do not currently have SROs, and changes to the law will enable them to fill these positions. The new funding plan also enables schools that currently have an SRO to pursue grants to fund other safety priorities.

“The safety of our children and teachers is a top priority for my administration, and this investment ensures that school districts will have the resources they need to better protect our schools,” said Lee.

Governor moves forward with promise to strengthen CTE programs statewide

From the start of his campaign to be Tennessee’s next governor, Bill Lee emphasized the importance of career technical education and his intent as governor to strengthen and expand the programs offered to Tennessee students. Earlier this month, he took the first steps in moving forward with those campaign promises with the

announcement of his Governor’s Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) initiative.

According to a media statement from the governor’s office, the

CTE program
cont. page 7



Legislators look for solutions on the future of testing

TEA survey shows support for alternatives

Several initiatives are moving through the Tennessee General Assembly aiming to change the existing testing regime in the state.

One of the key bills is HB383/SB488 filed by Rep. Terri Lynn Weaver (R-Lancaster) and Sen. Janice Bowling (R-Tullahoma), which would allow districts to administer the ACT, ACT Aspire or SAT tests as an approved testing alternative in math and English language arts for high school students.

Many legislators are more concerned than ever about the repeated TNReady failures over the years. TEA has been raising awareness of the persistent problems, loss of data and problems with credibility plaguing the TNReady test.

Testing survey
cont. page 8



THE STRONGEST VOICE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS

Context matters more than dramatic headlines

By TEA President Beth Brown



Artist Kenneth Noland said, “For me context is key—from that comes the understanding of everything.” Without seeing the complete picture, we cannot fully appreciate art...or statistics. Recent headlines proclaimed “large numbers of Tennessee students not ready for college” based on the number of students needing remediation. It’s important that we look at that data in context.

Tennessee teachers are working hard to open post-secondary opportunities to more and more of our students. The Tennessee Promise provides an avenue for more graduates to begin college,

and school counselors across our state are going the extra mile to make sure more and more seniors fill out federal student aid and Promise forms.

After years of work since the Hope Scholarship was enacted, Tennessee has the highest federal student aid form completion rate in the country, partly because the form is required to remain eligible for Tennessee Promise.

Tennessee’s educators are working hard with limited resources, and our students are demonstrating progress.

With a state ACT average score of 20.2 and more Tennessee high school graduates going to college, it is understandable more enrollees will fall below the 19 ACT score threshold for math and reading that triggers extra help in Tennessee community

colleges. However, there is steady progress to reduce remediation rates, especially compared to other states.

Tennessee has seen steady progress in ACT scores, which hit an all-time high last year. We are one of 20 states requiring all students to take the ACT. Of those states, Tennessee ranks 6th in average ACT scores, while we rank 14th in funding and 39th in K-12 funding overall. We get more return on our investment than any other state. It would be amazing to see Tennessee fund its schools to the regional average. If we get these types of results with limited resources, imagine the return on investment if we had increased funding.

Of the five states requiring ACT with higher average scores than Tennessee, all have far fewer students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, with student poverty rates one-third less than Tennessee on average.

As a rural educator, I know about limited resources and working with students on the economic margins. Poverty and insecurity are real barriers to learning; it may be harder for students to envision going to college if none of their family members have ever been themselves. Yet it is wonderful we broaden the college expectations of more and more students, seeing them taking that giant first step.

One solution to improve student ACT scores is test-prep courses. In my school, I have taught ACT prep courses. After learning test-taking strategies, students demonstrated significant gains on benchmark tests within my class, and those gains were also evident when students took the actual ACT.

ACT is a good measure. Perhaps it’s time to look at using ACT subject tests in earlier grades as an alternative to TNReady. Based on my experiences as an ACT prep teacher, I have a feeling that familiarity with the assessment will result in higher scores, which in turn will reduce the number of students requiring remediation in college.

When I consider the context of ACT scores and student participation in post-secondary opportunities, I have a clear understanding: Tennessee’s educators are working hard with limited resources, and our students are demonstrating progress. Those efforts and achievements should be celebrated as we continue our work to ensure that every student in Tennessee has a great public education.

We need to address the real barriers to student success

By TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder



The factors that influence student achievement are not confined within the walls of a school building. Having engaged parents is one of the most important factors for student learning. Improving respect for teachers and our public schools is critically important, too.

There has been a lot of talk recently about a proposed “parent dress code.” The bill, sponsored by longtime public education advocate Rep. Antonio Parkinson, is about much more than parent clothing choices. Rep. Parkinson has stated his intent with this proposal is to ensure anyone, including parents and vendors, who enters a school building conducts themselves in a manner that is respectful to students’ learning environment and the faculty.

TEA is always supportive of measures to improve respect of the teaching profession and our public schools, but I do understand why reporters and educators have questioned the portion of the bill that covers dress code.

I have seen my fair share of questionable parent attire, but the parent’s presence and attention to their child’s education is far more important to me than their wardrobe choices. Parents, like educators, have overwhelming demands on their time and attention. If they are prioritizing their child’s education at school and at home, that should always be acknowledged and encouraged.

A student can have the best and brightest educator in the state, but there is only so much that can be accomplished without the necessary support and encouragement at home. Teachers and parents need each other.

I do believe that this proposal comes from a sincere concern for improving the learning environment. I have some ideas, though, on additional ways that legislators can improve the learning environment in our public schools.

First, legislators could continue making significant investments in public education funding. The state has made historic increases in recent years, but there is still a lot of work to be done. Increased funding would allow for smaller class sizes and more one-on-one instruction. It would also provide for inviting classrooms stocked with the resources needed for a quality public education - resources that are currently being funded out of teachers’ own pockets.

If parents are making their child’s education a priority and showing up in the school building, they should be met with open arms.

Fully funding public education would also mean providing a livable and competitive wage for educators. There is no excuse for teachers and education support professionals needing second and sometimes third jobs to be able to pay their bills. Qualified and committed educators are the foundation for student success and a positive learning environment. Current state funding levels make it much more difficult for less affluent districts to recruit and retain the professionals our students deserve.

The second issue largely impacting the learning environment is toxic high-stakes testing. The state has tied so many critical decisions for students, teachers and schools to its flawed TNReady assessment that it has created an environment of drill-test-punish. This is not conducive to teaching or learning. We must rethink the way we evaluate student achievement and teacher effectiveness. The current system is only causing more harm.

I agree we need to look at ways to improve the learning environment, but let’s not overlook the most significant barriers to learning.

TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE (USPS 17201) is published nine times, biweekly, mid-January through mid-May, by the Tennessee Education Association, 801 Second Avenue North, Nashville TN 37201-1099. Periodicals Postage Paid at Nashville, TN, and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE**, 801 Second Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201-1099. The subscription price of \$6.89 is allocated from annual membership dues of \$258.00 for active members; \$129.00 for associate, education support and staff members; \$16.00 for retired members; and \$10.00 for student members. Member of State Education Association of Communicators (SEAC).

MANAGING EDITOR: Amanda Chaney
achaney@teea.org
ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Jim Wrye
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & PUBLISHER:
Carolyn Crowder

Tennessee Education Association

801 Second Avenue North
Nashville, TN 37201-1099
Telephone: (615) 242-8392
Toll Free: (800) 342-8367, (800) 342-8262
Fax: (615) 259-4581
Website: www.teateachers.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Beth Brown* (800) 342-8367
VICE PRESIDENT: Tanya Coats* (865) 308-2787
SECRETARY-TREASURER: Carolyn Crowder (615) 242-8392
DISTRICT 1 LaDawn Hudgins* (423) 384-3585
DISTRICT 2 Melinda Reese (423) 327-0114
DISTRICT 3 Robert Holder (865) 617-1179
DISTRICT 4 Connie Mitchell (865) 604-3471
DISTRICT 5 Jeanette Omarkhall (423) 413-9114
DISTRICT 6 Tammy Linder (931) 310-5389
DISTRICT 7 Jim Gifford (615) 430-6233

DISTRICT 8 Fred Riley (615) 525-9303
DISTRICT 9 Erick Huth* (615) 973-5851
DISTRICT 10 Randall Woodard (615) 594-5632
DISTRICT 11 John Friend (256) 275-7662
DISTRICT 12 Doris Morton (731) 394-3233
DISTRICT 13 Renee Baum* (901) 604-2035
DISTRICT 14 Kenyon Cook (901) 605-7080
DISTRICT 15 Neshellda Johnson (901) 857-6042
ADMINISTRATOR EAST Carrie Clabo (865) 603-3791
ADMINISTRATOR MIDDLE Janolyn King (615) 203-5920
ADMINISTRATOR WEST Heather Heard-Davis (901) 230-4881
HIGHER EDUCATION Clinton Smith (731) 223-0080
BLACK CLASSROOM TEACHER EAST Diamond Kelley (423) 760-0238
BLACK CLASSROOM TEACHER MIDDLE Brenda Munusamy (931) 433-0918
BLACK CLASSROOM TEACHER WEST Latia Watson (901) 500-1006
STATE SPECIAL SCHOOLS Ginger Henderson (865) 548-4615

NEW TEACHER Hope Shields (901) 239-1232
ESP Sandra McDurmon (901) 237-2866
TN NEA DIRECTOR Tiffany Reed (901) 416-2530
TN NEA DIRECTOR Karen Anderson* (423) 741-9682
STEA MEMBER Savannah Huff (615) 347-9884
TN RETIRED Linda McCrary (615) 888-7026
* Executive Committee
AT LARGE RETIRED DIRECTOR ON NEA BOARD
JoAnn Smith-Mashburn (423) 914-2818

TEA HEADQUARTERS STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Carolyn Crowder; ASST. EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS: Terrance Gibson; Steve McCloud; Jim Wrye; TECHNOLOGY & BUILDING OPERATIONS MANAGER: Galen Riggs; COMPTROLLER: Steven Martinez; UNISERV FIELD MANAGERS: Karla Carpenter; Leigh Phillips; STAFF ATTORNEYS: John Allen, Virginia A. McCoy; GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COORDINATOR: Drew Sutton; COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATORS: Amanda Chaney; Alexei Smirnov; INSTRUCTIONAL ADVOCACY

& PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATORS: Shante Telfer; ADVOCACY HOTLINE COORDINATORS: Mary Campbell, Gera Summerford & Cynthia Wood.

UniServ Staff contact information can be found on page 6.

Our collective action can change the future for our students and profession

By Lisa Jorgensen, United EA of Shelby County member



I am ALL IN for the #RedforEd #TN2020Vision goals. Tennessee students need more funding, and there are way too many high stakes decisions being based upon

a very dysfunctional and exceedingly expensive test. Both of these concerns must be addressed, and the answers lie in the Tennessee General Assembly.

Some legislators have different ideas on how to best meet the state's obligations to educate all children. I believe our hope lies in parents, teachers and community members raising our voices in a united effort for positive changes.

I was raised in a small bedroom community in Bergen County, NJ, in a tiny former farmhouse that my parents discovered when riding through town on the bus. My father taught in the NYC schools for a couple of years, but he became a math and reading tutor, focusing on both remedial and accelerated learning.

We didn't have much money, but our neighbors did. Bergen County schools were considered in the top three in the country at that time. The schools were funded by property taxes.

We relocated to Nashville in the early 1970s. *Hee Haw* was still a television staple. *The Beverly Hillbillies* had just gone off the air. My northern friends made jokes about Tennesseans going barefoot.

My high school was hugely disappointing. I never wrote a paper. Spelling and vocabulary words were less rigorous than those in my fifth grade spelling book. My father continued his calling as a reading and math tutor, but we all delivered newspapers early in the morning to help make ends meet.

Fast forward to 2019. Tennessee public schools are 39th in investment per student, but the state of Tennessee has had a significant budget surplus through the 2015-2018 fiscal years. It is estimated that there will be a \$200 million revenue surplus this year. Something doesn't add up.

The TNReady (not-ready) testing contract was accepted at a cost of \$30 million, although that figure doesn't take into account local investment in testing. In April 2018, Shelby County Schools estimated that they spent \$46 million in test preparations alone.

Last year, I was able to support my fellow teachers as they readied their classrooms and students to participate in the first of the pre-TNReady tests, the benchmark testing for the kindergarteners to be

taken on computers beginning the third week of school.

Although most of my school's kindergarteners had not attended pre-school and many did not have computers at home, and a large percentage did not speak English, all of these children were required to begin and complete a reading assessment and then, a few days later, a math assessment on the computer.

At my school, we don't have the desktop computers available for benchmark testing of all the students, so laptops were purchased to be available for this process. Kindergarten teachers had to set up each individual laptop with mouse and headphones, log it on, log on the testing program and student, and supervise each child as they waded through the process. I'm so glad that I was able to help, but I estimated that with 12 similar tests each year, these kindergarteners were going to lose the equivalent of six weeks of their English/Language Arts/Reading instruction.

It is true that these tests were "District mandated tests." My district has invested in these in part because of state requirements, and in part to try to get ahead of the testing competency required to stave off the state's threat of school shutdowns and take-overs due to test scores. And yes, the district estimates that it has spent more than \$46 million in the process.

I can't help but wonder what that money could have been used for instead. Educational assistants? Pencils and supplies? Toilet paper and soap? Art supplies? Musical instruments and sheet music? Actual books available for reading at the schools? Library support? Additional school counselors for behavior, academic and planning? A living wage for district employees?

The lost learning time during testing is a disservice to our students and educators. The practice needs to stop!

Every Tennessee Education Association member needs to be part of the effort to increase awareness of the need to improve state investment in public education and stop the high-stakes decisions based on testing. We need to motivate parents, grandparents, high school students and recent graduates, community volunteers and education advocates to wear #RedforEd. We need to encourage all supporters of public education to contact their state legislators to vote for these changes.

Our students' futures and our profession are at stake.

ASK TEA

ANSWERS FROM THE EXPERTS AT THE TEA HOTLINE

Q: I cannot attend Civication during my spring break. Can I take a personal day to attend Civication another week?

A: Yes, provided your leave request complies with state law and your district's local board policy, you may use a personal day to attend Civication. State law provides leave "can be taken at the discretion of a teacher, who shall not be required to give reasons for the use of any personal leave," though such requests can be denied for reasons including the following:

- More than 10 percent of teachers in your school have requested leave on the same day
- Scheduled student testing is occurring
- The leave request is for the day before or after a school holiday or vacation
- The leave request conflicts with a previously scheduled professional development or parent-teacher conference day.

If you need assistance securing leave to attend Civication, contact your association leadership or UniServ coordinator for help. And don't forget to register for Civication at TEAteachers.org after your leave has been approved!

Q: I've heard there are confirmed cases of measles in our district, which is frightening to me because my twins are still too young to be vaccinated. Can the district do anything to prevent the spread of this highly contagious disease?

A: Yes. Among the more aggressive actions a district can take is requiring students or staff suspected of having a communicable disease, including measles and tuberculosis, to undergo a physical examination by a physician. By law any individual confirmed to have such a disease can be excluded from school until a physician's certificate is furnished indicating that the individual has been cured of the communicable disease.

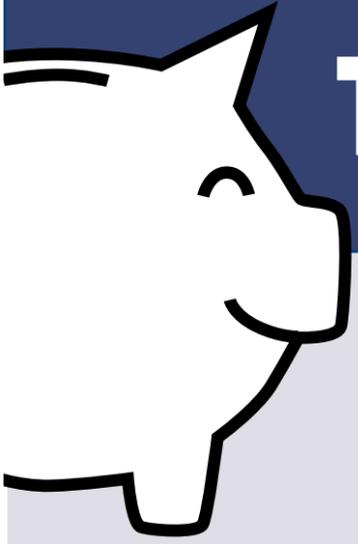
A more common tactic to stop the spread of illness this time of year is to close schools for several days. To do so districts often utilize so-called "stockpile" days, which many districts elect to accrue by extending their instructional days in accord with state law. In the event of serious outbreaks of disease, the commissioner of education may waive the 180 minimum instructional days required by law.

Q: My young son is hospitalized some distance from our town where I work as a teacher's aide. Honestly I work because my family needs the district's insurance coverage, yet I fear losing it if my sick leave runs out before my son is released. As an at-will employee can anything protect my job and insurance benefits?

A: Depending on how long you have been employed and how much you work, you may qualify for a leave of absence under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which can protect both your job and your health insurance. Although FMLA is an unpaid leave, typically it can be coupled with another paid leave, such as sick leave, to maintain your income. During an FMLA-qualifying leave, your employer must maintain its contribution to your insurance premium, and you will continue to be responsible for the portion normally deducted from your paycheck—even if no wages are earned. Beyond FMLA, some districts provide locally created benefits for their at-will employees, though local benefits vary widely, so it's best to contact your district's benefits coordinator to find out what options may apply to your situation.



The TEA Advocacy Hotline supports local leaders and building representatives in answering member questions. If you have an employment-related question, please contact your building rep or UniServ coordinator.



TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Tennessee gets more every public K-12 dollar

Our state ranks **39th** for investment per student

After years of increases Tennessee now ranks 39th in funding per student at \$9,995, behind the Southeast average of \$10,705 and the national average of \$12,756 per student.

Tennessee is first in the South for on-time graduation, ninth for the entire nation, and ranks fourth in on-time graduation for black students.

9th
On-time graduation

4th
Black on-time graduation

Of the 20 states requiring all students to take ACT, Tennessee has the 6th highest ACT average score, far higher than many states not requiring the ACT.

6th
Average ACT score

We can and should fund our schools at the Southeast average.

\$700 million
needed over two years to meet Southeast K-12 funding average

General Fund revenue not budgeted FY15-FY18: **\$2.4 billion**

*"FY" = fiscal year (July 1-June 30). Period between July '14 - June '18. Source: TN.gov

K-12 potential FY15-18 non-budgeted revenue: **\$816 million**

Tennessee K-12 receives approximately 34% of General Fund budget annually.

Projected Internet sales tax and revenue growth for FY20: **\$500 million**



TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

ESAs fraud

Arizona was the first to report found money from state's ESA schools.

Arizona ESAs have transferred all school program — pre-empted dollars, then sent to criminal investors.

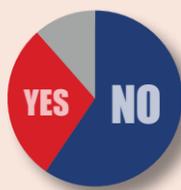
ESA/VOUCHERS: FRAUD

SCHOOLS: OUR BEST INVESTMENT

e for
llar.

Polling shows Tennesseans strongly opposed to vouchers

Question: Do you support the use of taxpayer dollars to fund attendance to private schools?



STATEWIDE (6,510 respondents)

NO 59.5% **YES 29%**

6,510 highly likely voters, with a GOP oversample

Polling of 6,510 likely voters completed by ReVily-Spry, a GOP survey firm. Polling occurred from May -October, 2016. Polling includes oversample of Republican primary voters. Polling margin of error is +/- 4 percent. Polling was conducted in legislative districts across Tennessee during primary and general elections.



RURAL (2,995 respondents)

NO 64% **YES 24.5%**



URBAN - SUBURBAN (3,515 respondents)

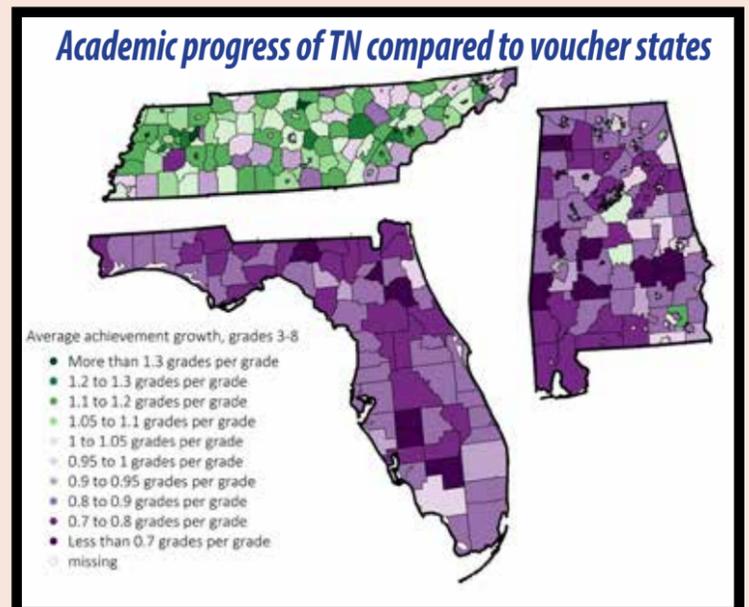
NO 54% **YES 34.5%**

Vouchers damage student achievement

Studies show that vouchers lower student test scores, especially in math.

Major academic studies of voucher programs in Indiana, Ohio and Louisiana all showed students who took taxpayer funding to attend private schools had significant drop-off in academic achievement compared to public school students.

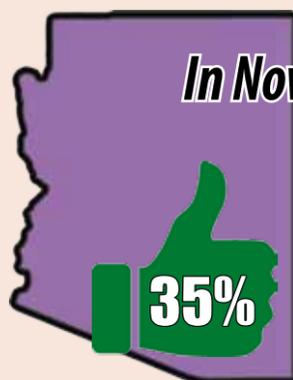
The Ohio study, sponsored by the pro-voucher Walton Family Foundation and conducted by the Fordham Institute, showed negative impacts of using a private school vouchers persisted three years into the program.



States are plagued with fraud and abuse

Arizona was the first state with ESAs. An October 2018 Arizona Auditor General report found more than \$700,000 in fraudulent purchases using public money in the school-voucher program. State officials have recouped almost none of that money.

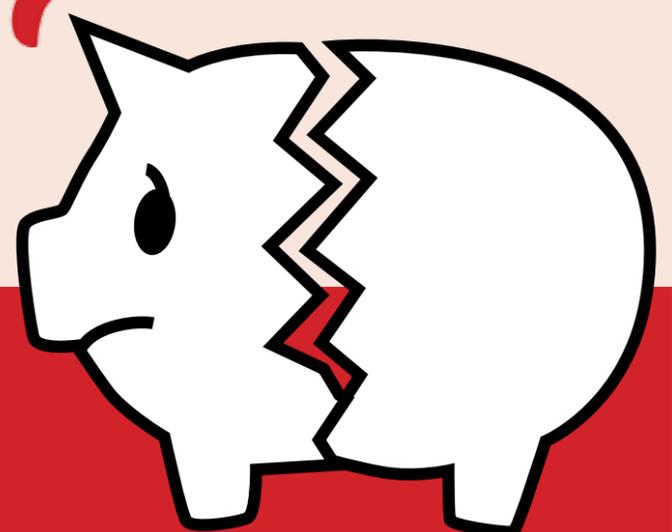
Arizona has been plagued with fraud and abuse for years. Some parents diverted scholarship money into a 529 college-savings account and then leave the state preventing the state from recouping funds. Other parents pocket taxpayer money and kids back to public schools. The state Attorney General launched a investigation into ESA funds that were used to pay for an abortion.



In November 2018, Arizona voters rejected ESAs 2-to-1



Arizona was the first state to pass ESAs in 2014.



FD and WASTE

SAVE the DATE

TEA Civication

Tuesday of Spring Break

Stand up for public education!

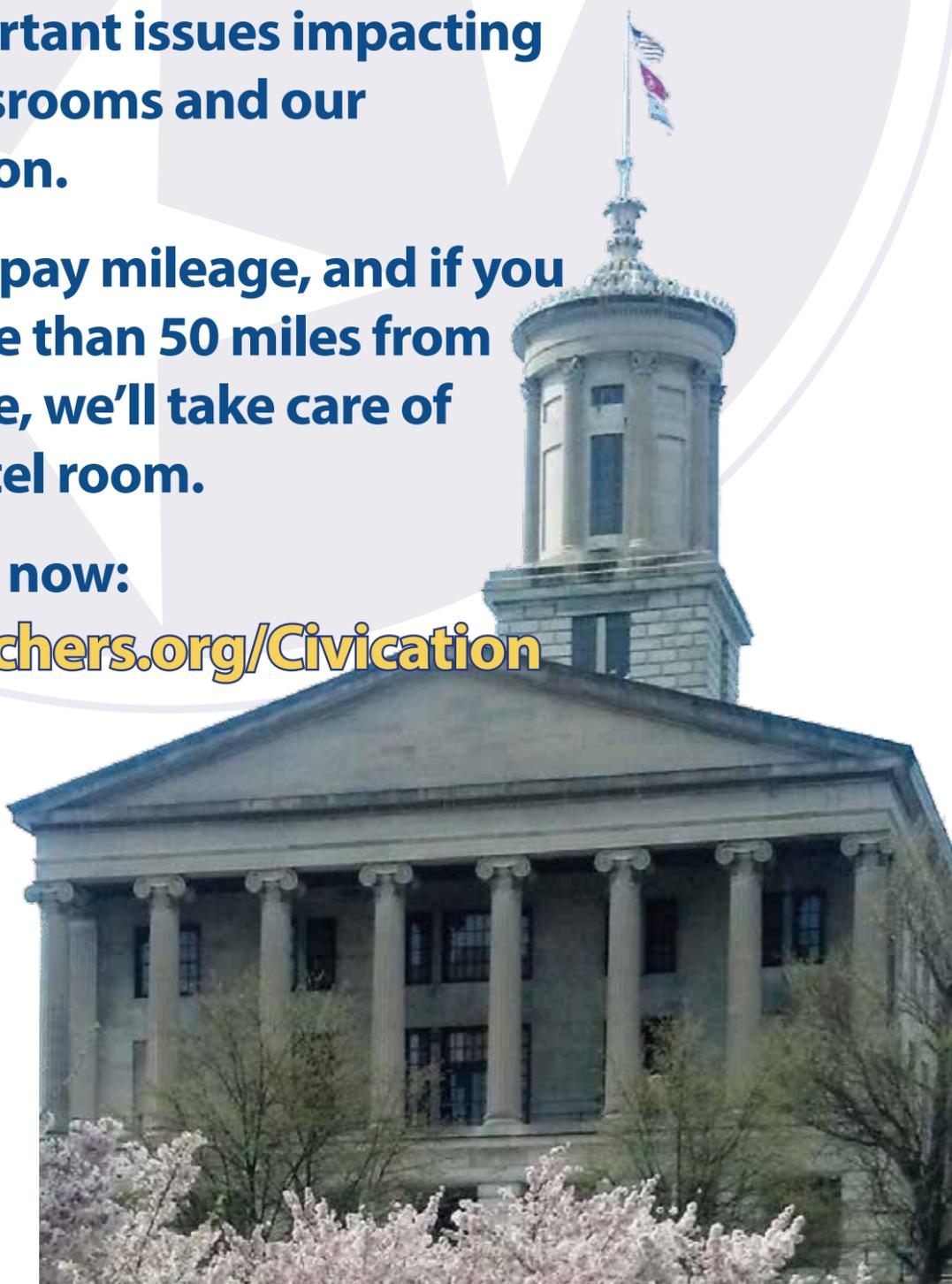
Join educators from across the state in participating in TEA's Civication on the Tuesday of your Spring Break.

Hearing directly from educators in their districts can make the difference in how legislators vote on important issues impacting our classrooms and our profession.

TEA will pay mileage, and if you live more than 50 miles from Nashville, we'll take care of your hotel room.

Register now:

TEAteachers.org/Civication



Contact TEA

Tennessee Education Association
801 Second Avenue N., Nashville, TN 37201-1099
(615) 242-8392, (800) 342-8367
FAX (615) 259-4581

UniServ Coordinators

District 1 — Harry Farthing, P.O. Box 298, Elizabethton, TN 37644; phone: (423)262-8035, fax: (866)379-0949; Assns: Bristol, Carter Co., Elizabethton, Johnson Co., Hancock Co., Hawkins Co., Kingsport, Northeast State Community College, Rogersville, Sullivan Co. **District 2** — Jennifer Gaby, P.O. Box 70, Afton, TN 37616; (423)234-0700, fax: (855)299-0723; Assns: Cocke Co., Greene Co., East Tennessee State University, Greeneville, Hamblen Co., Johnson City, Newport, Unicoi Co., Washington Co. **District 3** — Tina Parlier, P.O. Box 70288, Knoxville, TN 37938-0288, (865)688-1175, fax: (866)518-3104; Assns: Campbell Co., Claiborne Co., Grainger Co., Jefferson Co., Sevier Co., Union Co., Walters

State Community College. **District 4** — Jason White, KCEA, 2411 Magnolia Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917; (865)522-9793, fax: (865)522-9866; Assns: Knox, Pellissippi State Comm. College, UT-Knoxville, TSD. **District 5** — Tom Hopkins, P.O. Box 5502, Oak Ridge, TN 37831; (423)416-7330, fax: (855)301-8366; Assns: Alcoa, Anderson Co., Blount Co., Clinton, Etowah, Maryville, McMinn Co. (except Athens City - see District 7), Monroe Co., Oak Ridge, Polk Co., Sweetwater. **District 6** — Shannon Bain, P.O. Box 3452, Lebanon, TN 37088, phone: (615)547-7769, fax: (844)274-0765; Assns: Cannon Co., Cumberland Co., Cumberland University, DeKalb Co., Lebanon, Putnam Co., Van Buren Co., Warren Co., Wilson Co., White Co., TTU. **District 7** — Theresa Turner, HCEA 4655 Shallowford Road, Chattanooga, TN 37411; (423)485-9535, fax: (423)485-9512; Assns: Athens City, Bradley Co., Chattanooga State Community College, Cleveland, Hamilton Co., UT-Chattanooga. **District 8** — Josh Trent, P.O. Box 451, Livingston, TN 38570, (931)279-9530, fax: (855)299-5674; Assns: Fentress Co., Lenior

City, Loudon Co., Meigs Co., Morgan Co., Oneida, Overton Co., Rhea-Dayton Co., Roane Co., Scott Co., York Institute. **District 9** — Jackie Pope, 2326 Valley Grove Dr., Murfreesboro, TN 37128; phone: (615)898-1060, fax: (855) 301-8214, Assns: Bedford Co., Bledsoe Co., Coffee Co., Franklin Co., Grundy Co., Manchester, Marion Co., Moore Co., Motlow State Community College, Sequatchie Co., Tullahoma. **District 10** — Jeff Garrett, P.O. Box 1326, Lebanon, TN 37088-1326; (615)630-2605, fax (855)320-8755; Assns: Clay Co., Jackson Co., Macon Co., Pickett Co., Robertson Co., Smith Co., Sumner Co., Trousdale Co. **District 11/13** — Antoinette Lee, P.O. Box 1412, Antioch, TN 37013; (615)308-5293, fax: (888)519-7331; Assns: FSSD, Williamson, TN Dept. of Ed. **District 12** — Sue Ogg, P.O. Box 210486, Nashville, TN 37211-0486; (615)856-0503, fax: (855)427-6660 — Assns: Fayetteville City, Giles Co., Lawrence Co., Lincoln Co., Marshall Co., Maury Co., Wayne Co. **District 11/13** — Leigh Phillips, Rhonda Jett, Metro Nashville, 531 Fairground Court, Nashville, TN 37211; (615) 866-8689 (Phillips); (615)476-3161

(Jett), fax: (855)299-5837 (Jett); Assns: Dept. of Higher Ed., Metropolitan Nashville, TN School For The Blind, MTSU, Murfreesboro City, NSCC, Rutherford, TSU. **District 14** — Maria Uffelman, P.O. Box 99, Cumberland City, TN 37050; phone: (931)827-3333, fax: (855)299-4925; Assns: Austin Peay State University, Clarksville-Montgomery Co., Henry Co., Houston Co., Paris, Stewart Co., Weakley Co., UT-Martin. **District 15** — Karla Carpenter, phone: (901)590-2543; Assns: Benton Co., Central, Cheatham Co., Clarksburg, Decatur Co., Dickson Co., Hickman Co., Humphreys Co., Huntingdon, Lewis Co., McKenzie, Perry Co., West Carroll. **District 16** — Lorrie Butler, P.O. Box 387, Henderson, TN 38340; (731)989-4860, fax: (855)299-4591; Assns: Chester Co., Jackson-Madison Co., Jackson State Community College, Hardin Co., Henderson Co., Lexington, McNairy Co., West Tennessee School for the Deaf. **District 17** — Terri Jones, P.O. Box 2140, Cordova, TN 38088; (901)258-3902, fax: (844)270-8083; Assns: Bradford, Crockett Co., Dyer Co., Dyersburg, Dyersburg State Community College, Gibson Co.,

Hardeman Co., Haywood Co., Humboldt, Lake Co., Lauderdale Co., Milan, Obion Co., Tipton Co., Trenton, Union City. **District 18/19** — Keyth Harrison, Memphis, TN; (901)305-2467, fax: (855)320-8737; — Assns: Bartlett, Collierville, Fayette Co., Germantown-Arlington-Lakeland, Millington, Southwest State Community College, University of Memphis. **District 18/19** — Karla Carpenter, UniServ Field Manager; UniServ Directors: Reginald Fentress, Tom Marchand, 6520 Stage Road, Bartlett, TN 38134; phone/fax (901)379-6939; United Education Association of Shelby County, www.unitedshelby.org.

www.teateachers.org
www.nea.org

Lee's early initiatives demonstrate emphasis on CTE and STEM



CTE program
from page 1

GIVE initiative is a two-pronged approach that utilizes regional partnerships to develop work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities. The program will give communities the funding and flexibility to build programs that best reflect local needs and work directly with private industry to structure programming.

"As a high school teacher in a rural county, I've seen for myself how important it is for students to have access to a strong CTE program," said TEA President Beth Brown. "We have strong, vibrant communities all across this state that depend on skilled workers. Gov. Lee's initiative will show students that there are good paying jobs right there in their communities that do not require going into debt for

a college degree or moving to a metro area."

In addition to the GIVE initiative, Gov. Lee also recently announced the Future Workforce Initiative targeting STEM programs statewide.

"The Future Workforce Initiative is a direct response to the emerging technology industry and making sure our students are first in line to be qualified for technology jobs," Lee said in a media statement.

The Future Workforce Initiative aims to put Tennessee in the top 25 states for job creation in the technology sector by 2022, according to the governor's office.

"By introducing CTE and STEM initiatives as complimentary programs, Gov. Lee is demonstrating an understanding that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach that works for every Tennessee student," Brown said. "Our students and communities are unique. It is important that students can explore all of the opportunities available to them for what comes next following graduation."

TEA supports the governor's initiatives around CTE and STEM programs, but believes there must also be a change to the role standardized tests play in measuring student achievement before students can fully take advantage.

Students need time to explore and master the skills offered in these programs. Under the current system, however, valuable classroom time is lost to mastering test-taking skills instead.

Lawmakers to take up community schools proposal this week

Nearly one hundred parents, teachers, administrators, and other advocates for community schools participated in the Tennessee Community Schools State Network Day on the Hill last week. TEA is a founding member of the coalition, whose goal is to raise awareness about community schools work happening in the state and to promote policies that support it.

"TEA knows that community schools are an evidence-based approach to school improvement that is not top-down or punitive, and that meet kids where they are and removes barriers to learning," said TEA President Beth Brown. "We are proud to be part of the coalition and will continue to advocate for support of this important work."



Bill sponsor and TEA member Rep. Kirk Haston (R-Lobelville)

The coalition is supporting HB1330/SB1058 (Haston/Dickerson), which was introduced in response to a report about community schools released last fall by the Comptroller's education research office. The report cited national research showing the method had promise, but that Tennessee state law needed to more specifically define success to determine whether or not initiatives are achieving their goals.

"We know that you have to prove the model before asking for money from the state, and this bill is a step toward doing just that," Brown said. "We know there is great work happening in Tennessee that's making a real difference in the lives of our students, and hope the legislature can help lift it up."



Community schools advocates participated in a Day on the Hill on Tuesday, Feb. 18. Advocates pictured above with Rep. Jason Potts (D-Nashville). Photo courtesy of Community Achieves.



Use your educator voice to fight for public education!

Face-to-face advocacy makes a difference

It is not a coincidence that private school vouchers have been defeated for as many years as TEA has been hosting Civication. Meeting face-to-face with elected officials works. Legislators seeing committee rooms packed with #RedforEd educators giving up a day of their Spring Break is powerful.

Educators who are working with students every day are the people legislators need to hear from. Your perspective on how the votes taken in Nashville directly contribute to, or impede, student learning is the most valuable form of advocacy.

There are several big fights happening this session. We need as many educators and other public education advocates packing the halls and committee rooms of the legislature every single week of Civication.

If you have not already done so, please visit TEAteachers.org/Civication to register for the Tuesday of your Spring Break. TEA covers your mileage, and if you live more than 50 miles from Nashville, we will take care of your hotel room, too.



Advocate from your couch

Being a strong and effective advocate for your students and your profession does not require a drive to Nashville. There are plenty of important actions you can take right from your own couch.

First, make sure you are plugged in with TEA on social media (see icons bottom left) and that you are receiving emails from TEA with legislative updates. Social media and email alerts are the first places you will learn of important calls to action. Email asmirnov@tnea.org if you are not receiving TEA emails.

Second, don't just follow along - join in the conversation online! Participate in #RedforEd days and share with your friends and family why they should join you in our 20/20 Vision campaign.

Third, send emails and make phone calls to your legislators regularly. Hearing from their educators back home is the best way to earn legislators' support on the issues that impact our classrooms.

Last, write a letter to the editor for your local paper and/or a Member Voices column for this publication. You are the expert on what our students need to succeed. Email achaney@tnea.org to submit a Member Voices column and for assistance with letters to the editor.



Testing survey from page 1

Educators across the state overwhelmingly support dramatic changes to the testing regime.

A recent TEA survey showed teachers in all grades support scrapping TNReady and replacing it with a nationally recognized assessment system.

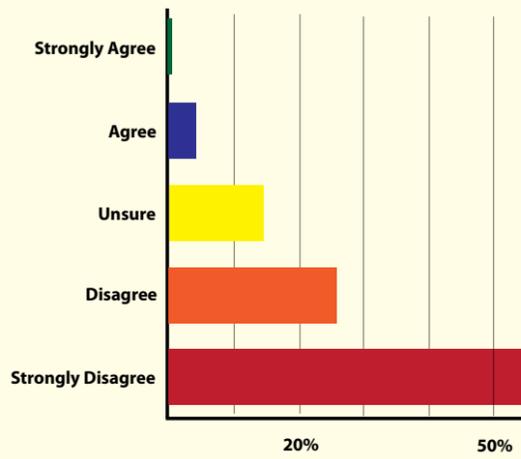
When asked if they had a choice in state testing systems for end-of-course exams in their subject area, 87 percent of high school teachers said they would choose the ACT suite of assessments. Eighty-three percent of high school teachers rejected the notion that TNReady accurately measures student knowledge and Tennessee standards.

The same sentiment prevails across all grade levels, according to the survey, which went viral on social media and garnered almost 5,000 responses in five days.

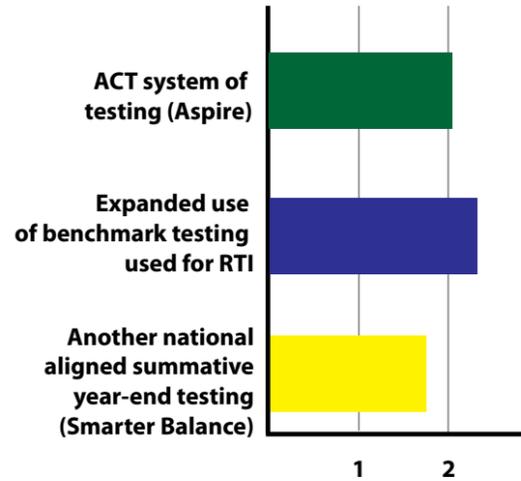
Ninety-eight percent of Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers want to eliminate the current portfolio system or make fundamental changes with better teacher input. Among middle school teachers, most would like to see expanded use of benchmark testing used for RTI, followed by ACT.

“We are tired of the failed test telling us we are failing. Please stop the madness!” said one of more than 1,600 teachers who chose to comment at the end of the survey.

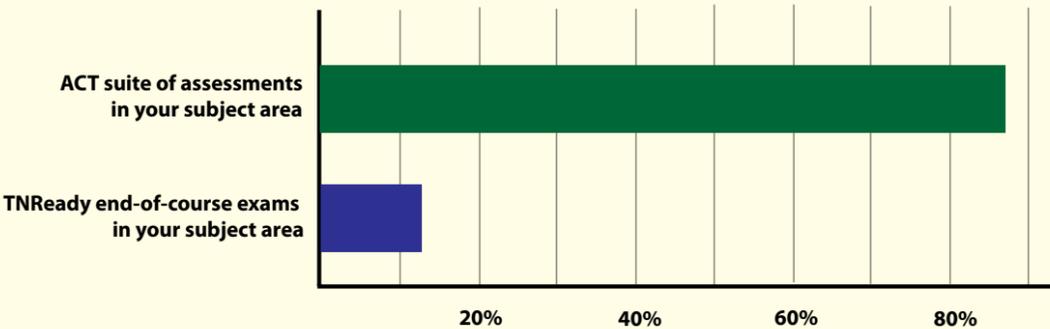
Pre-K and K teachers were asked to evaluate the statement, “The portfolio system accurately measures student knowledge and state standards.”



Teachers in grades 3-8 were instructed, “Please choose in order of your preference, which statewide assessment you would prefer?”



High school teachers were asked, “If you had a choice in state testing systems for end-of-course exams in your subject area, which would you choose?”



Legislators considering proposal to create adverse childhood experiences screening

Newly elected state Senator Katrina Robinson (D-Memphis) is making an effort to ensure Tennessee students are screened for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) before they are suspended, expelled or sent to alternative school.

Co-sponsored in the House by Rep. Harold Love Jr. (D-Nashville), SB170/HB405 would require boards of education across the state to conduct adverse childhood experience (ACE) assessments before suspending, expelling or requiring a student to attend alternative school. The policy would provide guidance on who will administer the assessment within a school, according to the bill.

“We support every effort to ensure a proper ACE assessment is considered before suspending or expelling a student,” said TEA President Beth Brown. “As educators, we want to make sure our students get all the help and support they need. This legislation would certainly improve their chances of getting the best education

possible.”

SB170 would require the results of any ACE assessment to be included in any report made to explain the reason for a student’s suspension, expulsion, in-school suspension or transfer to alternative school.



Sen. Katrina Robinson (D-Memphis) is the sponsor of the ACE bill.

It also provides for an ACE training program within school districts, which “may include information on administering ACE assessments before certain disciplinary actions are taken.”

SB64/HB402, also filed by Robinson and co-sponsored in the House by Rep. Rick Staples (D-Knoxville), would require each local board of education to adopt a policy

requiring all K-12 teachers, principals and assistant principals to participate in ACE training.

If passed, the bill would make mandatory ACEs training on an annual basis, before the first day of instruction, and would require districts to use either their own training program or one developed by the state Department of Education.

TEA Bill Tracker The ones to watch

Be sure to check back in future issues for updates on important legislation to watch in 2019.

The Good:

HB66/SB373 (Moon/Swann)

Reduces weight of student achievement from 30% to 15% in teacher evaluations. Allows teacher to choose whether TVAAS growth or qualitative observation make up difference if in an untested subject.

HB20/SB337 (Reedy/Gresham)

Requires the LEA to pay for the cost of background check investigations for LEA employees in certain cases.

HB1330/SB1058 (Haston/Dickerson)

Aligns TN community schools law with current research and seeks to raise awareness of funding sources to support initiatives and share best practices in the future.

HB866/SB63 (DeBerry/Robinson)

Expands career and technical education programs to middle school grades.

HB215/SB259 (Clemmons/Kyle)

Requires placement of bleeding control kits in every TN public school and requires the department to develop training for school staff on their use.

The Bad:

HB18/SB38 (Reedy/Gresham)

Expands eligibility for the special ed voucher program to include homeschool and private school students who’ve not attended a TN public school.

HB564/SB482 (Dunn/Gardenhire)

Removes ability of a school system to set a threshold on the number of employees needed to request access to a payroll deduction slot.

HB1143/SB1397 (Ragan/Bell)

Eliminates payroll deductions for anything other than benefits or certain charitable contributions. Eliminates local authority to decide whether or not to permit access.

A note on HB70/SB20 (Powers/Gresham):

An earlier publication referenced a position of opposition to this bill, which extends the repeal of the Tennessee Virtual Education Act by four years to 2023. TEA has grave concerns about the continued operation of the Tennessee Virtual Academy, which is among the poorest performing schools in the state by nearly any measure. However, TEA supports certain district-led distance learning initiatives, which also operate under this law. The organization’s position on this legislation has thus been modified to Deferred or Neutral.

More updates:

If you are interested in receiving more frequent updates via email about action taken in the General Assembly, please email asmirnov@tnea.org. The frequency of the email updates varies depending on actions taken by the legislature.