

TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE

LEGISLATIVE REPORT | March 25, 2019 | VOLUME 5, ISSUE 5



**Privatization
machine
poster**
pgs. 4-5



PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

Stopping radical charter expansion

The fight against vouchers

A bill to increase state power to open charter schools across Tennessee hit fierce opposition over the past weeks. The Lee administration made concessions, but there are still concerns.

HB940/SB796 creates a new state charter bureaucracy that can authorize charters in any school system, over the objections of local boards, and whose decisions are final and not subject to appeal. These state-run charter schools take all state and local BEP dollars, along with all local public school tax dollars above the BEP, including

Charter expansion
cont. on page 7

Vouchers and radical charter school expansion have hurt public education in other states. We are now engaged in the fight to prevent that from happening in Tennessee.

“There is a reason why our state hasn’t gone down the privatization road like so many others, and it is because our association fights and wins,” said TEA President Beth Brown. “We fight in elections, we fight for public opinion, and we fight in the halls and offices of the legislature. The next weeks are critical for members to be active and vocal to beat bad legislation. We must fight and win for

Voucher threat
cont. on page 7

TEA, legislators continue to push to see TNReady test questions

A TEA-backed bill to allow parents and educators to see a percentage of the questions from TNReady tests passed the legislature in 2016. To date, only a trickle of questions has been released.

While the move was once backed by the State Department of Education, it appears that it may be having a change of heart on test transparency.

In a recent committee hearing, department officials presented cost estimates for complying with test transparency as required by state law. When questioned by lawmakers, department officials were noncommittal

about following through with releasing TNReady questions.

“When passed three years ago, test transparency had widespread support not only among educators and parents, but with the legislature, too,” said TEA President Beth Brown. “Between the high-stakes decisions the state has tied to these tests and the continuous failures of the test,

Test transparency
cont. on page 7

Transparency

TEA monitoring State Board actions on licensure

TEA has been working with the Tennessee State Board of Education to ensure its rules do not make it possible to unfairly revoke teacher licenses.

TEA legal team member John Allen attended a state board rule-making hearing March 11 where he spoke about the issues around teacher licenses. TEA has maintained the position that the goal of state board’s rules must not be to go as far as possible in the direction of taking an educator’s license for any conduct that some might characterize as inappropriate.

“Instead, the goal must be to fully address the specific kinds of

misconduct that make an educator unfit to maintain a license,” Allen said during the hearing.

At issue were several instances when Tennessee teachers’ licenses were threatened for situations which would not cause concern in one district but might be flagged in another. TEA is also working to make sure teachers receive adequate training across the state to address aggressive student behavior.

TEA will present a more comprehensive letter to the state board regarding existing concerns with the rules in the coming weeks.



THE STRONGEST VOICE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS

“Choice” can be a good thing, but not with ESAs, charters

By TEA President Beth Brown



Ernest Agyemang Yeboah, a writer and teacher from Ghana, said, “Don’t just find faults; be the solution to the problems you see!” That’s why TEA isn’t just pointing out the flaws in legislation currently being considered by Tennessee lawmakers: we are offering a better solution.

The education buzzword in the General Assembly this year is “choice,” and more than one bill has been filed under the guise of offering educational choice.

The administration’s proposed charter expansion bill (HB940/SB796) creates a statewide commission that can overturn any local school board’s decision to deny a charter school application. That’s right—charter schools could now open anywhere in the state, regardless of whether a county wants them or not. This is problematic not only because it infringes on local control, but also because opening a charter school does not mean closing a public school. Instead, the public school is drained of desperately-

I’ve heard it said that we should “bloom where [we’re] planted.” Tennesseans have an obligation to make sure that the educational soil is fertile.

needed resources. Finally, a significant percentage of charter schools do not demonstrate improvements in academic achievement, while innovative public schools using similar funding show significant gains for students.

HB939/SB795, the voucher bill (don’t be fooled by the term “education savings account”), is even more flawed. Even if we could ignore the fact that research shows voucher students fall behind their peers when going to private schools or homeschooling (and I can’t ignore it...I’m an English teacher), vouchers just don’t make sense financially. First, ESAs in other states have experienced a significant amount of fraud and abuse of taxpayers’ dollars. Eligibility for the ESA program initially is limited to counties with at least three schools in the bottom 10 percent, but students don’t have to attend a school in the bottom 10 percent. Moreover, families are eligible at 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. That’s right...a two-parent family with two children making more than \$90,000 will get taxpayer funding to subsidize private school tuition. Selling the ESA proposal as a way to save our poor children is completely disingenuous. The estimated cost is more than \$70 million in local dollars after three years of the program. The result? Taxes will increase and/or public schools that serve low-income students will lose critical funding.

Now let’s talk about meaningful, effective choice.

TEA supports HB1330/SB1058, a bill that highlights the positive impact community schools have on student achievement. We know that the lowest-performing schools in the state are almost always the schools with the most concentrated poverty, the highest rates of adverse childhood experiences, and, often, the most student mobility. Only by addressing these issues first can we seek to create a place where students can thrive, and the research shows community schools are a means to do just that. Each community school plan is tailored to meet the unique needs of that student body and the broader community, and since parent and community support are one of the vital pillars of a successful community school, parents have direct input into the creation of a successful academic experience for their children.

I’ve heard it said that we should “bloom where [we’re] planted.” Tennesseans have an obligation to make sure that the educational soil is fertile and that students have the resources they need to do just that.

Choose 20/20 Vision over a recipe for disaster

By TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder

There is a recipe being discussed in the General Assembly that could cause food poisoning for Tennessee’s public schools.

Con Game Cookies

Ingredients:

- High-stakes decisions based on tests that are not statistically reliable
- Lack of funding and other resources
- Radical charter expansion
- Vouchers
- Attacks on TEA by limiting or ending payroll deduction opportunities
- Titles and messages that ignore facts
- An unseemly amount of money from those dedicated to privatizing public education



Preparation process:

Mix the last two ingredients together until the privatization money totally hides the deceptive titles and messages.

Work in the first five ingredients one at a time until:

- high-stakes testing looks like reasonable accountability;
- the lack of funding is not seen as a problem and in fact people swallow other ideas that will cut even more precious resources from public schools;
- vouchers look like a way to “save” under-served students and communities even though research shows these programs have proven to overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy;
- radical charter expansion looks like just another choice for parents and communities when it actually takes away the choice of locally elected school boards to make decisions based on the communities they serve; and
- no one realizes the discontinuation of payroll deduction opportunities for TEA members to deduct dues while allowing deductions for a wide variety of other entities is discriminatory.

Roll the mixture into balls and place on Teflon cookie sheets.

Bake at 350 degrees until they become embedded in Tennessee law.

Before serving, sprinkle the tops of the cookies with deceptive messages and outright lies that look like pretty sprinkles so the food poisoning will destroy public schools as soon as possible.

OR

Read and implement the calls to action in this Advocate. Listen for other messages from your TEA leadership in the coming weeks as we urge all who care about public schools to join in the fight. We must stop the nonsense and instead implement our 20/20 Vision. This vision is the only proposal that will put Tennessee’s public schools on track for a long and healthy life, but it will not be implemented unless we fight now and fight together.

We must stop the nonsense and instead implement our 20/20 Vision. This vision is the only proposal that will put Tennessee’s public schools on track for a long and healthy life.

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UniServ Staff contact information can be found on page 6.



Use your educator voice to
fight for public education!

Keep up the great work!
Hundreds of TEA members have
already met with legislators and
attended committee meetings, but
there is more work to be done!

We need you in Nashville on your
Spring Break for Civication, and
making phone calls to legislators
from back home. Every contact
a legislator has with an educator
matters!

Keep posting your #RedforEd
pics, sharing news stories
from the Hill and encouraging
colleagues to take action, too!



#RedforEd

YOU are the very best lobbyist for public
education. The professional expertise and
real-life stories you share directly with
your legislators make the difference.

ASK TEA

ANSWERS FROM THE EXPERTS AT THE TEA HOTLINE

Q: I have been asked to give the TN Ready test to a student with almost no writing skills. Can I assist him by writing his answers on the test?

A: No, not unless the student is entitled to a scribing accommodation, which would require you to be trained as a scribe before that accommodation could be provided. Providing an accommodation, such as scribing, giving extra time, or reading aloud, in situations where a student is not entitled is a violation of test security protocols. No accommodation should be given unless the teacher administering the test has been notified in writing by the test coordinator, and that written notification should be received well in advance of the test date. If you have questions about providing testing accommodations, contact your association representative or UniServ coordinator for help securing the information you need.

Q: The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between our school board and the professional employees will expire on June 30, 2020. What can we do to ensure a new MOU is in place when it expires?

A: In order for a board to be obligated to engage in collaborative conferencing, which is the process by which an MOU is reached under PECCA, several steps must occur. First, the parties must be authorized to conference, and that authorization can be initiated between October 1 and November 1 by submitting a request to conference supported by evidence that at least 15 percent of professional employees want to conduct conferencing. Upon receipt of that request, a board is required to appoint a special question committee, the charge of which is to conduct a confidential poll. If the poll's results show a majority of eligible professional employees want to engage in conferencing, then the parties can commence conferencing after their respective representatives are appointed. Although initial terms are three (3) years, the law allows for more frequent intervals for subsequent polls and terms, though the parties must include such language in their MOU. With just over a year remaining on your MOU, now is the time to determine whether a poll is needed. If a poll is required, time is of the essence, and your UniServ coordinator along with a host of other TEA staff are available to support your association in laying the foundation to ensure a successor MOU is reached before your current agreement lapses.

Q: I am a first-year teacher convinced my contract will not be renewed. Is there anything I can do?

A: Your district's UniServ coordinator can be a powerful ally in navigating a possible non-renewal. UniServs understand the dynamics of each district, and can guide members through the local politics and policies, which at times can work to avert a non-renewal as easily as participating in a district job fair, or applying for voluntary transfer. Because formal notices of non-renewal are not due for several more weeks, your UniServ can even facilitate a meeting with administrators to help you get a better sense of whether you will be retained. Although the district doesn't have to provide notice now, nothing prevents you from applying for positions now, so don't hesitate to ask your UniServ about other districts or opportunities.

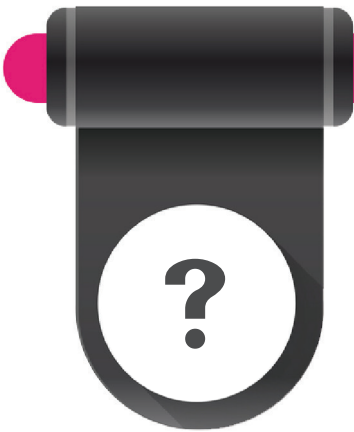


The TEA Advocacy Hotline supports local leaders and building representatives in answering member questions. If you have an employment-related question, please contact your building rep or UniServ coordinator.

THE PRIVATIZATION MACHINE

A look at the inner workings of the multi-billion dollar strategy to

TEA is the **ONLY** organization standing in the way of the privatization machine.



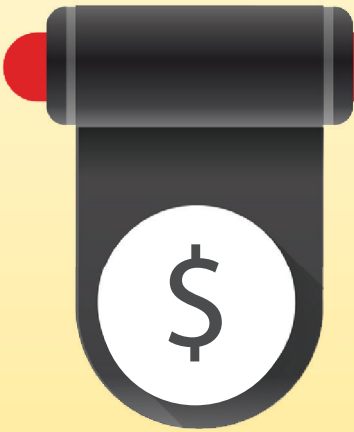
DESTROY TRUST

Most Americans love their local public schools. For this privatization plan to work, Americans' trust in teachers and public education had to be undermined. A new teacher evaluation system based heavily on test scores allowed privatizers to paint teachers as "ineffective." Distrust is sown on issues like curriculum, painting schools as out-of-touch with the values of the communities they serve.



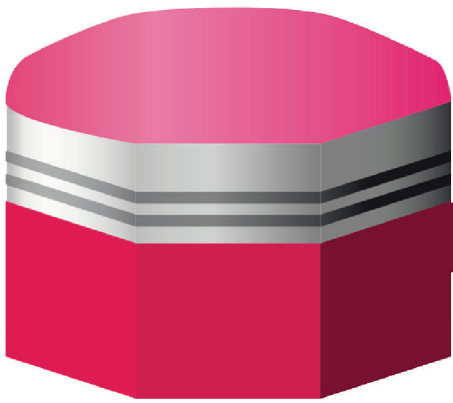
SAY SCHOOLS ARE FAILING

In addition to using flawed standardized tests to label teachers as ineffective, those same tests are used by privatizers to label our schools as "failing." Teachers know that a standardized test is not the best way to measure student achievement, but their voices went unheard as privatizers pushed the nation to evaluate schools based solely on test scores.



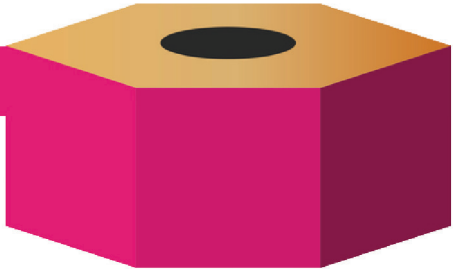
MAKE MONEY

As public schools are unfairly labeled as "failing," privatizers lobby the state to hand its schools over to a number of different charter school operators and implement private school voucher programs. As we are seeing in this administration's proposals, these schemes divert billions of dollars from public schools and into private pockets.



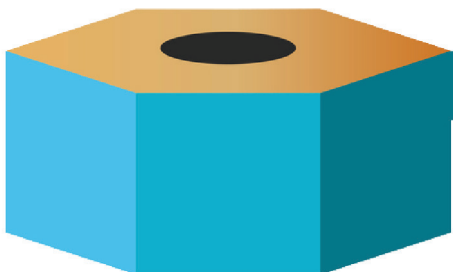
TARGETED BY

Years ago, wealthy investors like the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Gates family, decided they wanted to transform the system of public schools - prioritizing money over education for all children.



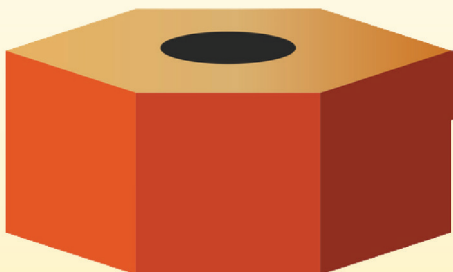
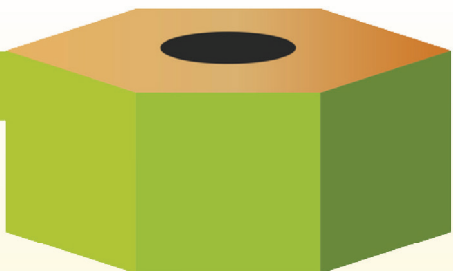
WEAKEN THE

Tennessee educators voted to reject privatizers try to silence the legislature voted to reject rights, privatizer finger legislation. The plan but are more engaged than largest and strongest Now they unsuccessfully deduction year after year



CLOSE PUBLIC

Once unreliable test scores manufactured data pri about the business of s school after another, fi



PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MACHINE

destroy public education

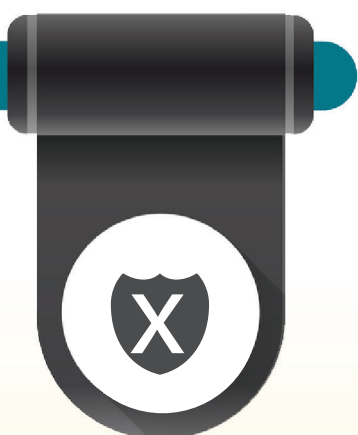
BILLIONAIRES

Investors like the Walton Family Foundation and the DeVos family wanted to turn our nation's schools into a for-profit operation over quality public education



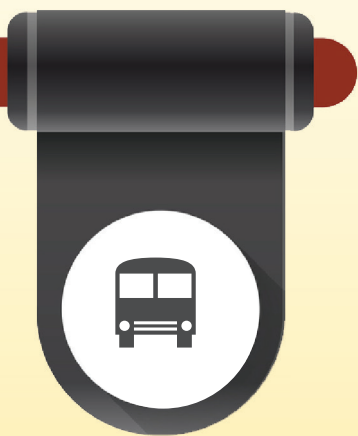
OPPOSITION

Witnessed first-hand how the opposition. When the repeal collective bargaining attempts were all over the place, TEA is the hurdle standing in their way. Teachers are never, and TEA is the hurdle standing in their way. Teachers are never, and TEA is the hurdle standing in their way. Teachers are never, and TEA is the hurdle standing in their way.



SCHOOLS

Schools provide the resources needed, they go through the process of shutting down one "failing" school and opening its staff in the process.



has protected students from
for 6 straight years!

TEA is fighting back, and working to increase our winning streak



Hundreds of TEA members and public education advocates have already flooded the halls of the legislature, with more to come.

TEA's government relations team works tirelessly with legislators to explain the damage ESAs and radical charter expansion would cause.

Legislators receive calls and emails daily from TEA members voicing opposition to bills that undermine the strength of our public schools.

TEA President Beth Brown has appeared in dozens of media interviews explaining the threat of ESAs and radical charter expansion, and the importance of adequately funding public education.

TEA developed an election strategy that is paying off with increased numbers of pro-public education legislators.

PRIVATIZATION IS STOPPED

WHEN WE ALL DO OUR PART

*Some simple actions that
can make a big difference!*



CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

Email

To find your legislators' email, go to capitol.tn.gov. Write to them about what you think!

TEA pass-through calls

On key votes, TEA will send you a pass-through call to connect you with your legislator. Stay on the line, and leave them a powerful message.

USE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Share TEA posts

TEA posts updates and news, be sure to share these posts with your social networks!

Post on your own

Don't assume friends and family know about the attacks on public education. Tell them what is going on.

RAISE THE AWARENESS

#RedforEd

Wear red on Wednesday, tell parents why you are doing it, and use the hashtags #TN2020Vision #FundTNSchools

Tell friends and family

Encourage your colleagues, folks at church, and family members to contact their legislators about the threats to your local public schools.

Contact TEA

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FAX (615) 259-4581

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www.teateachers.org
www.nea.org

A move to ACT assessment could restore trust in testing, provide reliable data

Test transparency from page 1

transparency is key to rebuilding trust.”

There is a cost associated with releasing a percentage of test questions each year, because in order to maintain test security, new questions must be created to replace those that have been released. However, the importance and the purpose of releasing a percentage of questions outweigh the financial implications.

“When Commissioner Schwinn assumed her role in January, she sat down with TEA leaders and said ‘testing should not be a black box,’ and shared how test transparency worked in Texas as an example of what we could do here,” said Brown. “She specifically asked us to hold her accountable for including teacher voices. Teachers and parents alike have been very clear on our interest in seeing TNReady test questions. It is past time for the state to follow through with its legal obligation to release test

questions.”

HB1246/SB753 pushes even further than existing law, ultimately requiring the state to release 100 percent of TNReady questions. As introduced, the bill would require the state to release 50 percent of TNReady questions from the 2019-20 test, 75 percent of questions in 2020-21, and then 100 percent of questions from the 2021-22 TNReady assessment.

Another option to resolve the state’s concerns with the expense of releasing test questions would be to switch to the ACT suite of assessments. Doing so would not only make it easier and more affordable to release test questions, but would also implement an assessment system proven to be a better indicator of student achievement.

ACT already has transparency practices in place. It releases a portion of test questions every year and produces test prep materials with questions proven to be appropriately aligned with their actual assessments.

CONFERRING CORNER

More TEA locals across the state are engaging in the PECCA process with local school boards than ever before.

Since the collaborative conferencing law was passed, TEA affiliates have proven that the PECCA process can lead to strong MOUs that can help local funding, secure state dollars for salaries and protect and improve benefits.

In early March, members of the McKenzie Education Association met with the Director of Schools, Lynn Watkins, and school board member Jon Davis to begin the process of collaborative conferencing. McKenzie EA has a long history of advocating on behalf of teachers, and adding

the PECCA process is a great way to strengthen conditions in their district.

“Strong schools depend on good-faith collaboration between teachers and local school boards, and the PECCA process helps achieve better working conditions which equal better student learning conditions,” said TEA President Beth Brown.

McKenzie PECCA team pictured below (left to right): Sherrie Austin, Beckie Smith, Megan Taylor, Tiffany Smith, Lizz Gonzalez, Malissa Anderson, Joanna Turner (MEA President), Kevin Gallimore, Lynn Watkins (Director of Schools), Jon Davis (McKenzie SSD Board member)



Radical charter expansion, ESAs threaten financial stability of all public schools

Charter expansion from page 1

for capital outlay and transportation.

An amended bill narrowly passed the House Education committee on March 20, with more questions raised than answered during the tense hours-long hearing. The Senate Education committee passed the measure the same day.

The original bill allowed charter companies to apply directly to the state, and eliminated critical language that let local school boards consider the negative fiscal impact to public schools of charter schools opening in the district as a reason to deny an application. The amended bill makes charter applicants go to the local board first and reinserted the fiscal impact language. The amended bill still allows the new state charter bureaucracy to ignore the financial damage and open state authorized charters in every school district in Tennessee.

“When a charter school opens, a public school doesn’t close, and costs to the existing system rises per student,” said TEA lobbyist Jim Wrye. “The negative fiscal impact of charters on public schools is well documented, and the idea that an appointed state board can commandeer local education funding over the objection of an elected local school board is simply wrong.”

Currently, if the state board overrules a system with a priority school, it may open one itself. For other systems, the state board commands the local system to authorize the charter, which it has never done.

A new charter bureaucracy will have a financial incentive to open charter schools since it receives 3 percent of all state and local funding for each charter student. The budget of this new charter bureaucracy is estimated to be \$1 million.

One of the many lawmakers voting against the measure was Rep. Mark Cochran, R-Englewood (right), who asked key questions during debate, noting the state board has rarely overruled local education agencies under the current set-up.



Rep. Mark Cochran (R-Englewood)

“My worry [is] the current process seems to have given a lot of deference to local boards of education. My big worry on changing the process in a future commission is that that deference will no longer exist.”

That has been the concern of TEA. The bill has several key steps to go before final passage, including difficult votes in both House and Senate Finance committees. Limiting the ability of this new bureaucracy to ignore the fiscal impact findings, changing the makeup of the board, and altering the appropriation of local dollars by the state are still battleground in the coming weeks.

Voucher threat from page 1

our students and schools.”

The administration’s voucher bill was finally unveiled and passed by only one vote in a House subcommittee organized to hear privatization legislation. HB939/SB795 takes BEP funds and puts them on debit cards for families for private schools, home schooling or other purposes. It is modeled on an Arizona law that has been ripe for fraud and abuse, and is a leading reason why that state is at the bottom for education funding.

While past Tennessee voucher legislation was initially targeted for low income students attending priority schools, the administration’s bill targets upper-income families, up to \$109,000 for a family of five, who live in counties with three or more schools in the bottom 10 percent. Voucher students take only the math and language arts state tests each year, and funds can be put in 529 college savings accounts rather than spent for current education needs.

In a committee room packed with TEA members on Civication, association lobbyist Jim Wrye testified against the bill, outlining research showing voucher students fall behind their public school peers and how funds are easily misused. But his main focus was on the long-term devastating effects on school funding and local taxpayers.

“We have never subsidized private school children with taxpayer dollars. Many high-income families that qualify for these public school dollars do not send their children to public school,” said Wrye, noting that in Arizona 75 percent of families getting vouchers were deemed affluent and zoned for public schools rated high-quality by the

state, while only four percent are used by low-income families zoned for low-performing schools.

“As these children reach kindergarten age they automatically qualify for all BEP dollars for the next 13 years. And since local governments in our cities fund a majority of the BEP, this is a new and unsustainable cost that will starve local schools and cause property tax increases,” Wrye said.

Under the terms of the bill, within 10 years 22,000 voucher children will get BEP dollars. In other states with similar laws, a majority of children getting vouchers (or in this case debit cards) never attended a public school. In current dollars, the new cost to local governments could be more than \$60 million annually.

The governor has put \$25 million one-time funds in the budget to offset the loss of current students who leave public schools. But the program will have recurring costs that will far exceed any one-time appropriations and sap local government’s ability to invest in public schools.

Once voucher programs get established, they always grow. The Arizona legislature expanded its voucher program to all families in the state, but before it could go into effect the law was overturned by referendum last November, trounced by voters 65 percent to 35 percent.

The voucher bill is schedule to go before the full House Education committee on Wednesday.

“We all need to engage our legislators to encourage them to do the right thing and vote no on vouchers,” said Brown. “We’ve beaten them before with united action, and we’ll need to do it again for the future of public education in the state.”

TEA partners with parent, community groups to build support for expanding community schools

TEA is part of a statewide coalition supporting transformational community schools that is asking legislators on House and Senate education committees to support community schools legislation (HB 1330/SB1058) filed by Rep. Kirk Haston (R-Lobelville) and Sen. Steve Dickerson (R-Nashville).

“This legislation will help with the continued improvement and growth around district-level work that supports the community schools framework,” according to the letter from coalition leaders, including TEA President Beth Brown.

Community schools, which turn public schools into hubs for resources that can be used by the school and the community, are a proven model of supporting existing public schools through partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and people living around them. Unlike charter schools, which transfer taxpayer funds to private investors and unaccountable out-of-state management companies, community schools ensure every student has an opportunity to learn and succeed based on local needs determined by the teachers, parents and students in each community – at a fraction of the cost compared to charter schools.

The legislation, which passed unanimously out of the House K-12 subcommittee, seeks to expand the reach of community schools statewide based on the success of such schools already operating across Tennessee.

“Community schools seek to remove barriers to learning so that every student can realize their full potential,” according to the letter. “The bill does not request funding, but seeks to educate systems about using braided funding from multiple sources to support our work within the many initiatives across our state. Our goal is ensuring that every student in Tennessee is surrounded by a community of support, empowering them to stay in



Rep. Haston (left) and Sen. Dickerson are sponsoring legislation to expand community schools statewide, giving districts the flexibility to serve the unique needs of their students.

school and achieve in life.”

Through ongoing TEA-supported work across the state, initiatives like Community Achieves in Nashville, which now serves 22 schools in MNPS, focus on outcomes such as preparation for postsecondary education and career. Those focused efforts saw scholarship funds offered double since 2013 to almost \$16 million. In the 2015-16 school year, there was a 4 percent increase in the number of students scoring at or above the ACT benchmark score of 21.

In 2017-18 the Great Schools Partnership in Knox County saw 544 students receive dental services through their partnership with the Knox County Health Department. They measured a 3.3 percent reading proficiency gap closure between community schools and the rest of the school district.

Communities in Schools Memphis documented 95 percent of CIS students stayed in school, 91 percent of seniors graduated, 79 percent of students met or made progress towards attendance goals and 88 percent of students met or made progress towards academic gains during the 2017-18 school year.

Community schools efforts are making an impact for Tennessee students. The coalition is asking educators to contact legislators to voice their support for the bill.

TEA Bill Tracker

The ones to watch

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.

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.

HB0632/SB0565 (Terry/Bowling)
Bill would permit certain teachers with three consecutive years of an LOE of 4 or 5 to use that score for other years in certain circumstances. Aimed at removing potential barriers to high quality teachers working in low-performing schools.

HB949/SB805 (Lamberth/Johnson)
Governor’s GIVE Act which seeks to expand student access to career and technical education opportunities.

HB946/SB802 (Lamberth/Johnson) Administration bill requiring school systems to submit a report on how they used teacher raise money provided by the state to the department of education and the BEP review committee.

HB653/SB909 (Hawk/Southerland)
Changes BEP funding ratio for school nurses from 1:3,000 students to 1:700. Increasing school nurses was a recommendation of the BEP review committee.

The Bad:

HB939/SB795 (Lamberth/Johnson)
Administration’s voucher bill. Would create tax-payer funded debit cards for parents to use on private school or homeschooling expenses.

HB940/SB796 (Lamberth/Johnson)
Administration’s statewide charter authorizer. Would create a new charter authorizing commission appointed by the governor who could open charters themselves in every school district in the state.

A note on caption bills:

Often there are issues still evolving as the session progresses, but aren’t assigned specific bill numbers until they are ready to run in committee. The finished product is then presented as an amendment to what is called a caption bill, a placeholder bill filed earlier in the session. TEA has its own caption bills, as do privatization groups. Captions make knowing bill numbers for certain ideas impossible, but it’s still very important to call and speak to your legislators about the concepts themselves. The following are a few basic ideas that will very likely become bills this year:

Good ideas and efforts

- ✓ Ensuring teacher raise money reaches paychecks
- ✓ Reducing the emphasis on high-stakes tests
- ✓ Good faith revisions ensuring the PECCA process is strengthened and improved
- ✓ Providing due process to all ESPs
- ✓ Changes to the evaluation of teachers, including the use of the pre-k/kindergarten portfolio

Bad ideas and efforts

- ✗ Any voucher, including ESAs
- ✗ Radical charter expansion absent local school board input or erosion of accountability standards for charter schools
- ✗ Attacks on the association

SLA registration now open: TEAteachers.org/SLA

Emerging Leaders training coming to Summer Leadership

The Tennessee Education Association will offer the Emerging Leaders School in conjunction with the 2019 TEA Summer Leadership Academy to be held June 13-15 at the Embassy Suites Cool Springs, Nashville.

The purpose of the school is to introduce potential leaders to the Association and provide experiences and training to prepare them for future leadership roles in the TEA,

NEA and their local affiliates. The program is also designed to discover leadership talent and help potential leaders become involved in the organization at the local, state, and national levels.

More details are available online at TEAteachers.org and in the upcoming issue of Teach. Applications will be due Friday, April 26.

