

# TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE

LEGISLATIVE REPORT | April 8, 2019 | VOLUME 5, ISSUE 6



Two pull-out  
posters  
pgs. 4-5



## PRIVATIZATION VS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### State charter bill threatens urban, rural and suburban districts

An administration bill to create a state charter commission capable of placing a charter school in any school system continues to generate controversy, and a strong fight from TEA.

The bill has narrowly passed several committees. Republicans and Democrats have voted against the bill and strong bipartisan opposition continues to alter the legislation.

“We know charter schools can be destabilizing to school budgets and finances, and there is no data to show charters do better than public schools,” said TEA President Beth Brown. “The original bill was a statewide hunting license for pro-charter groups.”

**Charter expansion**  
cont. page 7

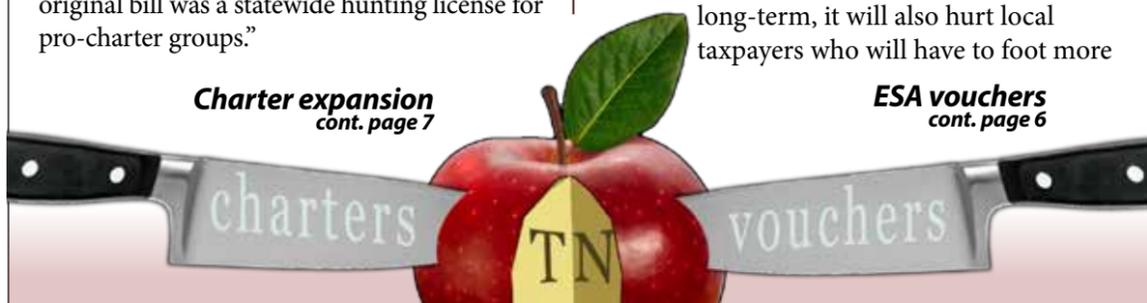
### ESA/voucher bill enters new area of the legislative fight

The administration’s ESA/voucher bill continues to have strong bipartisan opposition and is headed to critical committee vote next week. TEA members are encouraged to stay engaged, and, if possible, come to the capital when the bill goes before the House Finance subcommittee on Wednesday, April 10.

HB939/SB795 continues to struggle and be amended as new objections to the legislation appear.

TEA has made clear how the ESA bill will not only harm public schools in the long-term, it will also hurt local taxpayers who will have to foot more

**ESA vouchers**  
cont. page 6



### Rewrite of portfolio law moving forward

Teachers demand relief from the fundamentally flawed early learning portfolio. Legislation is moving in the House and Senate after powerful advocacy from TEA members.

The proposed amendment allows school systems to choose to keep the portfolio, opt out altogether or adopt an alternate growth measure.

TEA is the lead organization highlighting problems and demanding action on the botched pre-k and kindergarten portfolio implementation. Those efforts and the state’s inaction were on full display

**Portfolio changes**  
cont. page 7

### A renewed push to arm teachers over objections from law enforcement

In the name of “school safety,” legislators are again pushing legislation to arm educators.

Sponsored by Rep. Ryan Williams (R-Cookeville) and Sen. Mike Bell (R-Riceville), HB1380/SB1399 advanced last week in the K-12 subcommittee, in spite of several teachers and law enforcement officers speaking against it.

“Safety is on my mind every day. I don’t believe that allowing people with no additional training in school safety to carry guns would make my school safer,” said Jordan Randolph, a teacher in Murfreesboro.

“I’m very disappointed that a proposal could exist that would force our schools and communities to deal with this.”

Schools are already high-stress environments, and allowing teachers to carry guns would further endanger students and school personnel. TEA has instead backed Gov. Bill Lee’s efforts to fund more school resource officers.

HB1380 is similar to a controversial measure passed in 2016 that allows full-time faculty and other employees of public colleges and universities in Tennessee to carry guns

**School safety**  
cont. page 6

### DeVos crowd tells who we fight

First she tried to defund Special Olympics, and now she is working to defund Tennessee public schools.

On April 1, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos came to Nashville to lend her support to the voucher push in the General Assembly. DeVos is a leading privatization advocate, using her inherited personal fortune to fund the American Federation for Children, an organization active in Tennessee

**DeVos crowd**  
cont. page 6



Having fun with U.S. Sec. Ed. Betsy (Cruella) DeVos. Don't worry, we opposed President Obama's Arne Duncan, too.



**THE STRONGEST VOICE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS**

# We need you! Fuel up and help us finish the session strong!

By TEA President Beth Brown



Between antsy students eager for summer break and the days lost to state testing, the post-Spring Break slog to the finish line can be pretty rough on educators, students and parents. Unfortunately, it is also the time the General Assembly is considering some of the most consequential legislation of the entire session.

I know you are stretched thin, but it is critical that we stay engaged in the fights happening every day in Nashville. Many legislators are under intense pressure to toe the line and go along with priorities set by the administration and party leadership, instead of voting in the

best interest of their constituents back home. These divides are evident as committees take up bills on everything from testing to privatizing public education.

A number of bills are moving through committees to address TNReady issues, including test transparency and reducing the high-stakes impact of test scores. Despite years of testing failures, the administration and the department want to “stay the course” and not make any changes. With their opposition to proposed testing bills, legislators need to hear from you on why these bills are so important.

*The only way we protect our students and public education is to be loud and unrelenting until the session adjourns.*

We must get back to focusing on what is best for students. More time for one-on-one attention and instruction, learning critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as creativity through a well-rounded education will set our children up for academic

success. It is time for some meaningful change in how we measure student achievement and teacher performance, and the bills before the legislature this session will continue to move us in the right direction.

One of the biggest fights remaining is to protect our students and public schools from serious privatization threats. The administration is pushing hard on legislators to pass a radical charter expansion bill that opens up every school district in the state to the threat of unwanted charter schools. In its current form, the bill strips control for locally elected school boards who best understand the needs of their communities and instead hands the authority over to an unaccountable state bureaucracy.

The administration is also playing fast and loose with an education savings account voucher bill. Details of the governor’s ESA bill are constantly changing, but one that remains the same in each amended version is the harm this bill would cause Tennessee students. Vouchers are not proven to increase student achievement, but they have proven in other states to be a wildly irresponsible waste of taxpayer money. Our schools are already underfunded and struggling to provide the resources students need to succeed. The governor’s voucher proposal would further cripple our great public schools across the state.

These proposals put every single LEA in the state in jeopardy. Pilot programs spread. Good intentions fade. TEA, we are the ones standing in the way of these bills becoming law. The only way we protect our students and public education is to be loud and unrelenting until the session adjourns.

Throughout this issue of The Advocate you will find specific actions you can take to advocate for the best interest of students, educators and schools. Grab that extra cup of coffee (or your caffeine of choice!) and join me in the fight for great public schools.

# High-stakes testing hurts the students it claims to protect

By TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder



When the state shifted to evaluating teachers based on students’ standardized test scores, one of our deepest concerns was that this would unfairly force some of our most talented teachers to leave the schools and students who need them most.

By tying something as unreliable as standardized test scores to a teacher’s job security and ability to get a raise, the state has created a situation where teachers are having to choose between their professional livelihood and the students they love. Our students and teachers deserve better than to be put in that predicament.

Research has shown that students in lower income communities are more likely to score poorly on state standardized tests. A combination of bias in test questions and external factors, like coming to school hungry or distracted by issues outside the four walls of the school building, make it more difficult for students in these communities to perform well on tests like TNReady.

TEA has been working for years to chip away at the high-stakes testing system the state has created. We blocked an attempt to tie teacher licensure to TVAAS data, we worked to lower the weight of TVAAS in the overall evaluation and have pushed hold-harmless legislation in the years (and there have been A LOT of them) the state test experienced a serious failure.

As part of TEA’s 20/20 Vision to increase public education funding and end high-stakes decisions tied to state test scores, we are attacking these issues from every angle. HB632/SB565 is an important step toward mitigating some of the damage already done. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Bryan Terry and Sen. Janice Bowling, essentially grants teachers who have scored a 4 or 5 on their overall evaluation for three straight years a waiver from student growth data for the next three years if the data would bring their evaluation score to a 3 or lower.

Though we know evaluations based on TVAAS don’t identify our most effective teachers any better than they identify the lowest performing, the intent of this proposal is to give teachers an opportunity to teach our most vulnerable students without the threat of TVAAS hanging over their heads.

Of course, what this bill also does is acknowledge the harm that the high-stakes testing system is causing in lower income and ethnic minority communities. The fact that this bill is necessary, that teachers need a safety net to take teaching positions in these schools,

*A misguided attempt to label teachers based on test scores, has driven qualified, committed teachers away from the students who need them most.*

demonstrates that with its data-obsessed mindset the state is hurting the very students it claims to be saving. A misguided attempt to label teachers based on test scores has driven qualified, committed teachers away from the students who need them most.

The root of all of this is the deeply flawed system of using test scores in high-stakes decisions. Numerous studies have shown that state standardized test scores are not an effective measure of student achievement, teacher effectiveness or school performance.

I am hopeful that as TEA continues our advocacy efforts around our 20/20 Vision that more legislators will be lining up to sponsor bills to finally put an end to the test-and-punish system that is dragging down our great public schools.

**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@tnea.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 Omarkhal (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: Sylvia Claiborne; 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.



#Redford

**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 was arrested at Bonnaroo last summer, but because no charges were filed, it never occurred to me that I might have had an obligation to report the arrest to my employer. As a teacher do I have an obligation to report, and if so, what should I do?

**A:** Not pursuant to any federal or state law, some districts do have policies that require employees to report arrests. Check your local board policies and MOU, if applicable, to determine whether your district requires reporting. If there is a duty to report, a teacher who fails to do so could be considered insubordinate either for failing to report, or for failing to do so in a timely manner. For support in working through this issue, contact your local association rep or UniServ coordinator. A directory of UniServ staff is located on page 6 of this publication and online at [teateachers.org](http://teateachers.org).

**Q:** As I entered the building today, my principal asked me to meet with her at 1:30 p.m. Not knowing the purpose of the meeting, I did not ask for representation until after the meeting had started, when it became apparent discipline would be imposed. At that point I asked for, but was denied, representation. Did I have a legal right to representation, and if so, what can I do?

**A:** If a teacher reasonably believes that a meeting may result in disciplinary action, that teacher has a right to have an association representative present during that meeting. The teacher must, however, affirmatively assert that right as the employer is under no obligation to advise the teacher of the right or to proactively provide representation. If in the course of a meeting a teacher realizes discipline may be imposed, as was the case in your situation, the teacher has a right at that time to request that an association representative be present through the conclusion of the meeting, but that request for representation must be unequivocal. In situations where there has been a denial of representation, there may be recourse, and contacting your local rep or UniServ coordinator is the best way to explore those options.

**Q:** I was on maternity leave earlier this year, and now I am being asked to claim students for the upcoming TN Ready tests. What should I do?

**A:** Provided a student is present the requisite number of days, state law requires that student's results to be attributed to a specific teacher based on concepts known as "instructional time" and "instructional availability." Due to your leave, however, in addition to considering your students' attendance, you will need specific guidance from your district because the handling of a teacher's leave of absence is a matter of local discretion. If you need claiming assistance, or if you find an error in your claiming after the fact, contact your association rep or UniServ coordinator. And don't forget, claiming-related issues can be grievable under the evaluation policy, so don't hesitate to ask for help immediately if you detect an error or other concerns.



*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.*

# Who decided *THAT?!?*

Making sense of the decision makers influencing your classroom

## Tennessee General Assembly

The state legislature passes laws that guide one or more of the rule-making bodies below in setting education policy. Legislators are our go-to source for correcting implementation problems, like with the kindergarten portfolio mess.

### EXAMPLE:

The General Assembly passes a 4% raise for teachers. Funds are allocated in the budget. This acts as a directive to the other bodies listed below that the legislative intent is for all teachers to receive a 4% raise.

## State Board of Education

The State Board of Education makes rules - not laws - and directs the implementation of laws passed by the legislative body. The board is appointed by the governor and is therefore unaccountable to voters.

### EXAMPLE:

This is where things can start to go wrong. The state board can forgo applying the 4% raise to the salary schedule and instead allow discretion at the local level for how new salary funds are used.

## TN Department of Education

The department implements the policies set by the legislature and state board, and makes the day-to-day decisions that impact all schools (like when to bail on TNReady when systems crash). It can also have a strong hand in swaying legislation.

### EXAMPLE:

The department acts as an extension of the commissioner, providing guidance to districts reflecting the governor's preferences, which included an emphasis on pay-for-test scores with the previous administration.

## Local Board of Education

Local boards of education set budgets, determine pay scales, add locally mandated tests and more. This body works closest with individual schools and is the most in-tune with the unique needs of local communities.

### EXAMPLE:

A local board can take any flexibility granted by the State Board and determine how to use the 4% increase: apply it across the board, use it for one-time bonuses, apply it to increased benefit costs, etc.

*Something going wrong in policy implementation?*

*Back to the top for a legislative fix.*



TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



/TennesseeEA



@TEA\_teachers



/TEA\_teachers

# Advocates needed!

Important fights ahead in final stretch of 2019 legislative session

## THE FIGHT

### ESA VOUCHERS

**HB939/SB795**

The administration's proposal to direct more than \$125 million in taxpayer dollars to fund private schools would harm students and public schools statewide.

Education savings account vouchers are proven to lower student achievement and cripple public school budgets.

Legislators voting in support of any form of vouchers are turning their backs on students, educators and schools back home in favor of Nashville politics.

### CHARTER EXPANSION

**HB940/SB796**

Gov. Bill Lee's charter school bill will create a new state commission with the authority to drop a charter school into any district in the state. Public school budgets in rural, suburban and urban districts would be up for grabs for charter school operators.

Charter schools are not proven to increase student success. They are, however, proven to drain public school budgets of already scarce resources.

### TESTING & EVALUATION

**HB66/SB373 and HB0632/SB0565**

This bill reduces the impact of TVAAS in evaluations, moving us closer to achieving TEA's 20/20 Vision of ending high-stakes decisions tied to TNReady.

**HB1246/SB753**

This bill strengthens test transparency laws requiring the department to release TNReady questions.

## THE ASK

### CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

- Daily calls and emails are crucial as we enter the final weeks of the session. Legislators need to hear from their constituents!
- It's not all bad news! Say thank you to those who are standing with public education and encourage their continued support as tough votes approach.
- Explain how the legislation they are considering will impact the students and educators back home in their communities.

### ENGAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- Use your social media profiles to spread the word that we are in a fight for the future of public education in Tennessee.
- Just as you do with legislators, explain to your social networks how vouchers and radical charter expansion will hurt the students and schools in your community.
- Don't forget to tag your posts with: #TN2020Vision #FundTNSchools #RedforEd #NOvouchers

### ASK FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO JOIN THE FIGHT

- Fighting for public education is not just a TEA issue. Parents, local school boards and faith leaders statewide are standing united for public education.
- Personally ask your family members, friends and colleagues to contact their legislators in opposition to ESA vouchers and radical charter expansion that will impact all counties in the state.



/TennesseeEA



@TEA\_teachers



/TEA\_teachers

# Governor's ESA voucher plan faces widespread opposition, fight rages on to protect students and public schools

## Privatization fight from page 1

than half of the bill for years to come.

The current version of the bill allows any family living in a district with three schools in the bottom 10% to qualify for a BEP debit card of \$7,300 on average. The ESA income ceiling is \$66,950 for a family of four and \$78,442 for a family of five. The median household income in Tennessee is \$51,340. As written, 15,000 students are eligible, at a cost of \$125 million annually in BEP dollars.

Families do not have to be zoned for these bottom scoring schools—children can be attending some of the best performing public schools in the state—and income thresholds are far higher than the state average. The bill is similar to the Arizona program where 75% of families getting an ESA were deemed affluent by the state. The Arizona program is also rife with fraud and abuse.

Once a family qualifies for an ESA, income thresholds no longer apply. Once a child has qualified, it is an entitlement of that child until age 18, regardless if

family income grows. In the first affected counties, the major cities in Tennessee, local taxpayers fund the bulk of the BEP.

“The real threat to local taxpayers and schools is not current students leaving for a voucher entitlement, it is the thousands of students in the future who were always going to a private school,” said TEA lobbyist Jim Wrye. “Taxpayers don’t subsidize these children, and as their numbers grow, so does this new local burden, leading to either education cuts or tax increases.”

What is worse is that once a recipient qualifies for this entitlement, there is no residency requirement to stay in the county whose taxpayers are on the hook.

But the bottom 10 qualification in the bill is a moving target. On any given year 182 schools will be on it, and a TEA analysis shows many rural counties are on or near the ESA threshold.

“This is a loaded gun pointed toward local taxpayers in many counties,” Wrye said.

*Those who care about students and public education are united in this fight. The list of local school boards and/or directors of schools speaking out against vouchers is growing daily.*

Alcoa	Greeneville	Maryville
Arlington	Hamblen	Maury
Bartlett	Hamilton	Metro Nashville
Blount	Henry	Millington
Bradley	Houston	Murfreesboro
Cheatham	Jackson Co.	Oak Ridge
Collierville	Jackson-Madison	Robertson
Fayetteville	Johnson	Rutherford
Franklin Co.	Kingsport	Shelby
Franklin SSD	Knox	Sumner
Germantown	Lakeland	Wilson

## Arming teachers not the answer to school safety question

### School safety from page 1

if they have gun carry permits and have notified campus police or local law enforcement.

“It’s very difficult to keep a weapon concealed. They need to be in retention holsters, which are large, and they need to be attached to a gun belt, which needs to be attached to a uniform and a badge,” Brink Fidler, owner and founder of Defense Systems and a former law enforcement officer, said during his testimony. “In 52 percent of school shootings that occurred between 2000 and 2013, the attack occurred in the hallway or classroom. Can you imagine, under stress, trying to deliver accurate shots with a small concealable firearm? Even police officers that are trained have a hard time doing that.”

Fidler said a carry permit alone would not increase school safety and security. Much more is needed, such as sending teachers to advanced training, more funding for security initiatives and other measures.

“It won’t take long for students to figure out which educators are carrying a gun,” said TEA President Beth Brown. “This would change the entire dynamic and environment inside our schools - and not for the better.”

Last year, a bill proposing to arm teachers met fierce opposition from Tennessee educators and eventually stalled in a legislative committee.

“Arm us with the resources we need to teach our students, not guns,” Brown said.



Picture courtesy Tennessee Journal

## Voucher queen holds court with voucher advocates

### Cruella DeVos from page 1

politics and employing dozens of lobbyists in the state capitol.

Photos of a meeting closed to the media captured an interesting array of voucher advocates, and show what we are up against.

Along with some administration officials and legislators, the Beacon Center, TennesseeCAN, the State Chamber of Commerce, American Federation for Children, Diocese of Nashville, Tennessee Charter School Center, Tennesseans for Student Success, and SCORE were in the private meeting, according to the U.S. DOE.

One person notably absent: State Education Commissioner Penny Schwinn.

Vouchers and radical charter expansion have never showed improved education outcomes. What has been proven in states following the DeVos ideological path is damage to public school funding and student learning.

Tennessee hasn’t followed that path because there are enough Republican and Democratic legislators who love and trust their public schools, an association willing to fight for those schools and support those legislators, and a citizenry who knows a bad idea when they hear one.

### 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., East Tennessee State University, Elizabethton, Johnson City, Johnson Co., Kingsport, Northeast State Community College, Sullivan Co., Washington Co. **District 2 — Jennifer Gaby**, P.O. Box 70, Afton, TN 37616; (423)234-0700, fax: (855)299-0723; Assns: Cocke Co., Greene Co., Greeneville, Hamblen Co., Hancock Co., Hawkins Co., Jefferson Co., Newport, Rogersville, Unicoi 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., Oneida, Scott Co., Sevier

Co., TSD, 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. **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, Maryville, 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., White Co., Wilson Co., TTU. **District 7 — Theresa Turner**, HCEA 4655 Shallowford Road, Chattanooga, TN 37411; (423)485-9535, fax: (423)485-9512; Assns: 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: Athens City, Etowah, Fentress Co., Lenoir City, Loudon Co.,

McMinn Co., Meigs Co., Morgan Co., Overton Co., Rhea-Dayton Co., Roane 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., Fayetteville City, Franklin Co., Grundy Co., Lincoln 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 — Antoinette Lee**, P.O. Box 1412, Antioch, TN 37013; (615)308-5293, fax: (888)519-7331; Assns: FSSD, Marshall Co., 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: Cheatham Co., Dickson Co., Giles Co., Hickman Co., Humphreys Co., Maury Co. **District 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., UT-Martin. **District 15 — Tom Marchand**, PO Box 42218 Memphis, TN 38174; (901)569-8063, fax: (866)483-2514; Assns: Fayette Co., Hardeman Co., Hardin Co., Lawrence Co., Lewis Co., McNairy Co., Perry Co., Wayne Co. **District 16 — Lorrie Butler**, P.O. Box 387, Henderson, TN 38340; (731)989-4860, fax: (855)299-4591; Assns: Benton Co., Central, Chester Co., Clarksburg, Decatur Co., Henderson Co., Huntingdon, Jackson-Madison Co., Jackson State Community College, Lexington, McKenzie, Weakley Co., West Carroll, 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., Haywood Co., Humboldt, Lake Co., Lauderdale Co., Milan, Obion Co., Tipton Co., Trenton, Union City. **District 18 — Keyth Harrison**, Memphis, TN; (901)305-2467, fax: (855)320-8737; — Assns: Bartlett, Collierville, Germantown-Arlington-Lakeland, Millington, Southwest State Community College, University of Memphis. **District 19 — Reginald Fentress**, (901)229-6102, fax: (855)320.8737; United Education Association of Shelby County.

[www.teateachers.org](http://www.teateachers.org)  
[www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org)

## Bill could drop charters in any district, strip funds from local public schools

**Charter expansion**  
from page 1

There have been major changes to the bill since its introduction. The current version has charter organizations first going before a local school board rather than directly to the state, and it reinstated the ability of school systems to cite negative fiscal impacts to public schools as a reason to deny a charter application, something that was intentionally omitted in the first draft. However, this new commission can still decide whether the local system was right to deny a charter due to financial or other concerns and authorize the charter. All decisions are final and without appeal.

The State Board of Education currently hears charter appeals, and has rarely overruled local boards. The State Board can only authorize charters over local objections in school systems with a priority school. A new charter commission can be stacked with charter school proponents, raising concerns that deference to local decisions will cease.

“The idea of an appointed state commission overruling local decisions, with the power to take all state and local BEP funding, all local school funding above the BEP, and capital outlay funds, is wrong,” said Brown. “The lack of guardrails and some sort of neutral oversight could be a huge problem.”

A recent Duke University study found that charter schools had “significant negative fiscal” effects on urban and suburban districts, and “may expand choice for some students while imposing costs on taxpayers and students that remain in district schools.”

Rep. Antonio Parkinson (D-Memphis), whose district already has dozens of charter schools—mainly through the state’s failing Achievement School District—said he opposed the bill and warned his colleagues in committee, “You all are about to get a taste of the charter medicine.”

The bill now goes before the House and Senate finance committees. TEA continues to fight.

## CONFERRING CORNER

It’s spring – a time for renewal – and many locals associations are checking their contracts with school districts to see if they can be renegotiated and improved.

Under the leadership of President Karen Cook, President-Elect Brad Underwood and member Norma Lewis, Cannon County Education Association is headed back to the conferencing table.

Anticipating the expiration of their current MOU in September 2020, CCEA leaders petitioned their school district in 2018 so they could conference in 2019 before their MOU expired.

TEA affiliates from Memphis to

Mountain City are proving that the PECCA process can lead to strong MOUs that can help improve local funding, secure state dollars for salaries and protect and improve benefits.

“We see great examples of members working hard to protect the rights of their colleagues all across Tennessee,” said TEA President Beth Brown. “CCEA is another example of successful teamwork in getting the job done.”

If your local association’s MOU with the school board is set to expire soon or you would like to engage in collaborative conferencing, please contact your local president and TEA UniServ coordinator.



## TNReady failures must be addressed

With the Spring testing window just days away, legislators are considering a number of bills concerning TNReady and its many shortcomings.

“Educators and parents have been jumping up and down for years now trying to draw attention to the many problems we have with the state testing system,” said Beth Brown, TEA president. “The state’s test-and-punish system is essentially a black box that no one can see or fully explain, and it has destroyed the trust of teachers and parents. We can’t see the test, but we know it is going to hurt us and our students.”

Through the consistent advocacy efforts of TEA members, legislators have moved the state in the right direction by reducing the impact of TNReady scores in teacher evaluations and bailing students, teachers and schools out of high-stakes decisions in years that the test completely failed. There is still a lot of ground to cover to reach the association’s 20/20 Vision goal to end all high-stakes decisions tied to TNReady.

One bill still moving through the legislature, HB1246/SB753, addresses test transparency and pushes the state to follow through on releasing TNReady questions. Other testing bills include HB66/SB373, which would reduce the weight of TVAAS in evaluations, and HB0632/SB0565, which would provide cover from negative consequences for teachers who work in schools with lower TNReady scores.

“When we get to a place where the General Assembly is constantly having to go back and pass new laws to protect students, teachers and schools from the state test, we have a serious problem,” Brown said.

Contact your legislators and ask for their support of TEA’s 20/20 Vision to end high-stakes decisions tied to TNReady.

## Powerful member testimony on portfolio issues builds momentum for significant changes

**Portfolio changes**  
from page 1

last week when three teachers and one superintendent showed legislators the depth of the crisis in Tennessee’s pre-k and kindergarten classrooms, and articulated a dire need to fix it.

Several bills are moving through the Tennessee Legislature aimed at fixing the portfolio disaster, ranging from making it optional to eliminating it altogether. TEA supports those efforts and is eager to see the problems addressed before the legislature adjourns for the year.

“So far the only people who have reached out to kindergarten and pre-k teachers is the Tennessee Education Association,” said Natasha Patchen, a Knox Co. teacher who has been at the forefront of sounding the alarm about the portfolio roll-out and implementation. “TEA provided a survey to gather teacher ideas, concerns and input to the portfolio process. The state department of education has not asked for our input.”

Patchen pleaded with the legislators on the Curriculum, Testing and Innovation Subcommittee to “end this fiasco before we spend another tax dollar on this portfolio.”

Teachers across the state responded to the TEA survey in late 2017, providing detailed accounts of the failures of the portfolio system and offering solutions. TEA shared the survey

results with legislators who have made an effort to address problems. A 2019 TEA survey on TNReady showed how far the portfolio crisis had spread, with 98% of pre-k and kindergarten teachers asking to eliminate the current portfolio system or make fundamental changes with better teacher input.

Teacher input was precisely what made the pilot so attractive before the state bureaucracy came in and changed the portfolio system, according to last week’s teacher testimony.

“There are many ways to measure children, but this is not it,” said Candy Arwood, a teacher from Sumner County. “Knox County piloted it with 24 standards and then it morphed to 48. There is no way to go back to the drawing board and fix this mess. You’re dealing with unreliable platforms. Educopia failed and we were told this was going to be glitch-proof. This is not working statewide.”

Arwood said with so many other avenues to test student growth, “in my wildest imagination I do not understand why the state department of education supports this [portfolio system].”

TEA shared clips of the fiery testimony on social media, and it went viral in a matter of hours, reaching tens of thousands of viewers and generating another wave of comments and calls to end the portfolio mess.

“This does not drive my

instruction,” Arwood said. “This is just something I have to check off the list. If you want to see the data that supports what I’m doing in the classroom, I’ll pull the data and we can sit down and look at it, and I can show you where children have gone from a pre-reader to a k-level in guided reading. I can tell you where children couldn’t form a sentence at the beginning of the year, and now they are running full sentences with a strong phonics program. But this [portfolio] is a mandate and busy work for teachers, and there are other options out there, but you have the power to change this for the children.”

“This portfolio is so demanding that to get good scores we focus on portfolio skills instead of making sure our children have the basic, foundational skills our students need,” Patchen said. “The demands of the portfolio have drained the joy for the love of learning in our students.”

“As the portfolio example has demonstrated time and again, TEA members have proven the power of collective advocacy is the only way to impact change in public education,” said TEA President Beth Brown.

TEA will continue monitoring the bills and will provide updates on social media and in future publications.

# TEA strengthening pipeline to move members into leadership roles at local, state, national levels

The strength of the association comes from its foundation of engaged and organized members led by diverse, committed leaders. TEA has created a new program to strengthen the pipeline of members moving into leadership positions at the local, state and national levels.

The purpose of the new Emerging Leaders School is to introduce potential leaders to the association and provide experiences and training to prepare them for future leadership roles in their local association, TEA and NEA.

“The future of public education and our association depend upon the next generation of educators stepping into leadership roles,” said TEA President Beth Brown. “It is important to me that we end this notion of ‘waiting your turn’ to be an association leader. We need leaders with all levels of experience guiding the direction of our association and our profession.”

The school will be held in conjunction with the 2019 TEA Summer Leadership Academy June 13-15 at the Embassy Suites Cool Springs, Nashville. The Emerging Leaders School will begin at 1:00 p.m. on June 13.

The school will be open to all individuals who have been members of the TEA for no more than 10 years and who have not held a local, state, or national office (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, member

of local executive committee, board of directors). The individual must be a newly elected or appointed Association Representative or be willing to commit to serving as an Association Representative, or in some other leadership role, for the 2019-2020 year.

TEA will provide scholarships to selected potential leaders to assist them in paying conference expenses. A registration fee of \$50 will be required for those who are accepted into the school. This fee will be reimbursed if the participant attends and completes the three days of training.

Members who meet the eligibility requirements will be notified they have been selected for this school and will be asked to complete a contract which will clearly describe their responsibilities during and after their training, including their commitment to involvement in the United Education Profession.

The selection process will provide for equitable representation from all membership categories within the TEA. If all other factors are equal, participants will be selected on a first-come, first-serve basis according to the date applications are received at the TEA.

Please direct any questions to Marianne Staley at 1-800-342-8367 or [mstaley@tnea.org](mailto:mstaley@tnea.org).

## 2019 EMERGING LEADERS SCHOOL APPLICATION

This application form should be received by the TEA by 4:30 p.m., Friday, April 26, 2019.

Dr. ( ) Mr. ( ) Mrs. ( ) Ms. ( )

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Association – do not abbreviate: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Active                      ( ) ESP                      ( ) Higher Ed                      ( ) Administrator

Your Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school/work site: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Specifically, for my Association this coming school year, I plan to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have been a TEA member for no more than 10 years and have not held a local, state, or national office (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, member of local executive committees, board of directors). If selected for this training, I definitely plan to attend the Emerging Leaders Training Program and will assume a leadership role upon returning to my local association.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to: Leigh Phillips, UniServ Manager  
Tennessee Education Association  
801 Second Avenue North  
Nashville, TN 37201-1099

The application may also be completed online: [teateachers.org/emerging-leaders-school](http://teateachers.org/emerging-leaders-school).

# TEA Bill Tracker

## The ones to watch

### The Good:

#### 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 provide additional PD credits to teachers who teach in a priority school under certain conditions.

#### 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.

#### HB91/SB442 (Hicks/Bell)

Would provide school systems the ability to opt out of the pre-k/kindergarten portfolio, and use an alternative growth measure.

#### HB993/SB1139 (Moon/Swann)

Would eliminate the pre-k/kindergarten portfolio from teacher evaluations. The sponsors of both bills are working together to determine which bill presents the best path forward.

### The Bad:

#### HB939/SB795 (Lamberth/Johnson)

Administration's voucher bill. Would create tax-payer funded debit cards for parents to use on private school.

#### 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.

#### HB1276/SB1035 (Holt/Gardenhire)

Would prohibit the Tennessee School Boards Association from hiring staff to advocate for public schools in the legislature.

#### HB1380/SB1399 (Williams/Bell)

Would allow any school staff with a concealed carry permit to carry loaded guns into any public school with no additional training required.

### A note on bill numbers:

Please do not let your uncertainty of a bill number deter you from contacting your legislators. It is still critically important to call and speak to your legislators about the concepts they are considering that will impact public education. Knowing a particular bill number is not as important as making sure he or she understands what the issue is and why it matters to students and educators back home.

### 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