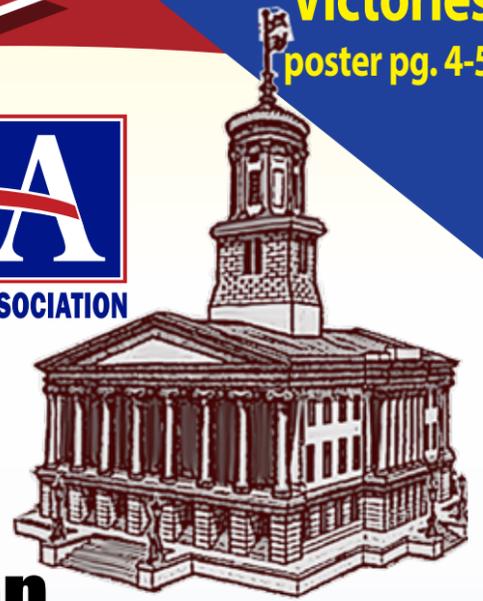


TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE

2018 Legislative
Victories
poster pg. 4-5



LEGISLATIVE REPORT | May 7, 2018 | VOLUME 4, ISSUE 7

Final legislative day's successful push for blanket TNReady protection



Speaker Beth Harwell and Minority Leader Craig Fitzhugh led the House in bipartisan work

"It's not about Republicans or Democrats, it's about educators," said Rep. Matthew Hill (R-Jonesboro) on the Nashville five o'clock news. Hill's statement came during the final battle to remove remaining issues with TNReady data use, and highlighted TEA's political efforts to build pro-public education majorities in the General Assembly.

"We know friends of education are on both sides of the aisle," said TEA lobbyist Jim Wrye. "Watching a remarkable united House push for fairness, and friends in the Senate ready to vote, showed lawmakers not only want to support teachers, they know teachers will support them."

The General Assembly had passed legislation the previous week preventing decisions for teachers on termination and compensation using TNReady scores. Yet there remained potential

negative consequences to teachers stemming from use of the invalid data from this year's test.

Key senators and the administration were content with what had already passed. That is when TEA members sprang into action.

The last week of session saw the senate flooded with member calls telling lawmakers how TNReady failures were impacting their students and classrooms. The Senate held a testing hearing, and the House held a second emergency committee hearing after fielding hundreds of calls and emails. Social media efforts kept up a steady drumbeat of issues and calls for action.

The House heard the teachers' voice.

On the session's last day, the majority House Republican Caucus held an

Hold-harmless
cont. page 7

What is the next step? One word: elections!



The victory of hold-harmless has members and parents asking what the next step is in addressing the problems of TNReady, confusing portfolios, discrepancies in state scores compared to ACT, and a variety of other critical Tennessee education issues. That step is electing people ready to work on solutions.

This will be a watershed election year with a chance to elect a new governor who has tremendous power to change the direction of education. More than one-third of the General Assembly seats are open, and dozens more have competitive primaries. There are friends of education in every race.

Critical elections
cont. page 8

With another failure, time to reassess the assessment system

Hold-harmless legislation is a temporary and superficial solution for a much deeper-rooted problem.

Teachers aren't opposed to tests when used as tools to accurately measure student performance and identify problem areas. Teachers use tests in their classroom all the time. The problem occurs when standardized tests do not accurately measure anything, yet are used to make high-stakes decisions for students, teachers and schools.

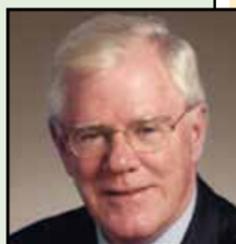
"The root of the problem with Tennessee's testing struggles is not about technology failures," said TEA

Reassessing the assessment
cont. page 6

Driving state dollars to teacher paychecks

New language inserted into the state budget should give local associations leverage to drive state dollars into paychecks. As part of the ongoing TEA pay effort, House Finance chairman Rep. Charles Sargent (R-Franklin) placed the rider into the appropriations bill stating "it is the legislative intent to provide a pool of funds for employee salary increases

Driving dollars into paychecks
cont. page 7



House Finance Ways & Means chairman Rep. Charles Sargent (R-Franklin), led the effort to get state funds into teacher paychecks



THE STRONGEST VOICE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS

Dear State Representatives: Thank you for listening!

By TEA President Barbara Gray



Dear Tennessee State Representatives,

We have been through a lot together during the past two years. We haven't always agreed, but we have accomplished a lot of great things together in the best interest of our students.

This session, though, you stepped up a in big way for all Tennessee students and teachers. When reports started coming in about problems with TNReady on its very first day, you didn't turn to the Department of Education. You came straight to your teachers. Your constituents. You wanted to know directly from us what exactly was happening in our classrooms back home in

your districts.

When the problems persisted the next day, and the day after that, and the day after that, you demanded answers from the state.

You took action - not as Republicans or Democrats, but as a united body that believes in public education.

After years of working together, you understood the stakes were incredibly high for students, teachers and schools. Final report card grades, teacher evaluations and the priority school list hung in the balance. You

understood it wasn't about escaping accountability, this fight was about *fair* accountability. You refused to let an unreliable, can't-get-its-act-together standardized test threaten your children and teachers back home.

You listened. You took our calls, responded to our emails and made time to sit down with us face-to-face to ensure you knew exactly what we needed to be free of the TNReady and TVAAS anvils hanging over us.

You took action - not as Republicans or Democrats, but as a united body that believes in public education and in doing what is right for Tennessee's students and teachers.

We were counting on you, and you came through. We recognize that you took extraordinary steps to protect us and our students from this disaster of a test. You made us proud.

Now that we are free to breathe a sigh of relief for this year, it is time to turn our attention to the future.

Don't cut off the lines of communication you have established with teachers and parents in your district these past few weeks. Instead, use those connections to dig deeper into how these high-stakes tests impact students and teachers every year - not just the years with technical problems.

Student stress and anxiety is at an all-time high. Teacher and parent trust in this testing system is at an all-time low - though it was never very high to begin with.

It is important to have assessments that give us a big-picture look at student achievement statewide. We need that to be able to identify and quickly address those achievement gaps. It is important to evaluate teachers to ensure every student has a qualified, committed educator in each classroom. We must do these things, though, in way that truly measures student and teacher achievement.

On behalf of TEA's tens of thousands of members statewide, I invite you to work with us to identify fair, reliable and accurate ways to ensure our students have the best public education possible.

Sincerely,
Barbara Gray, President
Tennessee Education Association

Time to shift organized action to August elections

By TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder



I view the end of the legislative session the same way I used to view the end of the school year when I was in the classroom. It's a time for relief and celebration, but it's also time for reflection. It is a time to look back to identify the things that went really well and reflect upon the things that you to improve on in the next year - or this case, the next legislative session.

This was an unusual session for the association. Traditional private school vouchers and the usual attacks on the association were dead and buried before the session even started this year. It left us with an opportunity to focus our energy and organized action on other issues. We went into the session prioritizing a number of things, but two that stick out are testing and school funding.

The governor continued to honor his commitment to increase school funding and teacher pay. This year we saw an increase in funding for programs like RTI, seat belts on school buses and school safety measures. We also for the first time were able to insert solid language into the budget to direct districts to apply the 2 percent raise included in the state budget to the local salary schedule, not just the State Minimum Salary Schedule as in years past. This added language, supported by TEA's government relations team, will go a long way toward making sure salary increases actually show up in teacher paychecks.

The testing fight - what do I even say? It was intense. It was fast moving. It was the toughest fight of the session, but it was also one the highlights for me. Seeing our members, leaders and staff from all across the state organize and move into action so quickly was really something special. Senators' voicemails were packed full of authentic, passionate messages from educators back home sharing the real story of what was happening with state testing. Those calls, the hundreds of emails and social media posts, and legislative visits made the difference. That united action is why students, teachers and schools will truly be held harmless from invalid TNReady scores this year.

It's another example of the power that we have as a united force advocating for the great public schools our students and teachers deserve.

Removing high-stakes decisions from state assessments for one year is not the end goal.

It's time now to turn that energy and organized action toward the primary election in August.

Removing high-stakes decisions from state assessments for one year is not the end goal. The fight continues until *all* high-stakes are removed from standardized tests for good. Period. To accomplish that goal, we need to elect true friends of public education to serve in every level of government, from the governor and Tennessee General Assembly, to your local county commissions and school boards.

The end of high-stakes decisions tied to standardized tests is within sight, we can't let up now!

So, catch your breath for a minute and enjoy the wins of this legislative session, but then we all must get back up and set our sights on the primary election. It is on us to get our friends, family members and colleagues to join us in voting for public education candidates.

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Cynthia Wood.

UniServ Staff contact information
can be found on page 6.

110th General Assembly Legislative Roundup

First testing reduction in years, clearing the clutter in 11th grade

A two year moratorium on expanding standardized tests has passed the General Assembly with TEA backing. The passage on the bill has been bolstered by the state's announcement of the elimination two state tests in the 11th grade.

"Testing, and over-testing, has become an issue for parents and teachers," said TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder. "The punishments for students, teachers and schools that come with state standardized testing are gaining awareness throughout the state."

The moratorium plants a strong flag by the legislature that there are limits to testing, and acknowledges issues of age appropriateness of standardized tests in lower grade levels.

"We went through the issues of SAT10 and other instruments in earlier grades. The drive for data and the penalties associated with it were beginning to warp what we needed to do for younger students in teaching and learning," said Crowder. "It's important that we have an honest discussion

on the role and amount of assessments. It is clear the General Assembly will demand to be part of that discussion as well."

The state assessment task force, which has TEA representation, has been reviewing the entire assessment system. One area of agreement was the need to reduce the number of exams in eleventh grade, to allow juniors to concentrate on the ACT. The task force recommended scrapping state end of course exams for English III and Chemistry, and the commissioner announced their decision in an April 9 press release.

Teachers polled across the state overwhelmingly agreed the English III test needed to be eliminated.

McQueen said in the 2019-20 school year the state will prioritize a dual-credit exam so students can earn college credit from that class. The test is still being designed, McQueen said.

The state will also cut 78 minutes from its third- and fourth-grade English language arts tests, the release said.

School bus seat belts gets an appropriation

A \$3 million budget amendment by Gov. Bill Haslam allows school districts to apply for funds to retrofit new school buses with seat belts.

While there is no law requiring lap or shoulder belts on school buses, the newly established fund allows local school districts to make decisions to implement new technology, and is a first step toward having a safer riding experience for Tennessee students.

Rep. Joanne Favors of Chattanooga, who is not seeking re-election, had originally filed legislation requiring seat belts on school buses after the tragic Woodmore

bus crash in 2016 that killed six students. Favors pulled her seat-belt bill during the final session of the 110th General Assembly citing a lack of support among fellow lawmakers.

"TEA supports measures to enhance student safety, and we welcome the governor's budget amendment," said TEA President Barbara Gray. "The experts at the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration say seat belts save lives in both passenger cars and school buses. We encourage local districts to apply for this funding to make their school buses safer for our kids."

ESP due process fight ends, to try again

TEA's continues to work to win back due process rights for Education Support Professionals. The conversation has gained more traction than in years past, proving that our strategy to elect public education-friendly candidates is working.

TEA is the only organization fighting to strengthen on-the-job protections for education support professionals, including restoration of annual contracts and a show-cause hearing for terminations.

"Many of our friends in the General Assembly who were supportive of bringing back due-process rights for ESPs are retiring or not seeking re-election this year," said TEA Vice President Beth Brown. "That's why it is imperative every Education Support Professional to ask their colleagues to join TEA and vote in both the primary and general elections in the coming months. Most races will be decided in the primary, so be sure to register to vote by July 3 and pay attention to TEA's election materials and mailers."

The 2018 ESP Conference, which was held at the TEA headquarters in April, reinforced the commitment of ESP members to more actively lobby our state legislature for due-process rights and other protections.

"As education support professionals, we must stay involved and support candidates who support all educators," said Sandra McDurmon, ESP member in Bartlett and TEA board member. "Had more ESPs been involved when we lost our rights, we might have been able to prevent it."

McDurmon said the 2018 election provides a unique opportunity to organize and strengthen ESP rights in Tennessee.

"In order to win back our rights, we are asking every ESP member in Tennessee to invite their colleague to join TEA and make sure their family members participate in this year's elections," she said.

ASK TEA

ANSWERS FROM THE EXPERTS AT THE TEA HOTLINE

Q: When does a teacher become eligible for tenure?

A: Tennessee state law for tenure eligibility can be found in TCA § 49-5-503 and TCA § 49-5-504. Essentially, a teacher who meets the following requirements must be considered for tenure in a school system:

1. holds a valid Tennessee teaching license
2. has completed a probationary period of five (5) school years or at least forty-five (45) months within the last seven years for which the last two (2) years have not been in an interim position
3. has received an LOE of 4 (above expectations) or 5 (significantly above expectations) during the last two (2) years of the probationary period
4. is re-employed in the school system after the probationary period

Time spent on leave, except state-approved sick leave, shall not count toward the probationary period.

There are exceptions to item 3) above for teachers on an extended approved leave, teachers who have had a change in employment assignment, or teachers whose evaluation data has been invalidated. There are also different guidelines for teachers who have previously attained tenure. Be sure to consult your TEA UniServ Coordinator with further questions.

Q: One of my fellow non-tenured colleagues said today that she expected to receive a notice of non-renewal. Is there a certain date by which the district has to send that notice? And if I don't receive one, does that mean I have a job for next school year?

A: Yes to both questions. State law provides that a notice of non-renewal must be received within five (5) business days following the last instructional day for the school year. As such, after that deadline passes for your district, those probationary, or non-tenured, teachers who have not received such notice can reasonably assume they are reemployed for the following school year.

Q: I am actively interviewing for several positions in two neighboring school districts, but I do not want to jeopardize my current job by resigning before I receive another job offer. If I get an offer, I'd like to start at the beginning of the school year, so how much advanced notice am I required to give my current district before I can start?

A: Pursuant to state law, teachers on a continuing contract are required to give at least 30 days' notice before the effective date of their resignation. The law also requires that teachers hired by other school districts must provide written proof to the new employer that timely notice of resignation was provided to the most recent employer. And, finally, upon receipt of a complaint from a school district that such notice requirements were not satisfied, the law gives the commissioner of education authority to suspend the licenses of those teachers who have breached their contracts, and to assess financial penalties against the districts that knowingly employed such teachers.



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.

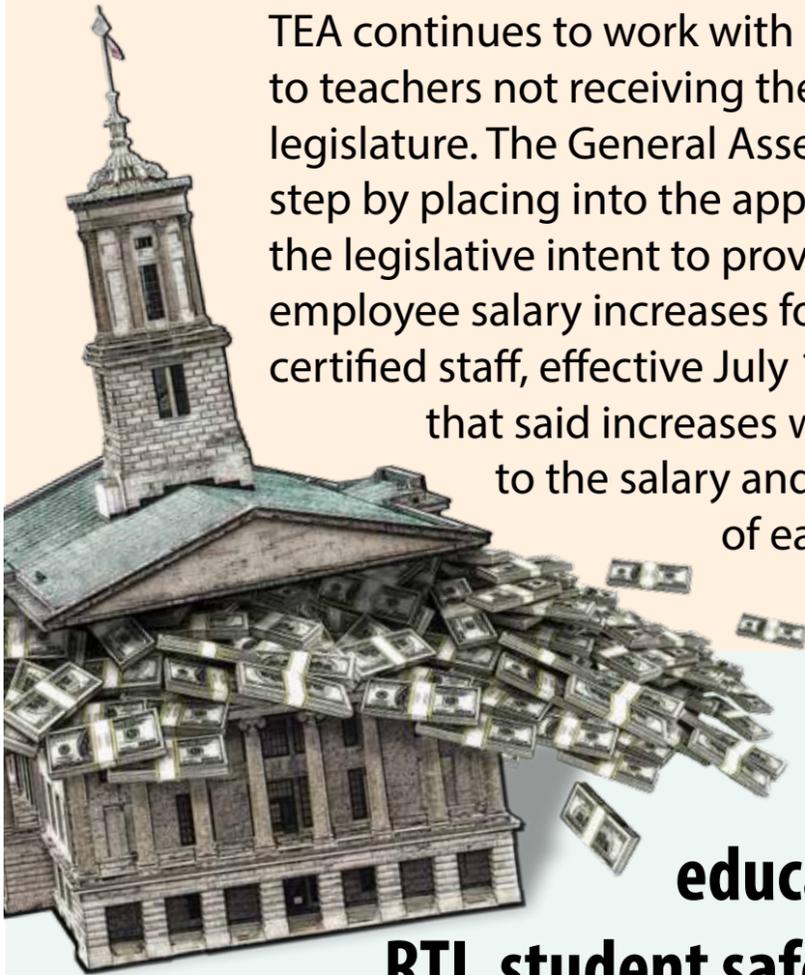
2018 TEA Legislative Victories



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Legislature passes 2% teacher raise, budget language to drive raises into teacher paychecks

TEA continues to work with legislators to find a solution to teachers not receiving the full raises passed by the legislature. The General Assembly took an important step by placing into the appropriations bill: "it is the legislative intent to provide a pool of funds for employee salary increases for teachers and other certified staff, effective July 1, 2018; provided, further, that said increases will be allocated according to the salary and compensation schedules of each Local Education Agency."



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State increases public education funding, including RTI, student safety and teacher benefits

The 2018-19 has a more the \$240 million increase for K-12 funding. The funds will be used for a number of things, including RTI, school bus seat belts, school safety measures and enrollment increases. The increase will also cover investments in teacher benefits and retirement. The increased funding for RTI begins to address educators' concerns that the program has been consistently under-staffed and under-resourced. The approved 2 percent salary increase for teachers will also come from these funds.

Legislators re expand ineffe special ed vou

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ts, teachers and schools to be harmless from failed TNReady

ady troubles piled up just as the General Assembly was preparing to adjourn for the year, hundreds of TEA members and public education professionals stood united in demanding students, teachers and schools be held-harmless from low scores and the resulting TVAAS scores. The legislature heard the message loud and clear and passed two different pieces of legislation to ensure no adverse actions could be taken as a result of scores from the unreliable and invalid TNReady test. The legislation covers not only students in kindergarten through third grade, but also state takeovers of local schools, but also teacher compensation, layoffs and other punitive measures tied to these scores.

ty by off-duty officers passes, alternative to arming teachers

Following the tragedy in Parkland, Fla., school safety quickly became the hot topic in the legislature. TEA was able to work closely with legislators to defeat a bill that would have allowed districts to arm certain teachers, and instead, pass legislation to increase funding for off-duty law enforcement in schools.

The key now will be for districts to take advantage of the additional funding and increase professional security in the classroom to better protect students and educators. The hope is that if this is not fully implemented at the local level, some legislators will be back again next year with a stronger push to arm teachers.

ject proposal to reauthorize, unpopular voucher program

ve massively expanded the voucher program was defeated. If it had passed, it would have dramatically expanded the use of private education professionals across the state in an attempt to undermine the gains of public education and have posed a risk to students.



State directed to re-evaluate Kindergarten/Pre-K portfolio with teacher input, 2017-18 hold-harmless protects teachers

Knoxville legislators Sen. Becky Massey (Pictured above with TEA member Natasha Patchen) and Rep. Eddie Smith took action when TEA shared the serious concerns of Knox Co. Kindergarten and Pre-K teachers over the new portfolio system and clustered standards. Knox Co. teachers were shocked and disappointed to see the pilot program they largely supported drastically changed when it was implemented statewide.

Legislation passed to hold Kindergarten and Pre-K teachers harmless this year also directs the state to re-evaluate its changes to the piloted program and gather meaningful feedback from educators statewide to determine the best way to move forward.

This fight will serve as a model to make positive changes to portfolio systems in other

grades and subject areas.



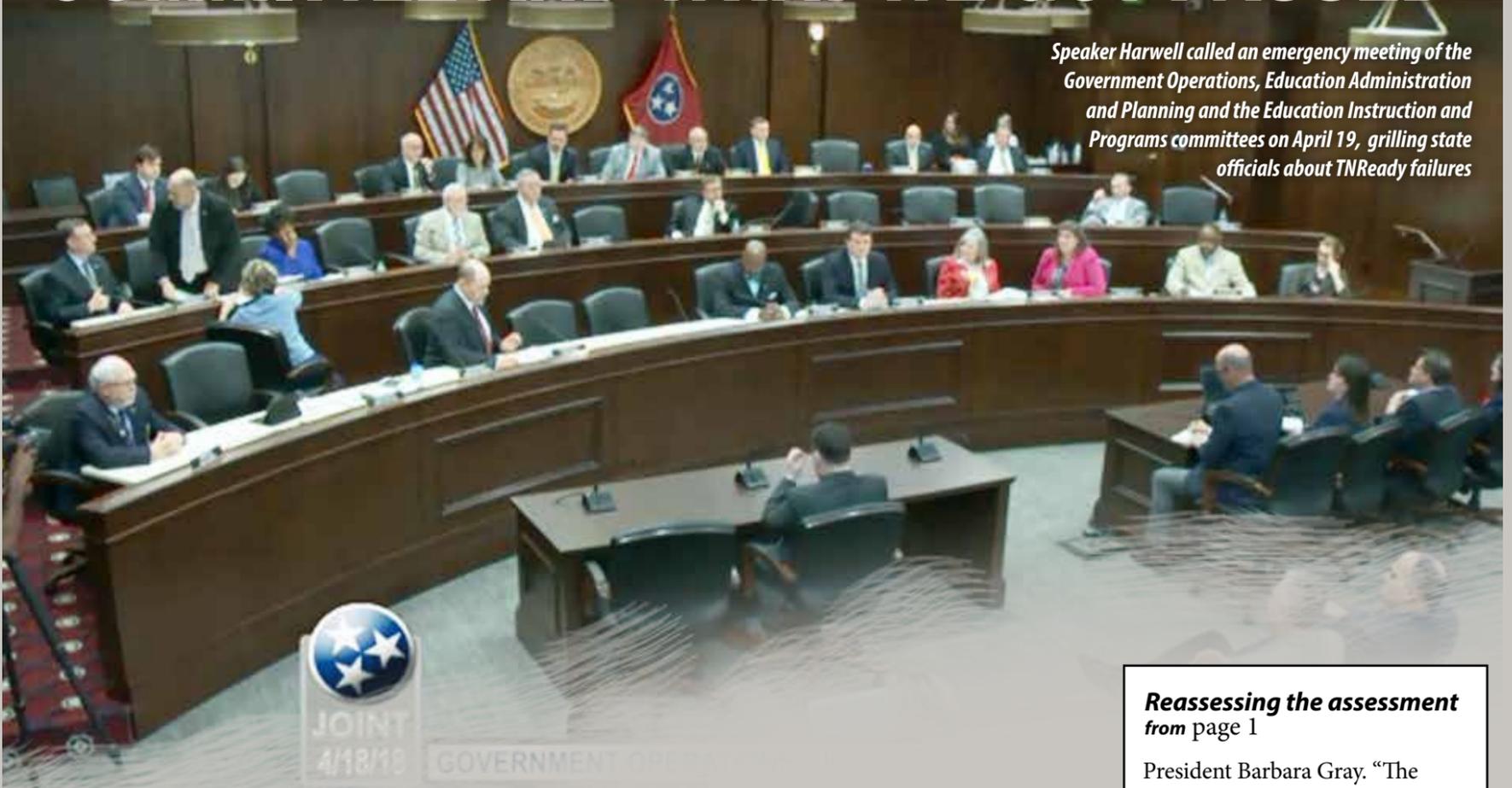
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WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT TNREADY IN COMMITTEE AND WHAT WE GOT PASSED

Speaker Harwell called an emergency meeting of the Government Operations, Education Administration and Planning and the Education Instruction and Programs committees on April 19, grilling state officials about TNReady failures



WITH ALL OF THE TNREADY PROBLEMS, WILL TEST DATA BE VALID?

The simple answer is no. Irregularities and problems in this year's test administration would under normal circumstances be reported as major testing breaches, invalidating scores.

There is no way to determine which students were advantaged or disadvantaged with problems online, with printed versions of the test, or the constantly shifting testing conditions.

WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF HOLD-HARMLESS LEGISLATION PASSED?

No adverse action may be taken against a teacher, student, school or system based on 2017-2018 TNReady data.

No employment or compensation decisions may be made using 2017-2018 TNReady data, including pay plans based on TVAAS scores.

WILL I GET A TVAAS SCORE THIS YEAR, AND MAY I USE IT?

TVAAS scores will be generated from this year's invalid test. Each teacher will have access to a composite score of 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 data.

Teachers may use the TVAAS composite score if it benefits them, but no adverse action happens if evaluation scores drop because of the TVAAS score.

WILL MY STUDENTS' GRADES BE AFFECTED BY TNREADY?

Each school board may determine what portion TNReady scores shall be used in student grades, from zero to 15 percent.

Students who took EOC tests in the fall can have their grades adjusted if a board lowers TNReady to zero.



Government Operations committee chair Rep. Jeremy Faizon was skeptical and called for an investigation

WHAT'S THE EXTENT OF TNREADY PROBLEMS AND HOW CAN WE ACT?

There have been widespread problems with both online and printed tests, affecting morale of students and invalidating results. They have continued through assurances from the state that problems have been fixed, and shifting explanations on causation hasn't helped. House leaders have called for a full comptroller audit of the problems in the system and its negative affects in schools and on students.

In committee testimony, the state said teachers, principals, and directors can report irregularities caused by TNReady via Nextera. Reports of Irregularity invalidate tests for students, and in theory a director may invalidate all student tests. School systems should review this option if they believe their students could not accurately demonstrate their knowledge.

Reassessing the assessment from page 1

President Barbara Gray. "The problem is that the state has wrapped up a deeply flawed test with things like student grades, teacher evaluation and compensation, and even the state's ability to takeover a local school. While technology upgrades are needed, I'd much rather the state fix its broken assessment system."

TNReady issues go well beyond the mis-scored tests, technology glitches, and delays in data.

There are fundamental problems in the test data, and what it says about our students, teachers, and schools.

TEA sees three very big problems with TNReady: the validity of TVAAS data used in evaluations; the stark contrast

between high achievement in ACT and graduation rates, and the very low proficiency scores the state reported for all Tennessee students; and the lack of transparency in the new testing system.

"It is time to ask fundamental questions about our assessment and accountability system. Those questions need to be front and center as we elect new state leaders," said TEA Chief Lobbyist Jim Wrye.

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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** — Mary Campbell, Susan Dalton, Metro Nashville, 531 Fairground Court, Nashville, TN 37211; (615)347-6578 (Campbell),

(615)476-3161 (Dalton), fax: (855)299-4968 (Campbell), (855)299-5837 (Dalton); Assns: Dept. of Higher Ed., Metropolitan Nashville, TN School For The Blind, MTSU, Murfreesboro City, NSCC, Rutherford, TSU. **District 14** — Maria Uffelmann, 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** — Tim Greene, P.O. Box 354, Goodlettsville, TN 37070; phone: (615)864-1984, fax: (888)519-4879; 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

TEA making progress in driving state and local dollars to teacher paychecks

For the first time, the General Assembly placed into the appropriations bill: "it is the legislative intent to provide a pool of funds for employee salary increases for teachers and other certified staff, effective July 1, 2018; provided, further, that said increases will be allocated according to the salary and compensation schedules of each Local Education Agency."

Driving dollars into paychecks from page 1

for teachers and other certified staff, effective July 1, 2018; provided, further, that said increases will be allocated according to the salary and compensation schedules of each Local Education Agency."

This new language, approved by the House and Senate, is a clear directive to local systems that the recurring \$55 million appropriated for new salary money needs to be placed spent on pay raises.

"We've been working with legislators to see why record investment in state teachers salary funds haven't made the impact they should have, and there were several bills proposed this year to address the issue," said TEA lobbyist Jim Wrye. "With this year's appropriation, Tennessee has increased recurring teacher salary dollars by \$353 million over the past four years, a 14 percent increase. In the past, that would have translated into roughly the same increase in the state average teacher salary. But it hasn't, and we've

now raised enough awareness of the problem and its causes that the next General Assembly and administration should make common sense changes to solve it."

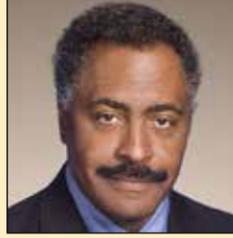
Last year, House Speaker Beth Harwell and Chairman Sargent sent a stern letter to the state board of education to increase the State Minimum Salary Schedule (SMSS) by four percent, the increase in the state budget. In years prior, the board only raised the schedule by half the amount of the state appropriation, as recommended by the department of education for local flexibility in using the money. Moreover, back in 2014 the board gutted the SMSS, reducing it from 20 steps to three and five lanes to two.

"The minimum salary schedule played an important role in not only raising the salaries of the lowest paid teachers, it was a rising tide lifting all boats and had impact for every teacher," said Wrye. "The problem with trying to promote local flexibility in regards to the SMSS is it reduced the state's leverage to getting those dollars into

Other legislative leaders on teacher pay issues



Rep. Mike Carter (R-Ooltewah)



Rep. John DeBerry (D-Memphis)



Sen. Brian Kelsey (D-Memphis)

key bills backed by TEA offering solutions to the problem of diminished teacher salary increases.

There was legislation floated to index the SMSS to the state appropriation for teacher pay for four years. Rep. Mike Carter and Sen. Todd Gardenhire, both from Hamilton County, sponsored a bill to require all state dollars to go only to certified personnel, and require a local match by the county government.

A bill by Sen. Brian Kelsey and Rep. John DeBerry, both of Shelby County, to have the state comptroller's Office of Education Research and Accountability (OREA) investigate the salary issue was also proposed, but was a casualty in the last fight for hold-harmless legislation at the end of the session. Nonetheless, it is expected that legislators will still request the study, as it's not necessary to pass a bill to do so.

The next steps are now at the local level. TEA is developing guidance for local associations that outline this year's appropriation, as well as a review of how much more additional state dollars have been sent to local systems, divided by all certified personnel.

"Knowledge is power when it comes to affecting local budget decisions, and we will be working to see our locals have the information they need," said TEA government relations coordinator Drew Sutton. "The rider put into the budget is an important step to make sure dollars go to where the General Assembly intended, into the family budgets of teachers."

teacher salaries. What we saw was far less than what we should have expected."

The board did increase the minimum schedule by four percent, and there was a notable impact across the state, especially in many rural systems.

During the session, there were several

After fight, final TNReady hold-harmless bill passes at the 11th hour

Hold-harmless from page 1

overwhelming vote to have leaders do what it took to protect educators and ensure fairness. Next, in a unanimous vote of every Democrat and Republican representative, the House halted the state budget, delayed other legislation, and referred a new hold-harmless bill to the Senate, sending a message to the governor and upper chamber that more needed to be done. House majority leader Rep. Glen Casada (R-Franklin) made the motion to hold the budget himself.

"Seeing the coordinated effort and a united House defend teachers was a remarkable event, and the leaders on both sides of the aisle should be commended for the landmark work they did," said Wrye.

In a historic show of cohesion and bipartisanship, a united Tennessee House of Representatives originally pushed legislation that would have excluded test data from this year's test

Final hold-harmless: "Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, no adverse action may be taken against any student, teacher, school, or LEA based, in whole or in part, on student achievement data generated from the 2017-2018 TNReady assessments. For purposes of this section, "adverse action" includes, but is not limited to, the identification of a school as a priority school and the assignment of a school to the achievement school district."

from evaluations completely, similar language to what passed when the 15-16 test crashed.

The Senate companion bill for the House hold-harmless was quickly tabled by Senate Education chair Sen. Delores Gresham. Many senators asked for an opportunity to vote, knowing it would pass easily.

Then began hours of disagreements, pressure and negotiation, against a backdrop of teachers calling for change. House Minority Leader Rep. Craig Fitzhugh (D-Ripley) and Republican Caucus Chair Rep. Ryan Williams (R-Cookeville), with steady pressure applied by Speaker Beth Harwell (R-Nashville), got the Senate and administration to agree on an amendment Fitzhugh had written, incorporating concepts outlined by TEA. The new bill passed both chambers late Wednesday night, April 25th, as one of the last pieces of legislation of the 110th General Assembly.

The key clause in the bill is "no adverse action may be taken against any student, teacher, school, or LEA" using TNReady data for 2017-2018 school year. TEA legal says the clear language means TVAAS scores linked to this year's failure cannot be used against a



House Republican Caucus swings into action: Caucus leader Ryan Williams (R-Cookeville, left) explains to the 70-plus members the Senate was not inclined for more hold-harmless legislation. A vote to withhold the state budget was adopted, and later executed by Majority Leader Rep. Glen Casada (R-Thompson Station, right)

Photo Courtesy: the Tennessean

teacher in any way, whether it is based in state law, rules or policies, or in local policies and decisions. Required remediation, extra observations and other professional penalties triggered by TVAAS data are eliminated, for this year or any future year that would use 17-18 test data.

Added with the legislation passed last week, it is a strong comprehensive hold-harmless that will have a lasting impact in future years. Teachers will still be given a TVAAS score, but it must be ignored if it would harm a teacher, but can still be used if it benefits them. TEA knows TVAAS is invalid for use in high-stakes decisions, regardless of whether the testing system functions or not, and this package of bills will only serve to shine a light on the trouble

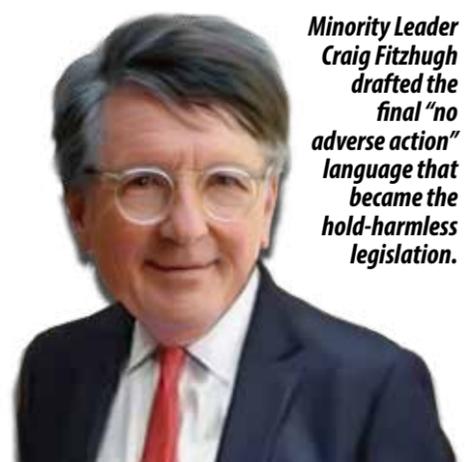
with TVAAS.

With the ongoing, repeated TNReady failures, teachers across the state are ready to act to protect their students and their profession from the disruption of continued testing meltdowns.

House Speaker Beth Harwell pushed for a resolution to hold-harmless legislation



Minority Leader Craig Fitzhugh drafted the final "no adverse action" language that became the hold-harmless legislation.



2018 Open Primary Elections

Local elections critical in fight for great public schools

The August election is not just about the candidates running for state offices. Local elected officials also have a significant impact on teaching and learning conditions in your district.

“We talk a lot about the Tennessee General Assembly races, but we must also pay attention to the elections for county commissions, local school boards and other local offices,” said TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder. “While the legislature sets state law, these local governing bodies determine issues like how school funds are allocated, the addition of any locally mandated tests, teacher salary and benefits, and more.”

The county commission, or in some cases the city council, is the local funding body that approves the schools district’s budget. It has the power to allocate or cut additional funding requests by the district. Electing candidates who believe in the importance of properly funding our public schools is a critical part in creating great public schools.

“Electing a strong slate of pro-public education legislators is only half of the August battle,” Crowder said. “Educators must organize at the local level to also elect school board members and county commissioners who recognize educators as the real experts on what students need to succeed.”

Contact your TEA UniServ coordinator or local association leaders for information on how to get involved in your local elections.

Electing friends of public ed key to continued legislative success

Critical elections from page 1

“This is a really important opportunity for us to elect a governor and legislators who will listen to teachers and parents about the issues our schools face, and work with us on how we can move forward,” said TEA President Barbara Gray. “We have done a lot of work in the past two election cycles to elect pro-public education candidates. That work has benefited us in fights like hold-harmless. Now we have the opportunity to elect a governor who will take some common sense approaches to return professional control, improve funding and prevent privatization.”

The next important date in the Tennessee election calendar is the August 2 primary, with early voting open from July 13 to July 28.

“It is important to remember that for the vast majority of General Assembly seats, the primary is the general election. Whoever wins the primary will be the next senator or representative,” said TEA Assistant Exec. of Government Relations Jim Wrye. “These are often low turnout elections making the teacher voice that much more powerful. Members have done a great job turning out in these primaries, Democratic or Republican, and it has made a huge difference in the political standing of educators and public education. Now it will be a sprint to the upcoming primary. Get ready!”

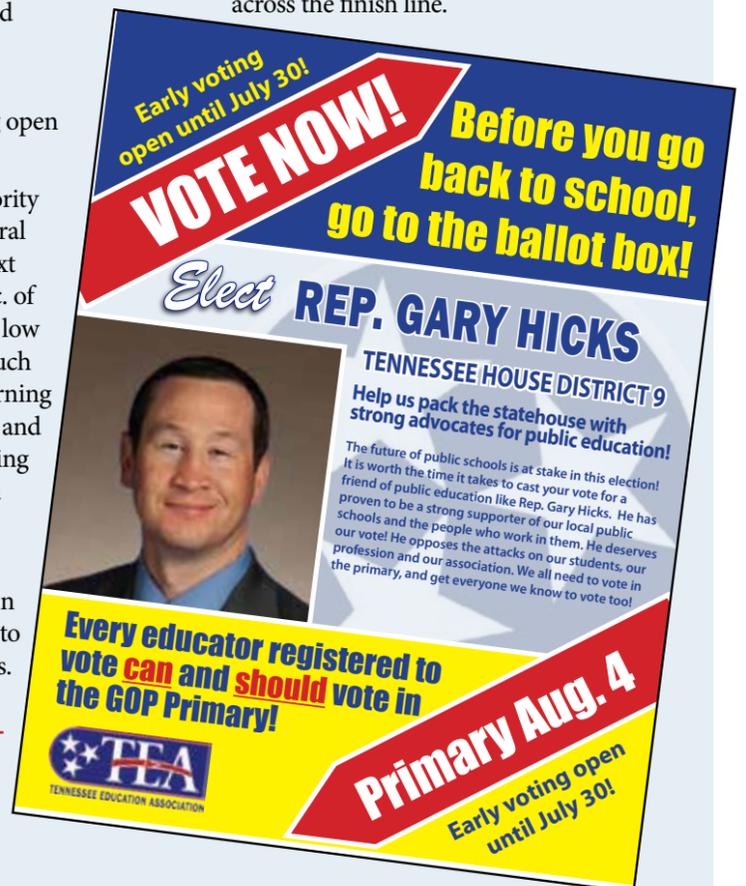
TEA will be making endorsements of incumbents who have strong voting records with the association and its members, and will be sending information to local associations on candidates and their positions. There are a few local associations with political

actions committees, but where they are organized, TEA Government Relations will be in constant contact about candidates and campaigns.

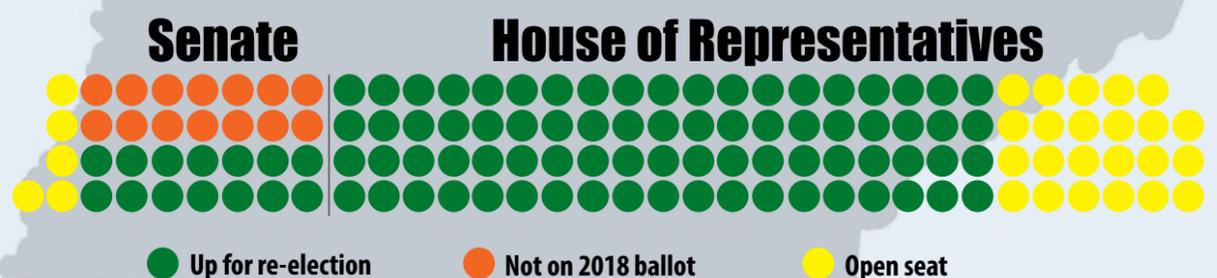
It is important to note that members are encouraged to participate and be active in any campaign they wish, and do not need to be a member of a local PAC.

“We’ve had such great participation by members in the past in the political process,” said Wrye. “If there is one thing I know for a fact, is that when members are engaged and active, there isn’t a candidate we can’t get across the finish line.”

Watch for mailers from TEA with information on the state pro-public education candidates in your district. The example to the right is from the 2016 primary.



Tennessee General Assembly



DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE : July 3

OPEN PRIMARY: August 2 • EARLY VOTING BEGINS: July 13

Community schools push to continue in 2019

Legislation that would have supported community schools as a means of school improvement did not advance out of the finance committees this year, but the bill sponsors have vowed to continue to advocate for the model in the 111th General Assembly.

“Community schools have a proven track record and provide one more tool for parents, administrators, and teachers to serve our students’ diverse needs,” said Sen. Steve Dickerson (R- Nashville), the Senate sponsor of the measure. “I would gladly introduce this bill again next year and hope to get it over the final hurdle so we can provide this option for more of Tennessee’s students

in the near future.”

The bill was approved unanimously in Senate Education, and easily passed out of the House Education committee. Once it arrived in the Finance committees, however, it became tangled in the budget rules. Efforts were made to remove any financial obligation on the part of the state, but ultimately the bill could not advance without being included in the budget.

“We commend the excellent efforts of the bill’s sponsors, and hope to see this supported by the next administration,” said TEA Chief Lobbyist Jim Wrye. “This approach is effective because it is done in partnership with a community, and TEA will continue to promote this good work.”

Legislature grants State Board new powers

A pair of bills pertaining to teacher conduct and the ability of the state board of education to take action against a teacher’s license passed in the final days of the legislative session.

HB2165/SB2013 (Goins/Gresham) rewrites the Tennessee teacher code of ethics, which was originally written by TEA years ago and placed into state law. The revised code contains new language about sexual misconduct by teachers, but also inserts unrelated offenses such as false statements about students or colleagues, test proctoring, and reporting breaches committed by other teachers.

HB2009/SB2011 (Goins/Gresham) provides expands the powers of the state board of education to take

licensure action against a teacher, to include reprimand and suspension. Current law only empowered the board to revoke a teaching license under certain circumstances. The new language will enable to board to create rules governing the new types of discipline.

“Student safety is every teacher’s number one priority, but we still have concerns about bureaucratic overreach and the potential for the state board to overrule local discipline decisions,” says TEA legal manager Steve McCloud. “We will engage in the rule-making process and closely monitor how this is implemented to make certain the rights of teachers are being respected.”