

TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE

TEA President Barbara Gray may be calling!
See page 8



LEGISLATIVE REPORT | April 17, 2017 | VOLUME 3, ISSUE 7

Billions in taxpayer dollars nationwide funneled away from public schools to fund vouchers

Privatization advocates have had their sights set on Tennessee for years. TEA has worked hard to hold them off for four straight legislative sessions, keeping public taxpayer money where it belongs - in public schools' budgets.

These groups have been working again this session to privatize our public schools through a number of different schemes, including

the Memphis pilot program and expansion of the special education vouchers. Both bills are still moving in the legislature.

The Memphis pilot bill (HB126/SB161) has been on a noticeably slower road through both chambers this year, indicating legislators are increasingly aware of the many problems with these voucher plans and unwilling to force unproven vouchers on any

district in the state.

If a voucher plan should make it through, the implications for public education funding could be disastrous.

States that have not been successful in defeating voucher legislation are seeing these programs eat away at increasingly larger chunks of public school dollars.

Some of the largest programs in the country - Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana and Ohio - now total close to \$1 billion

Vouchers
see page 4

State releases final ESSA plan as legislation awaits governor's signature

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in late 2015. The new federal education law replaces No Child Left Behind and gives states flexibility around issues like testing and accountability. Tennessee has already submitted its required ESSA plan to the US Department of Education for review. Just last week, the legislature passed HB 308, the legislative counterpart to the ESSA plan. While there are some positive elements, the plan also includes some key missed opportunities.

Local Control

ESSA grants both states and districts greater flexibility in approaches to improve the lowest-performing schools. The state's ESSA plan acknowledges the

ESSA plan
see page 6

Tennessee: \$18.6 million Estimated amount to shift from schools to vouchers under pilot program

Privatization schemes threaten to eat up public school funds

See pages 4 and 5

Community schools following in test transparency footsteps

Legislation to create transformational community schools in Tennessee could take a similar path as testing transparency did just two sessions ago.

When TEA introduced the idea of test transparency in 2015, it was quickly shot down by the administration because the concept was new and unfamiliar. After taking time to understand the benefits of test transparency, the administration filed its own version of the TEA bill in 2016, which passed with overwhelming support.

"Transformational community schools is a new concept for our state," said TEA Executive Director

Carolyn Crowder. "While our bill has stalled this session, we expect after legislators and stakeholders take time to fully study and understand how this model would improve public education in Tennessee, there will be increased support for the bill next session."

The transformational community schools model abandons the one-size-fits-all approach that has hindered public schools, and instead allows a community to determine for itself what its students really need to succeed.

To learn more about community schools, please visit www.TennAROS.org.

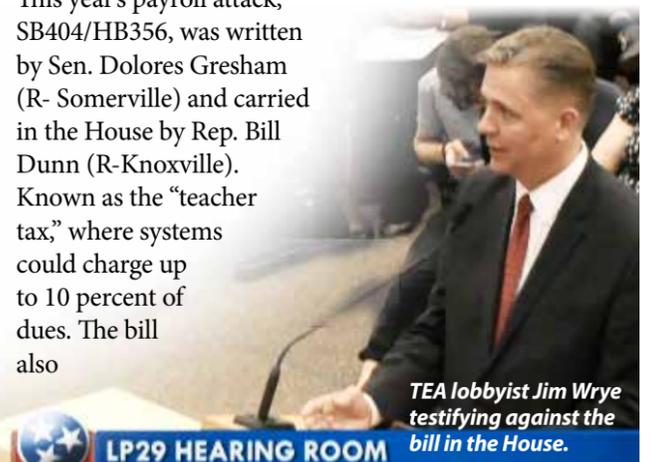
Bill to weaken TEA, interfere with local government fails

Payroll deduction is the way most members pay dues, and often is a target for privatization groups to try to weaken the association. Last year this was a huge fight where TEA had to kill a payroll dues deduction ban four separate times.

This year's payroll attack, SB404/HB356, was written by Sen. Dolores Gresham (R- Somerville) and carried in the House by Rep. Bill Dunn (R-Knoxville). Known as the "teacher tax," where systems could charge up to 10 percent of dues. The bill also

would remove any power that systems have to set requirements on how organizations qualify for payroll deduction, potentially opening systems up to mischief and demands that would

Payroll bill
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TEA lobbyist Jim Wrye testifying against the bill in the House.



THE STRONGEST VOICE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS

TEA protects, enforces educators' rights

By TEA President Barbara Gray



TEA protects educators' rights.

This is a widely known and understood fact, but most don't realize all that it entails. The work doesn't stop when we get a bill passed in the legislature or get a resolution approved by a local board of education.

That is just the beginning.

TEA members and staff who work tirelessly to get pro-student and pro-teacher policy in place are our first line of defense.

This involves drafting our own legislation and school board resolutions, showing up at meeting after meeting to educate elected officials and engage members.

When we are successful in setting new policy, the next step is making sure the law is followed. The state is not always a great enforcer of its own rules.

This is why our government relations team works so hard to make sure

TEA is the only professional association working every day in every district statewide to protect your professional rights.

we pass legislation that can actually be enforced. It doesn't do educators any good for a bill filled with flowery language about "teachers must be treated with respect" to be passed. That is a nearly impossible standard to defend in court.

TEA writes and advocates for bills that have concrete rights guaranteed to educators, like evaluation standards, licensing rules and collaborative conferencing policy.

Once passed, TEA's legal team crisscrosses the state ensuring local school districts are following state law and not violating teacher rights.

Just in the past couple of years alone, TEA has intervened at the local level in cases on unlawful firings, school boards violating collaborative conferencing MOUs, unfair evaluations and more.

Don't ever let someone tell you TEA only cares about state politics. Staff mileage reports clearly show otherwise.

TEA is the only professional association working every day in every district statewide to protect your professional rights.

You are an important part of the process, too. Members have to be engaged and looking out for one another.

Civication changes the tone of the session

By TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder



Every year around December and early January we start seeing the news stories with predictions about which legislation will pass the General Assembly when it reconvenes. In recent years, no story has been bigger than the "will they or won't they pass private school vouchers."

It isn't just vouchers, though. There is speculation over teacher pay, school funding, high-stakes testing, teacher evaluation and various attacks against TEA.

The narrative of those pushing legislation TEA and Tennessee educators oppose is always "this is the year!"

Bless their well-paid hearts.

You see, we have a secret weapon that is very tough to defeat regardless of how deep their pockets might be. Our side is an army of tens of thousands of educators, parents and public education advocates who are passionate about educating our children and are willing to do what is necessary to protect public education.

TEA's Civication, which involves members visiting the legislature the Tuesday of their spring break, has grown larger and larger every year. It has expanded from just TEA members to include parents, community partners, potential members and even students.

I love Tuesdays in March. There is nothing like watching public education advocates fill the TEA building and then leave for Legislative Plaza to hold their legislators accountable.

It is about this time each session when the bad

bills start losing their momentum. It is a lot harder to vote for anti-student and anti-teacher legislation with committee rooms packed with educators. Many of these bad bills never recover from the Civication stall.

However, we cannot give up the fight just yet. Those working against public education are looking for ways to resurrect their ideas in order to salvage something before the end of session. Our job is to continue following up with legislators to ensure nothing bad gets through because of these last-ditch efforts. So please be prepared to either "stay on the line" when Barbara calls; hold a local phone bank or contact your legislators in other ways to make sure these last-minute attempts against us fail.

I want to thank the hundreds of educators who came to Nashville for Civication and the thousands back home who I know will continue to make phone calls and send emails. Together we can ensure we realize another victory for the students of Tennessee.

Our side is an army of tens of thousands of educators, parents and public education advocates who are passionate about educating our children...



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UniServ Staff contact information
can be found on page 6.

Top five reasons to support tuition equality

By Mike Stein, Coffee County EA member



Like many of you, I am a huge sports fan. When I arrive at sporting events, I revel in the fact that I am part of a collective group, dressed in the same

colors, and united by the sole purpose of supporting our team. We arrive at the events coming from a variety of socioeconomic statuses and outlooks on life. It runs the gamut. Yet, at that particular point in time, none of that matters. We're here for the team - not just the ones playing, but for each other as well.

Meanwhile, the United States continues to transform into an increasingly divided nation, and Americans are becoming more proud to wear the colors red or blue. Most things in life transcend identifying with one color or the other. One of these issues that needlessly divides Americans is immigration. It's easy to forget that we are a nation that is founded by immigrants; sadly, in this country's relatively short history, there has always been an "evil" immigrant group who was forced to wear the opposing team's jersey through no fault of their own - whether it was the Native Americans, the Irish Catholics, the Jews, the Japanese, the Hispanics, or the Muslims.

Rep. Mark White of Memphis and Sen. Todd Gardenhire of Chattanooga co-sponsored a bill that absolutely needed to pass this session, but didn't. The Tuition Equality Bill (HB0863/SB1014) exempted immigrant students from paying out-of-state tuition if that individual: attended school in this state for two years prior to graduation from high school, graduated from high school or a home school program or obtained a GED, and is registered at a state institution of higher education.

Those who opposed the bill in the House Education Administration and Planning Committee did so on one of two grounds. Either they feared that Tennessee would become a magnet for illegal immigrants or they wanted to wait and see what President Trump was going to do about immigration at the national level before acting on a bill at the state level. Fear - especially unfounded and irrational fear - should not stop politicians from doing the right thing for our students, many of whom were brought to Tennessee before starting school and have no memories of living

anywhere else other than the United States. The "wait and see" excuse, in this instance, is nothing more than an attempt for these politicians to satisfy their bases. Neither of these reasons offer any consolation to the students who attended that House Committee meeting, saw the bill fail by one vote, and watched their dreams be deferred for at least another year. This small, but growing, group of students do not qualify for Tennessee Promise or The Hope Lottery Scholarship or Federal Student Loans. All they want is the opportunity to go to college like their classmates and be productive members of society. They still have to save up the money to go to college.

Rep. Mark White has promised to re-introduce the bill next year. Here are my top five reasons why everyone needs to support it:

1. It's the morally right thing to do. The Bible is very clear about helping immigrants. Leviticus 19:33-34 says: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."
2. This is a bi-partisan bill. Staunchly conservative Texas was the first state to pass a tuition equality bill. In total, 27 states have passed a bill similar to the one that is proposed in Tennessee. Both blue states and red states support it. Why? That leads me to number 3.
3. It's good for our economy. Workers with a college degree make \$1.3 million more in their lifetimes. More productivity means the state can collect more in taxes. Demand for educated workers is rising while supply is lagging behind.
4. It's great for our universities. An increase in admissions will provide income to universities that isn't already there. Allowing undocumented students access to in-state tuition will most certainly increase university graduation rates.
5. Governor Haslam supports it and will sign it if it passes the legislature. In 2013, the governor launched Drive to 55, a campaign to increase the number of college graduates to 55% by 2025. Tuition Opportunity supports the governor's goal of reducing barriers to higher education and creating a more educated workforce.

ASK TEA

ANSWERS FROM THE EXPERTS AT THE TEA HOTLINE

Q: My principal insists on recording our classroom observations, which concerns me because I've heard it's against the law to record video of students without parental consent. Can the principal record my observations?

A: Merely capturing a video depicting actual students in the classroom setting is not against the law. Depending on the circumstances, however, unauthorized viewing, posting, or distribution of such video could run afoul of education and privacy laws. While a few districts have policies specific to the recording of observations, the majority do not. So, provided your supervisor complies with law and policy, it is her prerogative to capture video of your classroom observation. If you have questions about applicable law or policy, or other concerns about video recording, contact your local Association representative or UniServ coordinator.

Q: To continue teaching 4th grade, I've been offered a voluntary transfer to a different school for next year. If I don't accept the transfer, I will probably be moved to a different grade-level assignment in the school where I now teach. Do I have any choice about my teaching placement/assignment?

A: State law provides that "The director of schools, when necessary to the efficient operation of the school system, may transfer a teacher from one location to another within the school system, or from one type of work to another for which the teacher is qualified and licensed." Once the director assigns teachers to a particular school, the school's principal is then authorized to determine their specific duties. All transfers and assignments must be consistent with the policies, rules or contracts of the board of education. If you have concerns about your teaching assignment, your Association representative or UniServ coordinator may provide assistance in addressing these concerns with the administration.

Q: I expect to be on paid leave of absence from early January through mid-February next year. Since I teach chemistry and my students will be required to take an EOC state test, is the school required to hire a licensed teacher in my place?

A: State law specifies that a substitute who replaces a teacher for less than 20 days is not required to be a licensed teacher. Since you will be on leave for more than 20 days, the school district should hire a licensed teacher (preferably endorsed in chemistry) to serve as an interim teacher in your absence.



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.

Privatization push threatens

Privatization bills like private school vouchers



Private school vouchers and education savings accounts cripple other states

Vouchers from page 1

in combined spending on some form of voucher program. Wisconsin alone has a voucher program that has grown to \$245 million in just a couple of years.

Tennessee will not be far behind if the pilot program were to pass this session. Based on the bill's fiscal note, the voucher program would shift nearly \$19 million away from the local school district to the private voucher schools.

TEA and other public school advocates are working to make sure these dangerous privatization schemes do not pass or expand this session. It is crucial that legislators continue to hear from educators statewide the vouchers in any form, in any district are wrong for Tennessee children.



Only TEA has the strength to fight for public education in Tennessee. It's because we fight for good candidates.

The reason why public schools have not been devastated by vouchers in Tennessee as they have been in other states is because there are enough lawmakers in our General Assembly, Republicans and Democrats, to tell the national privatization groups "NO."

It is no accident there are more anti-voucher lawmakers in the Capitol this

year than there were even last year. The credit goes to the members and unified strength of TEA.

Last August, privatization groups spent huge sums of money to defeat pro-public school legislators in their primaries. Only TEA could organize the counter-attack, with local members volunteering and voting, and the TEA

Fund providing the resources and media to expose the shadow groups. We won.

So when you ask someone to be a member and they decline because they don't want to be "political," let them know if it wasn't for us battling these groups in elections, Tennessee schools would be on the chopping block.

Above and below \$237 group

TEA threatens public education

TEA expansion would eat up public ed funds



Proposed expansion of special ed voucher program threatens most vulnerable students, waives federal protections

Lawmakers poised to violate promise to not expand until program proven effective

At the very end of the 2015 legislative session, the General Assembly passed a voucher scheme known as Individualized Education Accounts (IEAs) targeting students with disabilities. The program was dubbed a limited pilot program to explore options for students most in need of assistance. Now, as the first group of students have begun using these vouchers, legislators are back pushing an expansion of the plan.

“Parents recognize the danger of participating in this program, as evidenced by the less than 40 students who are receiving the voucher this year,” said TEA President Barbara Gray. “Families who sign up for the program have to forfeit their rights under IDEA – the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Fortunately, most parents realize forfeiting those rights is not in the best interest of their child with special needs.”

The program is costing the state more in administrative costs than the actual benefits provided to families receiving the vouchers.

Dana Goldstein, in a recent New York Times piece notes:

By accepting the vouchers, families may be unknowingly giving up their rights to the very help they were hoping to gain. The government is still footing the bill, but when students use vouchers to get into private school, they lose most of the protections of the federal Individuals With Disabilities Education Act.

Many parents, among them Tamiko Walker, learn this the hard way. Only after her son, who has a speech and language disability, got a scholarship from the John M. McKay voucher program in Florida did she learn that he had forfeited most of his rights.

The scenario Goldstein describes in Florida is exactly what happens in Tennessee. When a parent accepts the IEA voucher, they sign a waiver of their IDEA rights. Specifically, the language of the Tennessee IEA law reads:

“Participation in the program shall have the same effect as a parental refusal to consent to the receipt of services under 20 U.S.C. § 1414 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).”

What rights are parents forfeiting by accepting the IEA voucher? The rights guaranteed under IDEA include, “the right to a free education; the right to the same level of special-education services that a child would be eligible for in a public school; the right to a state-certified or college-educated teacher; and the right to a hearing to dispute disciplinary action against a child.”

“In short, every basic protection you’d expect to be provided to your child in a public school is given up when a parent accepts an IEA voucher,” Gray said. “Now, legislators want to expand the list of students who are eligible for these vouchers, encouraging more families to accept a few thousand dollars in

exchange for a waiver of all rights and protections for their child with special needs.”

The new proposal adds “developmental delay” and “multiple disabilities” to the list of conditions that qualify a student for the voucher. These additions represent a broad expansion of the original program. This breaks the promise made by bill sponsors in 2015 to give the program time to see how it works.

Fortunately, very few families have signed up so far. So, why are some lawmakers in a hurry to expand a program that’s not living up to its promise and could actually harm the students and families it is intended to help? Proponents want vouchers at all costs. Privatization advocates like Americans for Prosperity and Betsy DeVos’ American Federation for Children are seeking to gain a voucher foothold in Tennessee and use it to expand vouchers rapidly.

We know programs like the IEA vouchers have been subject to fraud in states like Arizona and Florida. We’ve seen minimal demand for the program here in Tennessee. It’s a program taxpayers can’t afford and families don’t need or want.

TEA will fight to prevent any expansion of this program and will work to demand accountability and ensure steps are in place to prevent fraud and abuse.

We don’t need one more state tax dollar spent on unproven voucher schemes.

GARY HICKS FOUGHT THE SHADOW GROUPS AND PROTECTED OUR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS.

That’s why these groups attack Gary

Rep. Gary Hicks successfully fought and won against big city special interests trying to take our tax dollars to fund all kinds of city private schools and corrupt charter corporations. He fought for the largest improvement in state funding for our local schools without a tax increase. Now that is a double dose of conservative common sense.

So where you see these big city groups attack Gary, remember his courage and leadership stopping their scheme to drain our tax dollars and send to places we don’t approve.

Vote for courage a double dose common sense Nashville. Vote

*** GOP PRIMARY

Left and at right: TEA Fund mailers in support of Rep. Gary Hicks (R-Rogersville) against his opponent in last year’s GOP primary. Privatization groups spent \$100,000 to defeat him. The TEA Fund and local members turned back the shadow group attacks, and Hicks won by double-digits.

SHADOW SPECIAL INTERESTS BACKING CYNTHIA JACKSON WANT TO ROB OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS.

THE TENNESSEAN National voucher groups spend big in legislative races

Cynthia Jackson knows that by taking their money she will be beholden to these national groups. She will listen to them rather than us when our schools are attacked and funds meant for our children are sent to private city schools.

TEA-FCPE
Tennessee Teachers
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Debate on A-F school grading to continue in 2018

West Virginia, Texas, and Louisiana are all taking steps to back away from controversial A-F school rating systems this year. These three states are using the opportunity created by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to create new, more accurate ratings of how schools are performing. However, as the backlash against rating schools this way grows nationwide, Tennessee is poised to begin giving schools A-F grades in 2018.

Legislation that would have removed the single letter grade and provided a rating system with identifying words like “exemplary” and “priority” failed this session, despite strong support in the House. The proposed system would have rated schools on a number of outcomes in order to give the public a better picture of areas of strength and those that need improvement.

“Members of the House understood the serious implications and flaws of the A-F law, and supported this bill to revise it,” said TEA Chief Lobbyist Jim Wrye. “It’s unfortunate the Senate will not get a chance to vote on it, because I believe many senators understand the A-F system is not in the best interest of their schools back home.”

The effort was derailed by Senate Education Committee Chair Dolores Gresham who vociferously defended the ill-advised scheme. Her committee did not get the necessary votes to move the bill forward, effectively stalling it in the Senate. TEA expects the bill to be reconsidered in 2018.

“A school’s performance can’t be reduced to a single letter grade,” said TEA President Barbara Gray. “Schools are more complex than that. TEA supported efforts to create a more complete picture of school performance and will continue to push for a rewrite of the A-F law next session.”

Now that the legislative effort to revamp the A-F system has failed for this year, the state will begin implementing the system, assigning grades to all schools by 2018.

“No matter what the state says, we know our schools are more than a letter grade,” Gray said. “TEA will work to highlight the successes of our public schools statewide.”

State plan, legislation misses opportunities to reduce testing, improve public ed

ESSA plan from page 1

role district-led Innovation Zones (iZones) have played in improving school performance. The legislation places increased emphasis on locally-designed, locally-implemented school improvement plans that must be approved by the Commissioner of Education.

“It is good to see the state acknowledging the work of local turnaround efforts like iZones,” said TEA President Barbara Gray. “We know those closest to our schools have the most vested interest in their success.”

Achievement School District

While the state’s ESSA plan envisions continuing to use the Achievement School District as a tool for school turnarounds, the emphasis again is on change at the local level. The proposed state law (HB 308) would cap the time a school can be in the ASD at 10 years. This cap will force the district and state to work together on a transition plan for any schools assigned to the ASD. The proposed law would also restrict the ability of a charter school to expand beyond the grades a school served at the time that school was assigned to the ASD. This feature was recently reinforced by an opinion from the Tennessee Attorney General which limits the ability of charter schools to expand beyond the original grades during a school takeover.

The ESSA plan and recently passed legislation take important steps toward curbing the “blow it up” model of school turnaround.

“Up until now, the model used by the state for school turnarounds was incredibly disruptive,”

said TEA President Barbara Gray. “This new approach is not perfect, but it marks a significant improvement. Students and communities don’t need more disruption, they need support and stability.”

While these two elements are positive, the state’s plan misses out on opportunities to rethink testing and accountability.

Testing

ESSA also gives states an opportunity to rethink testing. While Tennessee is just at the beginning of the TNReady experiment, most teachers and parents believe there is too much time spent on testing and test prep. TEA believes the state should have used the flexibility provided by ESSA to further reduce testing and also re-examine our approach to testing on the state and district level.

TVAAS

Tennessee is also missing out on a key opportunity to change the way teachers are evaluated. Connecticut is the latest state to ditch value-added scores in teacher evaluations. TEA believes Tennessee’s ESSA plan should have included a new, fairer approach to teacher evaluation.

What’s Next?

The US Department of Education will now review Tennessee’s plan and offer guidance for moving forward. TEA will continue to work with Commissioner McQueen and the Tennessee Department of Education on maximizing the positive impact of ESSA.

Concerns remain with charter bill

HB310/SB1197, the rewrite of the charter school law that would establish a new dedicated fund that could be used for the purchase or renovation of public or private property, is headed to the House floor vote this week.

While some of the changes are simply technical improvements, other parts of the bill remain problematic as they would expand some state board powers. TEA has stressed that there are good and bad actors in the charter movement, and safeguards must be put in place to prevent abuses of publicly owned land.

TEA will continue to monitor deliberations on the bill to ensure claw-back provisions are included to return land to public use when it is no longer utilized for school purposes.

“If a charter school shuts down, private investors shouldn’t be able to use that land for profit because it’s been acquired or improved with public funds,” said TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder.

All school supply funds to go directly to teachers

For years, TEA has run bills to increase teacher supply funds, only to see them die “behind the budget” for lack of funding. This year, Rep. Mary Littleton (R-Dickson) and Sen. Dolores Gresham (R-Somerville) had the supply increase bill, and it too was slated for budget oblivion.

Until Littleton offered an amendment.

HB457/SB14 now proposes to distribute \$200 directly to every K-12 teacher by Oct. 31 of each school year so that the teacher may spend it at any time during that year on instructional supplies as determined necessary by the teacher.

This is a change from current law, where individual teachers get \$100, and the other \$100 is pooled for a school and spent by a committee. Faculties can still pool funds if they so decide, but the control is now with every teacher. TEA supports the change and will continue to work for more supply funds.

The amended bill unanimously passed the Senate on April 13.

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District 3 — Tina Parlier, P.O. Box 70288, Knoxville, TN 37938-0288, (865)688-1175, fax: (866)518-3104; Assns: Campbell Co., Claiborne Co., Grainger Co., Jefferson Co., Sevier Co., Union

Co., Walters State Community College. **District 4 — Duran Williams**, KCEA, 2411 Magnolia Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37917; (865)522-9793, fax: (865)522-9866; Assns: Knox, Pellissippi State Comm. College, UT-Knoxville, TSD. **District 5 — Jason White**, P.O. Box 5502, Oak Ridge, TN 37831; (615)521-1333, fax: (855)301-8366; Assns: Athens, Alcoa, Anderson Co., Blount Co., Clinton, Etowah, Loudon Co., Maryville, McMinn Co. (except Athens City - see District 7), Monroe Co., Oak Ridge, Polk Co., Sweetwater. **District 6 — Shannon Bain**, P.O. Box 3452, Lebanon, TN 37088, phone: (615)547-7769, fax: (844)274-0765; Assns: Cannon Co., Cumberland Co., Cumberland University, DeKalb Co., Lebanon, Putnam Co., Van Buren Co., Warren Co., Wilson Co., White Co., TTU. **District 7 — Theresa Turner**, HCEA 4655 Shallowford Road, Chattanooga, TN 37411; (423)485-9535, fax: (423)485-9512; Assns: Athens City, Bradley Co., Chattanooga State Community College, Cleveland, Hamilton Co., UT-Chattanooga. **District 8 — Josh Trent**, P.O. Box 451, Livingston, TN 38570, (931)279-9530,

fax: (855)299-5674; Assns: Fentress Co., Lenior City, Loudon Co., Meigs Co., Morgan Co., Oneida, Overton Co., Rhea-Dayton Co., Roane Co., Scott Co., York Institute. **District 9 — Jackie Pope**, 2326 Valley Grove Dr., Murfreesboro, TN 37128; phone: (615)898-1060, fax: (855) 301-8214, Assns: Bedford Co., Bledsoe Co., Coffee Co., Franklin Co., Grundy Co., Manchester, Marion Co., Moore Co., Motlow State Community College, Sequatchie Co., Tullahoma. **District 10 — Jeff Garrett**, P.O. Box 1326, Lebanon, TN 37088-1326; (615)630-2605, fax (855)320-8755; Assns: Clay Co., Jackson Co., Macon Co., Pickett Co., Robertson Co., Smith Co., Sumner Co., Trousdale Co. **District 11 — Antoinette Lee**, P.O. Box 1412, Antioch, TN 37013; (615)308-5293, fax: (888)519-7331; Assns: Fayetteville City, Giles Co., Lawrence Co., Lincoln Co., Marshall Co., Maury Co., Wayne Co. **District 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 Uffelman**, P.O. Box 99, Cumberland City, TN 37050; phone: (931)827-3333, fax: (855)299-4925; Assns: Austin Peay State University, Clarksville-Montgomery Co., Henry Co., Houston Co., Paris, Stewart Co., Weakley Co., UT-Martin. **District 15 — Cheryl Richardson**, P.O. Box 354, Goodlettsville, TN 37070; phone: (615)630-2601, 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 — Zandra Foster**, 3897 Homewood Cove, Memphis, TN 38128; (901)377-9472, fax: (855)320-8737; Assns: Bartlett, Collierville, Fayette Co., Germantown-Arlington-Lakeland, Millington, Southwest State Community College, University of Memphis. **District 19 — Karla Carpenter, UniServ Field Manager; UniServ Director: 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

When legislators get it right

Rep. Mark White puts politics aside, prioritizes students

Legislation to offer in-state tuition to students without legal status is a controversial topic in Tennessee. Politics and misinformation drive the conversation around this bill, instead of the interests of these children.

Rep. Mark White, a third-year sponsor for the bill, has put aside his own political interest to serve the best interests of his constituents and the approximately 13,000 undocumented students in our state enrolled in our K-12 system.

“I know this bill brings angst for many people because of the political environment we live in, but when I was elected by my constituents I promised to not avoid the tough issues,” Rep. White said. “I believe it is a basic Republican conservative position that

if someone wants to get up every morning, go to work, go to school and better their life - that is what we have been about as a party all of my life. We need to give them the opportunity to do so. It does not cost Tennessee taxpayers anything.”

The bill ultimately failed in the House Education Administration and Planning committee following Rep. White’s testimony.

“While we may not agree on every issue, TEA applauds Rep. White for prioritizing the best interest of Tennessee students,” said TEA President Barbara Gray. “Education policy in our state would look much different if more legislators followed his lead and acted in the best interest of students, not politics.”



Attack on TEA membership defeated

Payroll bill from page 1

eventually lead them to stop offering it altogether.

The bill failed overwhelmingly in the House Finance Subcommittee last week with no discussion or questions – a testament to the relationships TEA has established with legislators on both sides of the aisle.

The 10-percent “teacher tax” provision removed a week earlier, but throughout numerous hearings the bill’s language exclusively targeted education associations without applying those rules to any other entity using payroll deduction options offered by LEAs demonstrated it’s intent.

“The defeat of a payroll bill year after year shows that the appetite for attacking TEA is waning in the General Assembly. It also demonstrates the power of teachers standing united across the state to defeat out-of-state special interests who want to weaken the association,” said TEA President Barbara Gray.

Like last year’s ban, this year’s bill was pushed by PET. They complained that PET had been denied payroll deduction, but never told lawmakers it was because many systems have a threshold number of employees before any vendor or organization can use payroll deductions.

“It’s astounding how many times we have to prove in the statehouse that this bill unfairly singles out education associations like TEA,” said Greene Co. EA President Rebecca

Thornburg. “Payroll deduction of TEA dues has never been an issue in my local. It’s obvious that someone decided to create a problem where one simply did not exist.”

Payroll deduction for association dues has existed in Greene Count for 17 years with no problems or concerns, as it has in many other school districts across the state. PET simply has to meet the employee threshold, something over the years they have yet to do.

During last year’s payroll fight, the legislative Fiscal Review Committee said payroll deduction for dues costs boards nothing because payroll departments in school districts already provide for many other deductions for things like supplemental insurance.

Rep. Dunn said in a committee hearing last month that the payroll deduction bill is the result of educators’ involvement in politics.

“We’re zeroing in on this because these professional associations get into politics,” Dunn said.

Gray said TEA’s vigilance and teachers coming to the statehouse during Civication helped educate lawmakers about the problems with other bad legislative initiatives.

“As we work to protect our students and our schools from out-of-state privatizers, watching one attack after another in legislative committees could get pretty lonely,” Gray said. “But having teachers, parents and community members with us is the best validation that we are fighting the good fight.”

TEA Bill Tracker

Some of the ones to watch

TEA bills:

This year, as we negotiated with legislators and the administration on key issues such as teacher pay, community schools, insurance improvements, and evaluation reforms, among others, TEA did not file wholly drafted legislation as we have in the past. We asked friendly lawmakers to file a number of *caption bills*, placeholders that were later wholly rewritten with amendments when ready. The list below and articles in this issue highlight the status of those bills.

The Good:

HB45 (Dunn)/SB662 (Tracy) - Awaiting Gov. Halsam’s signature - Provides enhanced school flexibility to meet requirements for physical activity of students. Fix for scheduling problems created by the recess bill passed last year.

HB174 (Reedy)/ SB14 (Green) - Nicknamed “The Teacher Bill of Rights,” as introduced this bill would create a list of rights and protections for educators, including the right to not have to personally fund classroom supplies. The legislature is currently working through amendments to this bill.

HB457 (Littleton)/SB401 (Gresham) - As amended, the proposal would direct the full \$200 teachers receive for classroom supplies, eliminating the pool committee.

HB441 (E. Smith)/SB859 (Dickerson) - This bill would increase funding provided for classroom supplies for first year teachers to \$500.

The Bad:

HB63 (Kane)/SB584 (Gresham) - This proposal expands the special education voucher program by adding new disability categories that would be eligible for the program.

HB1109 (DeBerry)/SB987 (Kelsey) - This proposal would expand the special education voucher program that has just last month begun issuing the first vouchers.

HB126 (Brooks, H)/SB161 (Kelsey) - This voucher bill differs in that it focuses solely on a Shelby County voucher pilot program.

HB336 (Dunn)/SB380 (Gresham) - Held in Senate Ed - This is almost an exact copy of the statewide voucher bill TEA has defeated for the past four years.

HB356 (Dunn)/SB404 (Gresham) - Failed in House Finance subcommittee - This would authorize LEAs to charge a 10 percent fee to collect dues through payroll solely for professional associations.

HB63 (Kane)/SB584 (Gresham) - Expands the special education voucher program by adding new disability categories that would be eligible for the program.

SR12 (Gresham) - Dead for the 2017 session - Inaccurately accused TEA of supporting government-funded abortion.

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WHEN BARBARA CALLS, STAY ON THE PHONE. WE'LL CONNECT YOU TO YOUR LEGISLATOR.

TEA's "pass through" automated call system is the quickest way to contact your legislator.

With possible votes on vouchers or teacher pay happening in the coming weeks, you may receive an automated call with President Gray's voice to your home phone.

Stay on the line and the call will *automatically* connect to the office of your legislator.

LEAVE A MESSAGE on your lawmaker's voicemail, tell them who you are, that you live in the district and your opposition to vouchers or support for increasing teacher pay. If you want, leave your contact information and ask your lawmaker to call you back.

**EVERY CALL
MAKES A
DIFFERENCE!**

