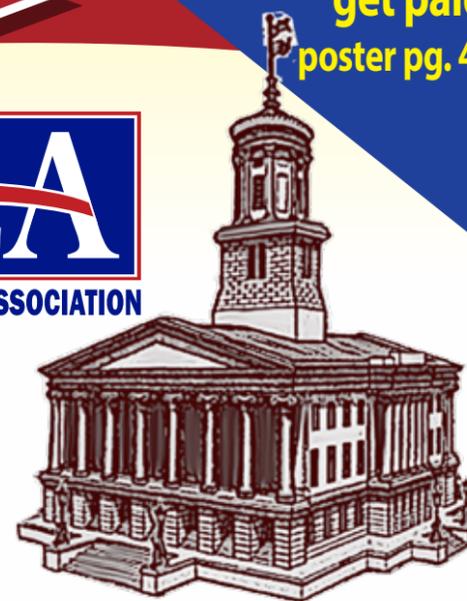


TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE



How do TN teachers
get paid?
poster pg. 4-5



LEGISLATIVE REPORT | March 19, 2018 | VOLUME 4, ISSUE 4

Safety task force explores funding options for SROs

The debate over how to best keep Tennessee students, educators and schools safe continues to be a hot topic of conversation in the halls of the Tennessee General Assembly.

Gov. Bill Haslam created a school safety work group made up of educators, elected officials, mental health professionals and members of law enforcement to work through the various proposals, review what safety measures districts across the state already have in place and recommend a best course of action to the legislature.

The group has met twice, and according to reports by Nashville news outlets, the discussion has been largely focused on how to fund more school resource officers.

School safety
cont. page 3

Pilot year for Kindergarten, Pre-K portfolio system gains support in key education committees

A bill that would hold Tennessee Kindergarten and Pre-K teachers harmless from evaluation results based on the new portfolio system passed a key legislative committee last week and is headed for the House floor.

Filed by two Knox County lawmakers, Sen. Becky Massey and Rep. Eddie Smith, HB1686/SB1854 was responding to several concerns raised by teachers about problems with the new evaluation system.

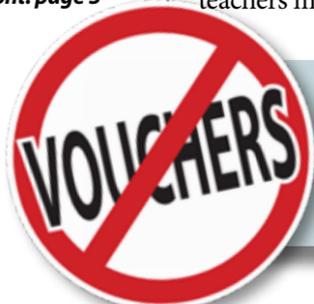
The bill was rewritten via amendment to incorporate feedback from stakeholders, including the State Department of Education. The most recent language cites ongoing problems with the system and explains why teachers must be held harmless.



According to the amendment, “due to the unfortunate vendor failures with previous assessment changes, and in an effort to bring confidence to the new Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten portfolio system,”

TEA member Natasha Patchen (left) speaks with bill sponsor Sen. Becky Massey at TEA Civication. Patchen's eye-opening testimony during a Knox County School Board meeting led Knox Co. legislators to take action.

Portfolio support
cont. page 8



Legislators push to expand special ed vouchers

The proposed legislation, which kicks off the first voucher fight of the session, would dramatically expand the existing IEA voucher program largely shunned by parents of children with special needs. Read more on page 7.

Legislators look for consistency in state tests after years of problems

Of the several bills addressing problems with testing in Tennessee public schools, only one is still standing in the 110th General Assembly – the moratorium on new state tests until 2021-22 school year.

Sponsored by Sen. Bill Ketron and Rep. Tim Rudd, both of Murfreesboro, SB1806/HB1855 prohibits the Tennessee Department of Education and the State Board of Education from mandating any new state tests for any grades beyond those required as of the past school year.

“While the proposed legislation does not govern federal assessments, tests under response to intervention, or tests approved by local school districts, this is a good first step in moving toward a more appropriate balance between testing and instruction,”

said TEA President Barbara Gray. “Tennessee is over-testing its students, and, coupled with several major testing debacles over the last few years, we have got to take a break from new tests to sort out existing problems.”

The Ketron-Rudd bill is one of many efforts supported by TEA to address problems with testing in Tennessee.

TEA continues to question 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. There is also concern over the lack of transparency in the new testing system.

Testing
cont. page 7

Community-driven school improvement proposal advances

A TEA-backed bill promoting community schools as a means of improving struggling schools advanced out of House education this week. The bill has now cleared the education committees in both chambers of the legislature and is heading to the finance committees.

“We commend the great work of the sponsors and are grateful for the strong support of the members of the education committees in the House and the Senate, and we are hopeful it will continue to advance,” said TEA chief lobbyist Jim Wrye.

The bill would create a grant program to be run by the department of education for schools interested in implementing a model of community schools as part of their school improvement strategy. The model is based on best practices

Community schools
cont. page 7



THE STRONGEST VOICE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS

Raising up the next generation of activists

By TEA President Barbara Gray



“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” I’ve thought of this Bible verse often over the course of my decades as a mother, grandmother and educator.

The calling we all feel to be in this profession has never just been about academics. We want so much more for our children and our students than for them to just be book-smart. We want to teach them to be kind, to be generous, to be strong. We want to help them find their voices, discover what they

are passionate about and build the confidence needed to use those voices to stand up for themselves and others.

We teach our children and students these things not just with our words, but with our actions. It’s important for young people to see the adults in their lives stand up for something in which they believe. It doesn’t matter if our opinions differ or we don’t share certain convictions, what matters is the action. The movement from talking about it to doing something about it is what counts the most.

We want so much more for our children and our students than for them to just be book-smart.

The National Student Walkout last week was a clear demonstration that our students are ready and willing to be activists when there is a cause they care about. It is our job to encourage that spirit and help

them channel it into effective, constructive action.

Seeing thousands of diverse students all across the country unite in a peaceful demonstration of solidarity while speaking truth to power gave me so much hope for our future generations.

My grandchildren attended Civication last week with my daughter, LoMay. They are too young to realize it now, but they are learning how to be advocates. They see their mother and grandmother - and all of you who attend Civication - putting time and effort into a cause that is close to our hearts. They see the adults in their lives taking action.

As my grandchildren grow older and listen to our conversations around the dinner table about testing, funding and other problems plaguing our public schools, they will know it’s not just words. They will know our words will be closely followed by action.

We may not always agree with the issue or the action our students and children choose, but we should always encourage and shape that spirit of activism. We must teach them to carry on the tradition to “Ask, Engage, Lead.”



What merits ending a teacher’s career?

By TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder



TEA is and always has been about the business of ensuring every student has a qualified, committed and professional educator in every classroom.

The teacher code of ethics was something developed by TEA as guiding principles of our profession. This wasn’t mandated. This was something TEA members wanted to put in place to strengthen the profession they love.

The code was adopted as state law decades ago, outlining responsibilities to students and colleagues such as not to suppress or distort subject matter, or exert every effort to raise professional standards. Once placed into state law, breaching the code could lead to local discipline action against a teacher.

TEA has never had an issue with this – after all, we created the code.

Fast forward to today; the State Board of Education now has rules that could lead to long-term suspension or revocation of a teacher’s license for a breach. This expansion of licensure penalties now puts the code in a different light, where some of the lofty but often ambiguous provisions in the code could cause the loss of a career.

The General Assembly is also contemplating a rewrite of the code (HB2165/SB2013), expanding its provisions. Some expansions make sense, especially proposed language that defines impermissible sexual behavior with students, whether it’s verbal, written, physical or electronic. The addition of this language is in response to a recent state report on teacher sexual misconduct, noting an absence of clear definitions.

A major change is a new requirement that teachers aware of a breach of any provision of the code must report it to their director, local school board or to the state board of education. Failure to do so is itself a breach of the code, with possible penalties included.

Most of the code is about setting important goals for our profession, outlining responsibilities to students and colleagues, and promoting the best in teaching and learning. Much of the code, though, is open to wide interpretation, including some of the non-student safety provisions proposed in legislation. We are concerned teachers may now be charged on what are judgment calls, put flags on licenses unnecessarily, or create issues by going outside administrators or directors first.

We are concerned teachers may now be charged on what are judgment calls, put flags on licenses unnecessarily, or create issues by going outside administrators or directors first.

TEA has been working with House members to put common sense into the code of ethics legislation, especially in light of licensure penalties the state board wants for code breaches. Having teachers focus on reporting issues dealing with the health, safety, and welfare of students—as current law requires—rather than ambiguous teaching practice concerns is a step. Reporting breach concerns to administrators or directors, rather than going straight to the state board, is also a common sense solution.

We want to make sure that licenses are not put in jeopardy unnecessarily, while making sure every teacher can be confident to report concerns.

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 offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE**, 801 Second Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201-1099. Periodical postage paid at Nashville, TN, and additional offices. 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).

Postmaster: Send address changes to **TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE**, 801 Second Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201-1099.

MANAGING EDITOR: Amanda Chaney
achaney@tea.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: Barbara Gray* (800) 342-8367
VICE PRESIDENT: Beth Brown* (931) 779-8016
SECRETARY-TREASURER: Carolyn Crowder
(615) 242-8392
DISTRICT 1 LaDawn Hudgins* (423) 384-3585

DISTRICT 2 Michele Bowman (865) 679-6523
DISTRICT 3 Robert Holder (865) 617-1179
DISTRICT 4 Connie Mitchell (865) 609-1702
DISTRICT 5 Jeanette Omarkhail (423) 413-9114
DISTRICT 6 Jennifer Eilender (931) 704-2487
DISTRICT 7 Jim Gifford (615) 430-6233
DISTRICT 8 Fred Riley (615) 876-0009
DISTRICT 9 Stephen Henry (615) 519-5691
DISTRICT 10 Randall Woodard (615) 594-5632
DISTRICT 11 Brandi Adams (731) 439-3476
DISTRICT 12 Janis Carroll (731) 431-2387
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 Margaret Thompson
(615) 649-1514
ADMINISTRATOR WEST Dennis Kimbrough
(901) 494-0105
HIGHER EDUCATION Josephine McQuail
(931) 520-0449

BLACK CLASSROOM TEACHER EAST Diamond Kelley
(423) 510-1400
BLACK CLASSROOM TEACHER MIDDLE
Brenda Munusamy (931) 433-0918
BLACK CLASSROOM TEACHER WEST Tiffany Reed
(901) 412-2759
STATE SPECIAL SCHOOLS Ginger Henderson
(865) 548-4615
NEW TEACHER Hope Shields (901) 239-1232
ESP Sandra McDurmon (901)237-2866
TN NEA DIRECTOR Tanya Coats (865) 308-2787
TN NEA DIRECTOR Karen Anderson (423) 741-9682
TEA MEMBER Celeste Randall (615) 335-0217
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: David Shipley; UNISERV FIELD MANAGERS: Karla Carpenter; Leigh Phillips; STAFF ATTORNEYS: John Allen, Virginia A. McCoy; GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COORDINATOR: Drew Sutton; COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR: Amanda Chaney; COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR: Alexei Smirnov; INSTRUCTIONAL ADVOCACY & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COORDINATORS: Rhonda Thompson; ADVOCACY HOTLINE COORDINATORS: Forestine Cole, Gera Summerford & Cynthia Wood.

UniServ Staff contact information can be found on page 6.

Safety task force explores funding options for SROs

School safety from page 3

TEA supports a push for more SROs, rather than proposals that would allow certain educators to be trained to carry a gun during the school day.

“Arming teachers is not the way to keep our schools safe,” said TEA President Barbara Gray. “TEA believes a safe and effective solution to combat gun violence in our schools is to increase state funding for SROs and other professional security resources.”

TEA is backing a proposal known as the School Safety Act of 2018, which would utilize off-duty law enforcement officers to provide security. Participation would be voluntary, officers would be required to carry a gun, and would be paid using state and local civil asset forfeiture funds.

Sponsors of HB 2129/SB 2059, Rep. Micah Van Huss (R-Jonesborough), Rep. Antonio Parkinson (D-Memphis) and Sen. Mark Green (R-Clarksville), have wide bipartisan support for their proposal.

A survey by the National Education Association conducted March 1-5, 2018, of educators across the country shows broad support for proposals similar to Tennessee’s School Safety Act of 2018. Among solutions offered in the survey to curb gun violence in schools, 84 percent of participants said placing armed security guards or police in schools would be

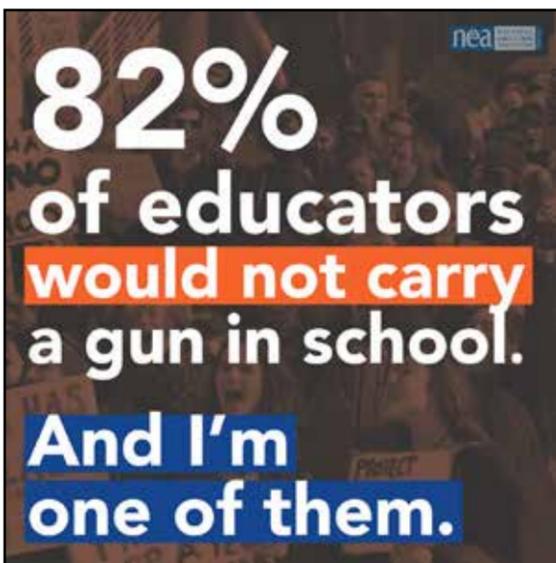
an effective solution. The only proposal ranking higher was increased funding and resources for mental health counseling in schools and communities.

According to survey results, seven in 10 educators say arming school personnel would be ineffective at preventing gun violence in schools. Among all members, 82 percent say they would not carry a gun in school. Even among those who own guns, two thirds—63 percent—say they would not agree to be armed in school.

To highlight the problem of armed educators, on March 14, a California teacher had his gun go off accidentally in a public safety class. The gun was pointed toward the ceiling when it fired, wounding two students with debris and a piece of bullet shrapnel hitting another on the neck.

TEA members visiting the state capitol for Civication are having open and honest conversations with their legislators about the fear students and educators are dealing with after repeated school shootings.

“Regardless of where individuals stand on gun laws, one thing we can all agree on is we must find a solution to gun violence in our schools,” Gray said. “It is unacceptable for our students and educators to fear for their safety while in their classrooms.”



Take action!

It is critical that educators’ voices be heard on this important topic. There are a number of ways you can get involved in the fight to improve school safety at the local, state and national levels.

Join the conversation online by visiting NEA Today on Facebook at [facebook.com/NEAtoday](https://www.facebook.com/NEAtoday) for shareable social media graphics.

Attend TEA Civication to ask your state lawmakers to support increased SRO funding as proposed in HB2129/SB2059. If you can’t come to Nashville, call or email your state representative and senator today.

Locally, you can organize with your local association to ask your school board to pass a resolution saying they won’t arm teachers.

Congress could also take action on this issue, so be sure to also contact your U.S. senator and representative to share your thoughts on how to best keep students, educators and public schools safe.

Last chance to register for the TEA Administrators Conference

The 2018 Administrators Conference is part of the TEA Spring Symposium (7 hours of approved TASL credit included), April 13-14 in Gatlinburg.

Register online TODAY: TEAteachers.org/administrators-conference

ASK TEA

ANSWERS FROM THE EXPERTS AT THE TEA HOTLINE

Q: I take prescription medication to manage my depression. Can I bring the medicine to school?

A: There is no law or regulation that would prevent you from bringing your prescription medications to school. However, if you do so, you will be responsible for securing those medications while at school.

If you can work it out with your doctor, it is recommended that you establish a drug regimen that does not require you to bring prescription medications to school.

If that is simply not possible, be sure that the medication is in a clearly marked prescription bottle, that it is securely stored while at the school, and that you do not take your medications in front of students.

Q: I recently experienced a heart attack, and have therefore exhausted almost all of my accumulated sick leave. What options do I have to extend my leave until the doctor releases me to return to work?

A: There are several types of leave that could apply in your situation:

1. If you are a member of your district’s sick leave bank, consider applying for additional paid sick days. The application form and guidelines should be available in Board policy.
2. You may also have the option to use FMLA leave in order to preserve your employment position and maintain the employer’s contribution toward your medical benefits. Although FMLA leave itself is unpaid, it can be used concurrently with any available paid sick leave, and some districts even require that it must run concurrently.
3. Finally, state law provides a mandatory long-term leave of absence called a “recuperation of health” leave that is unpaid, but includes return rights and other employment-related protections. This leave of absence must be taken from a date certain to a date certain, and when applying for it the teacher must state an intent to return to work following the conclusion of the leave. However, upon approval by the Board, this leave of absence can be extended.

Before making application for any extended leave of absence, it is recommended that members contact their UniServ Coordinator and local association leader to determine the best options.

Q: I received a text from a student that included a photo and joke unrelated to school. I responded “LOL!” The student shared the text with other students saying I thought the joke was hilarious, and now it seems the message has been shared extensively among students. Have I done anything wrong?

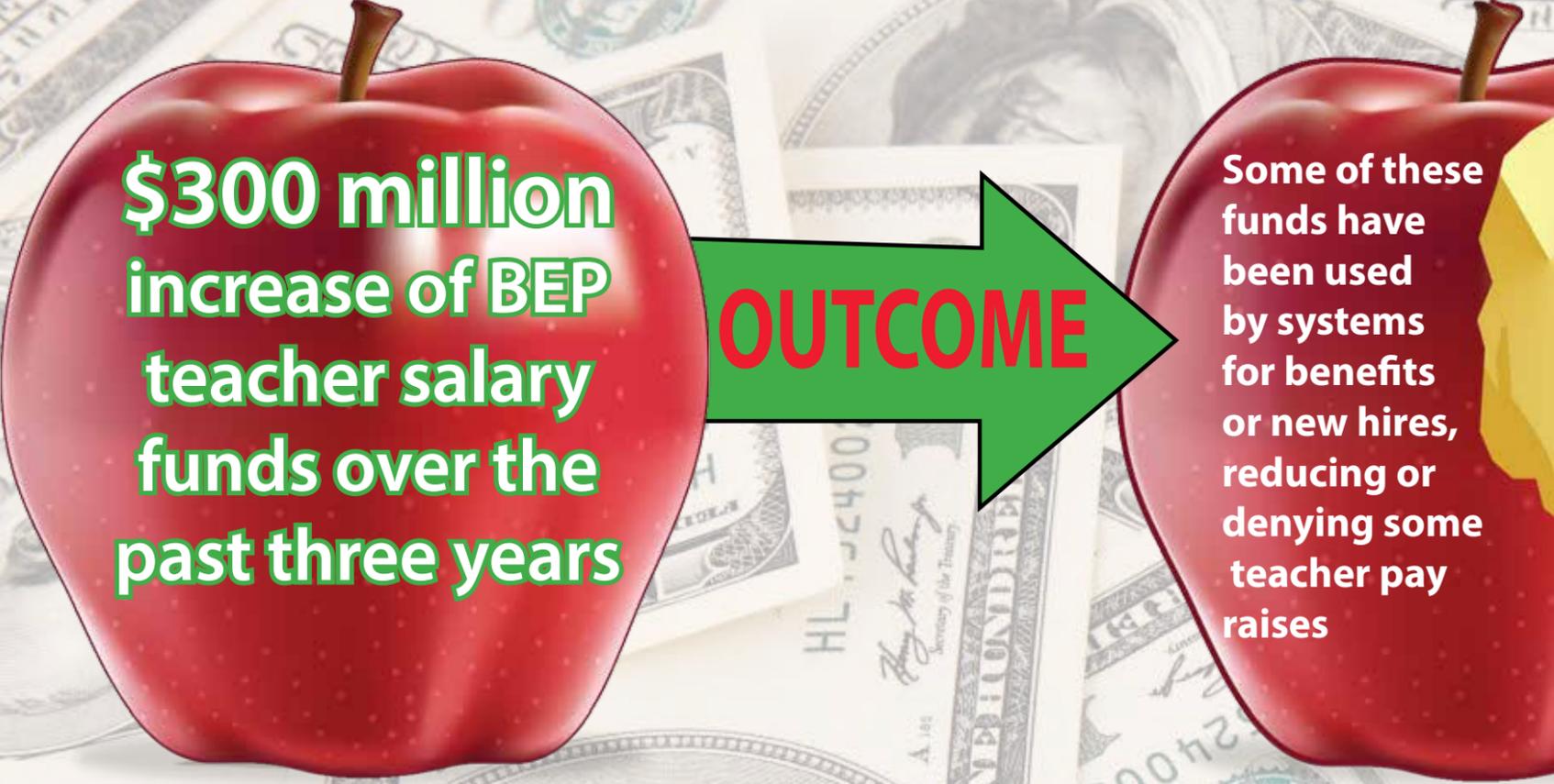
A: Remember that once you press “send” you no longer control how a message is shared or who sees it. Err on the side of common sense and caution – do not respond to student texts. Use other ways to communicate school-related information to students and families. Also, it’s not appropriate to send/receive even personal text messages while on duty with student responsibility.



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.

HOW TENNESSEE T

Big promises, vanishing state dollars, and TEA's



**\$300 million
increase of BEP
teacher salary
funds over the
past three years**

OUTCOME

Some of these funds have been used by systems for benefits or new hires, reducing or denying some teacher pay raises

Gov. Bill Haslam promises to make Tennessee fastest improving in teacher salary

In 2014, Gov. Haslam promised to lead the nation in teacher salary increases. It hasn't been exactly smooth sailing, but he has made good on his promise and steadily increased teacher pay in his yearly budgets.

At the time of his announcement, the average teacher in Tennessee had seen no real increase in her salary in two years. Meanwhile, many educators were facing increasing insurance expenses, as well as digging deeper and deeper into their own pockets for classroom supplies.

The increases Gov. Haslam has proposed in subsequent years really show that the governor is listening to teachers and understands the economic hardships they have been facing.

To attract and retain the best teachers, it is crucial that

Tennessee stay competitive with neighboring states in teacher pay, something we have been unable to do for many years now. The governor's proposal for 2018 sets us on the right path to finally "Beat Bama" in teacher pay.

As TEA pushed for Haslam's promise to be fulfilled, the administration and General Assembly have made record increases in the teacher salary dollars totaling more than \$300 million, including back-to-back 4 percent raises.

The governor's proposal includes \$212 million in new spending, with \$55 million dedicated to teacher pay. This amounts to about a 2 percent increase in state funding for teacher salaries, but TEA is pushing for closer to a 4 to 6 percent increase for teachers.

State Board actions and in less dollars mak

The greatest factor in limiting potential raises in a time of record state increases was the 2014 decision by the State Board of Education to gut the State Minimum Salary Schedule for teachers.

The schedule changed from five categories to two, and from 20 steps to four, reducing its overall power to lift all teacher salaries, but especially hitting the lowest paid teachers working in rural Tennessee.

To make matters worse, for several years the state board decided to raise the reduced schedule by only half the percentage of the increase that was appropriated in the state budget, further reducing the requirement for pay raises.

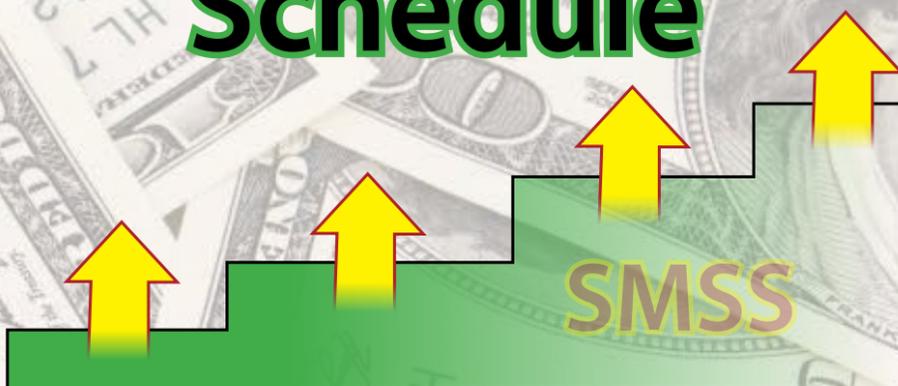
In addition to State Board actions, the problem of disappearing teacher raises was exacerbated

TEACHERS GET PAID

solution to getting funds into teacher paychecks

Increase the State Minimum Salary Schedule

SOLUTION



'local flexibility' resulting in it to paychecks

When some systems were allowed to use salary dollars to cover health insurance, or to hire additional staff, reducing or eliminating pay raises in some systems.

BEP dollars make up approximately half of all K-12 funding, with local dollars comprising a third of school spending and the rest coming from federal sources such as Title I.

The BEP funding formula does not provide for enough teachers to meet state and federal guidelines, and so every system pays for a portion of the teaching staff solely from local funds.

In years when there were little or no increases in local school funding, the overall raises were less than the increases in state salary dollars, as those dollars were spread to all teachers.

State can ensure teachers receive raises by requiring State Board to raise the SMSS

Each year since the State Minimum Salary Schedule was gutted, TEA has worked to educate legislators on the importance of a strong SMSS and the need to put safeguards in place to ensure raises actually end up in teacher paychecks.

In 2016, the General Assembly required districts with the lowest teacher pay to apply all funds from that year's increase to teacher pay.

Last May, House Speaker Beth Harwell and House Finance Chairman Charles Sargent sent a letter to the State Board demanding it raise the schedule by 4 percent, the same increase as in the BEP, and the board complied.

These are important first steps, but there is still much work to be done.

Preliminary research indicates overall compensation in rural

counties improved more than in years past, with some teachers getting the first raise they have seen in years. Even with the gains, the inequity between rural and suburban/urban teacher pay is as large as it has ever been.

To ensure teachers in all districts statewide receive the raises passed by the legislature it will require more pressure on the State Board to keep the schedule on pace with state increases.

Educators can get involved in this effort by contacting their legislators, local school board members and State Board of Education representative. These decision-makers need to understand the importance of the SMSS and the reality of what teachers are experiencing in terms of stagnant pay.



[/TennesseeEA](#)



[@TEA_teachers](#)



[/TEA_teachers](#)

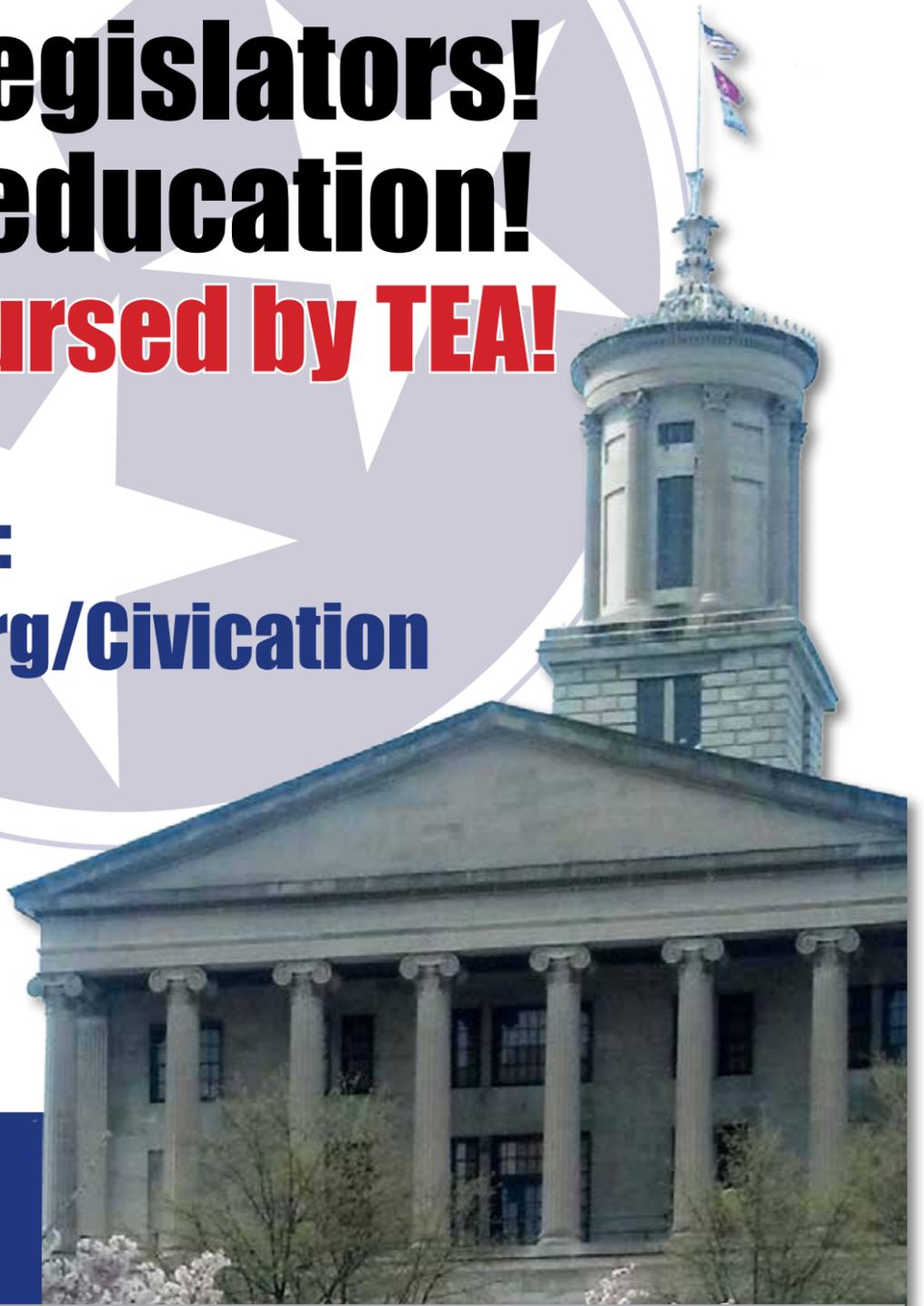
TEA Civication

2018

Join educators from across the state in participating in TEA's Civication on the Tuesday of your Spring Break. TEA will pay mileage, and if you live more than 50 miles from Nashville, we'll take care of your hotel room.

Come to the Capitol!
Talk to your legislators!
Stand up for education!
Mileage reimbursed by TEA!

Register online now:
www.TEATEACHERS.org/Civication



Contact TEA

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

UniServ Coordinators

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

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

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

Testing from page 1

Last December, the House Government Operations committee took Education Commissioner Candice McQueen, her staff and a testing vendor representative, to task for failures of TNReady. Government Operations rarely looks at education issues, and the unprecedented hearing was the result of a multi-year effort by TEA to sound the alarm on testing.

Significantly reducing the number of high-stakes assessments and eliminating the test-and-punish regime is one of TEA's goals.

"There is no benefit from over-testing our students and hanging the weight of a high-stakes test around teachers' necks, threatening their professional livelihood based

on flawed testing data," said TEA President Barbara Gray. "Statewide assessments have their place in public education. As a diagnostic tool, an assessment is a powerful tool in identifying gaps in knowledge, disparities between different communities and more. Assessments became a tool for punishment when the state tied so many high-stakes decisions to their outcomes."

As TEA works to greatly reduce or eliminate TVAAS in all high-stakes decisions, Gray asked every Tennessee teacher to consider participating in the TEA Civication on the Tuesday of their spring break.

"Join us and share your experience with testing!" Gray said. "Legislators from your district need to hear your stories before the legislature adjourns."

MAKE SURE YOUR EDUCATOR VOICE IS HEARD!

OPEN STATE PRIMARY: August 2

EARLY VOTING BEGINS: JULY 13

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: JULY 3

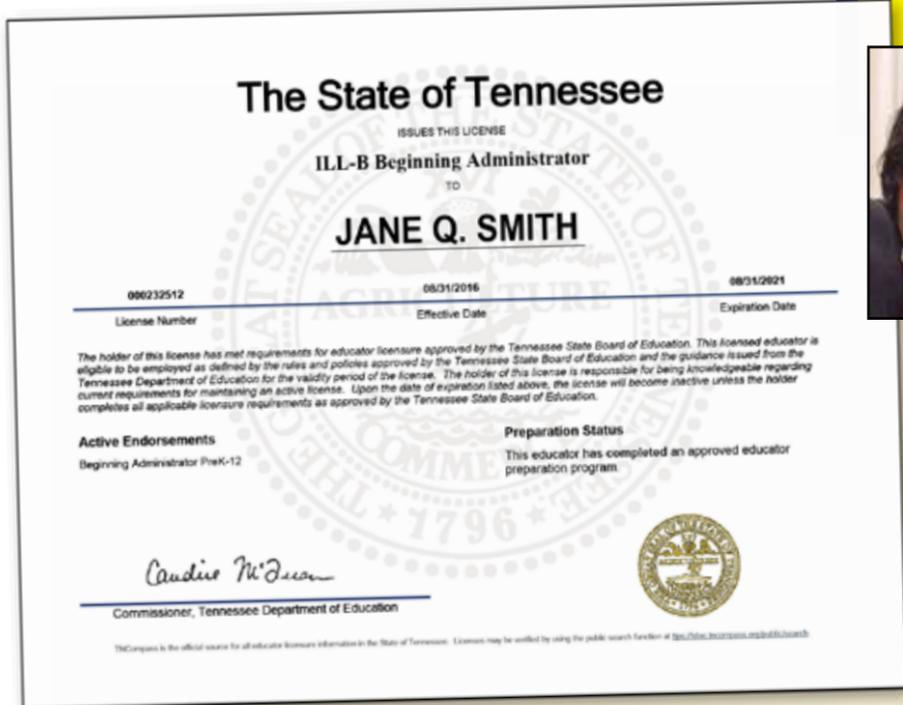
WE NEED TO ELECT FRIENDS OF PUBLIC ED WHO WILL STAND WITH US TO PROTECT OUR STUDENTS, OUR SCHOOLS AND OUR PROFESSION.



Nearly one-quarter of the House will be new representatives next year. We MUST fill these open seats with friends of public education.

EVERY EDUCATOR REGISTERED TO VOTE CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE STATE OPEN PRIMARY!

The winners of many *primary elections* will be the next legislators to serve in the Tennessee General Assembly. This means you can't wait until November to elect your next state senator or representative!



TEA board member LaDawn Hudgins (above) led the effort for Tennessee educators to have a printed license (left). Certificates can be downloaded from TNCompass.

Privatizers push massive expansion of special ed vouchers to all IEP students

In only the second year of the special ed voucher program, sponsors are proposing a massive expansion despite any evidence that there is public demand for it. The bill would expand eligibility to more than 112,000 Tennessee students with an IEP, more than twelve percent of the public education students in the state.

The Individualized Education Account (IEA) program, created in 2015, allows students with qualifying disabilities to withdraw from public school in exchange for a debit card containing the state and local dollars generated to educate that student, which averaged about \$6,700 in the current school year. To receive the money, parents must also agree to waive their child's rights under the federal special education law, IDEA, which guarantees a free and appropriate public education to their child.

The program has received little interest from parents since it launched two years ago. There are currently less than one hundred students participating in the program. As a result, the program operates at a considerable deficit, since the staff overseeing the program are supposed to be funded by a 6 percent administration fee. Yet proponents continue to seek to expand the unproven

program. There has been no study of student academic progress, which would be complicated by the fact that participating students are not required to take state tests in lower grades and are not required to be tested at all in high school. There are also concerns about learning disruptions caused by students moving out of and back into the public schools once the funds are exhausted.

Continued efforts to expand the IEA track closely with a similar program in Arizona, which last year became the nation's first universal voucher. Voucher proponents in that state rushed to expand the program several times before finally declaring every student in the state eligible, a move that could cripple public schools in the state. The law is currently held up in the courts after a massive public effort to block implementation by putting the expansion on the ballot this year was filed last fall.

"It is clear that the Arizona experience is the true agenda of national privatizers to push dangerous, unproven programs in our state and across the country," said TEA President Barbara Gray. "Parents have already spoken that they have little interest in trading their students' rights for a voucher, and TEA will fight to stop the expansion of unsuccessful programs like the IEA."

Printable educator licenses now available

Tennessee educators can download and print their teaching licenses, thanks to a meeting of TEA members and local legislators. TNCompass now has a link to download a high-quality PDF, which lists active endorsements and is suitable for framing.

At a recent TEA legislative meeting in Johnson City, members expressed dismay that unlike other state certified professions, teachers no longer had a printed license. LaDawn Hudgins, a TEA board member and Johnson City teacher, told lawmakers that physical licenses were a point of accomplishment and displayed in classrooms. The state discontinued printed licenses under then commissioner Kevin Huffman.

Sen. Rusty Crowe (R-Johnson City) and Rep. Micah Van Huss (R-Gray) were surprised, and told members they would address the issue. The Washington County lawmakers have worked with the department to improve design and make it available to all Tennessee teachers. It still is a work in progress, and the lawmakers continue to work with the department to make it better.

"The TNCompass link is a welcome step. I think there are some font choices and language on the license that can and should be better, but it's a good start," said Hudgins. "A teacher is worth a piece of card stock. It would be great if the state could print and send it as they used to do."



Sen. Rusty Crowe



Rep. Micah Van Huss

for a couple years, and what we've found is that community schools work best when they aren't reliant on a single funding source," said Wrye. "Education works best when many hands are helping lift up our kids, the same holds true for a community school."

The bill now enters a new phase of the process as it will need to be incorporated into the budget since the department will require staff to oversee and administer the program.

There has been broad support of the bill from teachers, parents, and community members. It will require continued engagement to secure funding before a final floor vote.

Community schools from page 1

derived from research conducted by several organizations across the nation. Participating schools could be from both urban and rural systems, as eligible schools include those on the focus list, defined as schools with persistent achievement gaps.

Grants would be awarded from a fund established by the legislation specifically for the program. Funding could be provided by the state through the appropriations process, but could also come from federal dollars or even private sources.

"TEA has been researching this good work

TEA members lead push for portfolio pilot year

Portfolio support
from page 1

local school districts are instructed to use the portfolio system but employment and compensation decisions “shall not be based solely on data generated by the portfolio model” for the 2017-18 school year.

The bill also instructs the Department of Education to study the Pre-K and Kindergarten portfolio model prior to the 2018-19 school year. The department must review the portfolio rubric, the method for the collection and submission of student work artifacts, and scoring.

“The study shall include feedback from pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers, as well as other teachers using other growth portfolio models,” the bill reads. School districts are also instructed to notify all teachers evaluated using the growth portfolio model of training and professional development opportunities on the new portfolio model.

“We all want this portfolio system to be successful, and hope that this year can be used to ensure the process works and teachers are comfortable,” said TEA Vice President Beth Brown. “Teacher confidence is critical to any evaluation system if it is to improve instruction. This bill would make certain issues raised by teachers this year are resolved before it could negatively affect anyone’s career.”

If the legislation becomes law in its current form, teachers would have the option of including scores in their overall evaluations if it benefited them after scores and data are presented to them at the end of the school year.

“Legislators are saying they received hundreds of calls from teachers concerned about the new system and the way student learning must be presented. This is a great testament to our ability to make real change and improve teaching and learning conditions in our schools,” said Natasha Patchen, a Knox Co. elementary school teacher who testified before the Knox Co. School Board and the General Assembly, voicing concerns about the new system.



Bill sponsor Rep. Eddie Smith took action after hearing from Knox Co. teachers about issues with the Kindergarten portfolio system.

Patchen attended the TEA Civication last Tuesday and watched as the House Education Instruction and Programs Committee passed HB1686 to the House floor.

“People need to stop being afraid to speak out,” Patchen said. “We must use our teacher voice when we see something that needs to change.

We know what our kids need to be successful.”

As part of the effort to hold teachers harmless and improve portfolio standards, TEA spearheaded an extensive portfolio and standards survey. More than 1,300 Kindergarten and Pre-K teachers took the survey, representing a significant portion of early-grade educators statewide.

Bill sponsor Rep. Smith said the feedback from teachers was key in his decision to propose a solution.

“It’s clear from the Knox teachers I talked to and the survey data that there was support for the portfolio system last year,” Smith said. “Early grade teachers want the feedback and evaluation of their student work. We had Knox teachers testify last October before the House education committees, and they made a compelling case about problems this year with the new standards and portfolio system. We need to take action and make this a pilot year.”

TEA protects educators’ right to run for local office

A bill that would have prohibited all school employees from serving on county commissions is losing support. The bill would have prohibited any county employee from running and serving on a local commission, including those employees who work for a

local board of education.

Tennessee law prohibits educators from serving on a local board of education in which they work, and local school boards are separate and

independent of county commissions, which are funding bodies. As TEA explained to bill proponents this proved educators were not employees of county commissions, but there was no amendment to exempt teachers from the ban. TEA is working to defeat the measure as a result.

“Teachers are community leaders, especially in rural counties, and are an important voice for guiding local government. Banning them from serving on county commissions was a wrong idea, and would have denied a basic right of self-government,” said TEA lobbyist Jim Wrye. “Preventing educators from running for local government offices across the state would have silenced our significant voice, and we’ll fight to ensure the rights of educators are unabridged.”

Currently, there are dozens of teachers—many of them TEA members—who serve as county commissioners and on local municipal councils. All of these teachers would have been cycled off, and an important viewpoint for local government would have been silenced.

TEA Government Relations works with local associations in local elections, at the request of the local. Whether it is school board races, county mayors and commissioners, or city councils, many locals across the state have engaged in the political process to elect pro-public school candidates.

“As we get more and more successful at the state and local level, we’ll probably see more of these kinds of bills in the future,” Wrye said.

TEA Bill Tracker

The ones to watch

This is a partial list of the key education bills being considered this session. Be sure to check back in future issues for updates on important legislation to watch in 2018.

The Good:

HB1686/SB1854 (Smith/Massey)

Provides a hold harmless year for the pre-k and kindergarten portfolio.

HB2129/SB2059 (Van Huss/Green)

Provides additional money for off-duty law enforcement to act as SROs in schools and at school functions.

HB2472/SB2393 (Love/Dickerson)

Community schools bill.

HB2164/SB1510 (Moody/Massey)

Requires instruction on child sexual abuse detection, intervention, prevention, and treatment be added to the family life curriculum.

HB1855/SB1806 (Rudd/Ketron)

Prohibits new state tests through the 21-22 school year.

The Bad:

HB2208/SB2563 (Byrd/Hensley)

Permits select teachers to carry concealed firearms in public schools. May be trained by public or private instructors.

HB2474/SB2610 (Moody/Gresham)

Expands IEA special ed voucher to all students with an IEP

HB1988/SB2039 (Kumar/ Gresham)

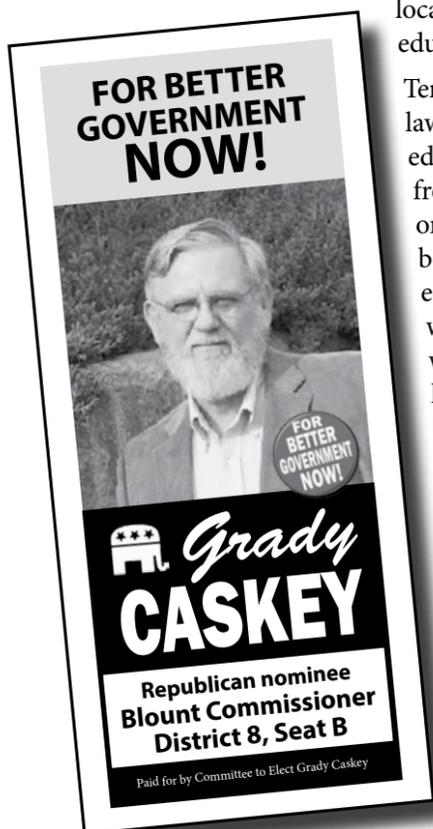
Requires teachers to issue a summer study guide for each high school student who enrolls in a course.

HB2158/SB2153 (Keisling/Bell)

Prohibits teachers from serving on county commissions

More updates:

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



Printed campaign materials created by TEA staff help educators win at the local level. TEA set printed campaign brochures for BCEA President Grady Caskey in his successful campaign for county commissioner.

