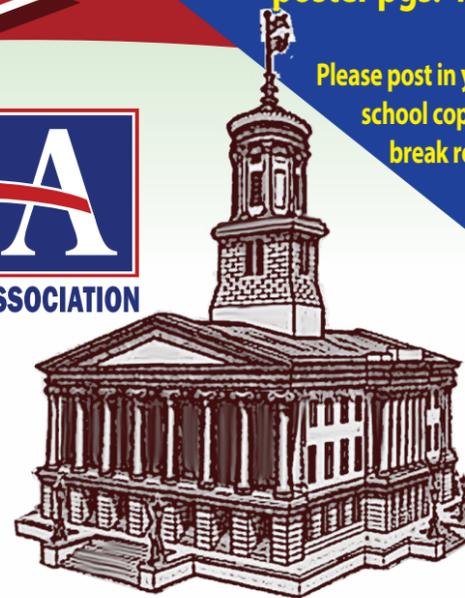


# TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION PUBLIC SCHOOL ADVOCATE



**TEA Civication**  
poster pgs. 4-5.

Please post in your  
school copy or  
break room



LEGISLATIVE REPORT | February 19, 2018 | VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2

## Legislation could jeopardize many teaching careers

Senator Delores Gresham has filed a series of bills that would dramatically expand the powers of the state board of education to suspend or revoke a teacher's license, and endanger teaching careers.

The bills come in the wake of a report concerning the state's ability to prevent educator sexual misconduct involving students. However, the vast majority of violations cited in the legislation leading to long-term licensure suspension or revocation have nothing to do with sexual misconduct or student safety.

"This is a huge overreach, and frankly a threat to our profession. No one is more concerned with the health and safety of students than teachers," said TEA President Barbara Gray. "We support in the

**Licenses threatened**  
cont. page 7

## TEA-backed bills to strengthen test transparency law

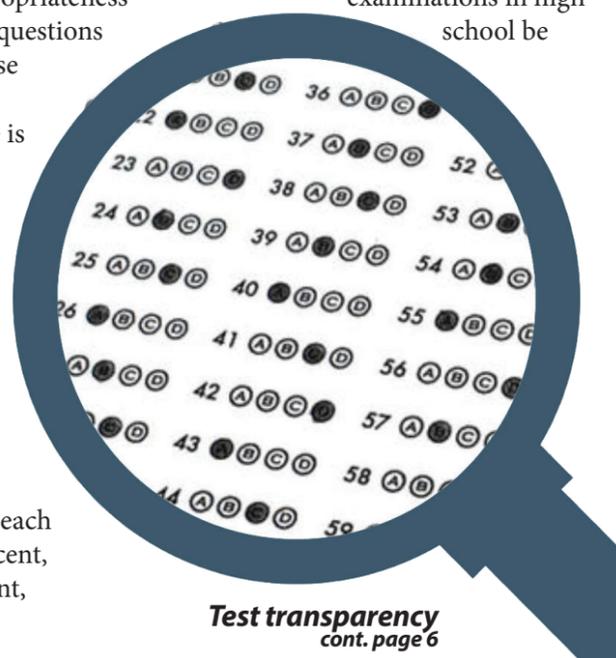
Two years after the General Assembly passed a law requiring the Department of Education to release questions from the state standardized test, educators and parents have still not been able to see any questions. Legislators are now working to strengthen the test transparency law and put safeguards in place to limit high-stakes decisions tied to tests no one can see.

"With the numerous problems that have plagued state standardized tests in recent years, it is easy to understand why parents, educators and legislators are committed to seeing the questions on these high-stakes tests," said TEA President Barbara

Gray. "Tennessee teachers and parents are best equipped to determine the appropriateness and validity of the questions being asked on these tests. Without test transparency, there is little to no faith in the test scores we get back from the state."

As filed, HB2247/SB1835 by Rep. Jeremy (R-Cosby) Faison and Sen. Steve Southerland (R-Morristown), would require that each year at least 30 percent, instead of 70 percent,

of the items on state assessments in grades 3-8 and end of course examinations in high school be



**Test transparency**  
cont. page 6

## Ensuring retiree healthcare and pensions focus of bills

*TEA demands educators retire in health and dignity after years of important public service*

Career educators shouldn't look with concern to their pension and health insurance when thinking about retirement. That's why TEA works every day to strengthen all retirement benefits.

Two legislative efforts strengthening TCRS and retiree

health insurance are moving through the General Assembly with TEA support.

A critical piece to retirement planning is health benefits, especially for those educators who retire well before Medicare eligibility. One of the great TEA victories was guaranteeing subsidized health benefits for the vast majority of educators retiring before age 65, with Tennessee law allowing retiring teachers to keep their insurance and requiring employers to pick up a portion of premiums based on years of service.

Because of new government accounting rules, those guarantees now need to be totaled as future liabilities on the books of school systems, rather than a year to year cost

**Teacher retirement**  
cont. page 7



## Push continues to get surplus funds into education budget

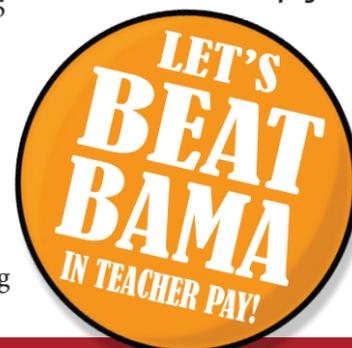
Governor Bill Haslam has made good on his promise to invest in public education and teacher salaries. With revenue projections coming in well above what was anticipated, he now has the opportunity to end his term by demonstrating just how committed he is to investing in our students and educators - and how badly he wants to "Beat Bama."

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.

"Increasing teacher salaries and staying competitive with our neighboring states allows Tennessee to recruit and retain the best teachers for our students," said TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder. "All Tennessee students should have access to a great public education, and that means having qualified and committed educators in every classroom."

**Teacher salary**  
cont. page 8



**THE STRONGEST VOICE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS**

# Minority students thrive with minority educators

By TEA President Barbara Gray



As we celebrate Black History Month, state legislators are considering legislation to help districts recruit and retain more minorities into the teaching profession.

Multiple studies have shown the powerful effect of minority students learning from educators who look like them, but the disparity between minority student enrollment and teachers of color continues to be a major stumbling block on the path towards greater academic performance for all students.

As the number of minority students in schools continues to grow, it becomes essential for the teaching force to not only relate to them, but also provide a well-rounded education that makes every child feel included. Having a racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse teaching force provides students with multiple perspectives that allows them to gain a greater understanding of the world around them.

*The disparity between minority student enrollment and teachers of color continues to be a major stumbling block on the path towards greater academic performance for all students.*

While infusing schools with a more diverse teaching staff has positive benefits for all students, targeting teachers who have grown up in a diverse community will allow them to better identify with their students and

understand the realities of their situations. Adding these teachers also gives them a further incentive to stay in the schools, while also giving students an opportunity to connect with someone who can relate to their experience firsthand.

Teachers of color are often employed in urban school districts that are minority-majority and are often struggling with budgetary issues. For many of these teachers the realities of stagnant pay, poor facilities, and limited resources push them toward either another district or another profession.

With the legislation the General Assembly is considering this year and the rise of programs like “Call Me Mister” recruiting young minorities into the profession, I am hopeful that we can see the numbers start to tick back up.

Two decades ago, about a quarter of teachers were minorities. That number is now closer to 15 percent, while at the same time the number of minority students has been steadily increasing in all districts statewide.

If the state is serious about closing the achievement and opportunity gaps for our students of color, we have to get serious about recruiting and retaining educators of color.

TEA is committed to doing our part to support minority educators and all educators serving minority populations. The TEA Minority Affairs Conference is one of the best events we host each year. I hope you will consider attending this year to learn more about the struggles facing our students and teachers of color. You can register online at [www.TEATEACHERS.ORG/MAC](http://www.TEATEACHERS.ORG/MAC).

# Policymakers need to hear your expert voice

By TEA Executive Director Carolyn Crowder



I'd be willing to bet you could trace almost every failed, struggling or otherwise ineffective education policy back to a decision-making process that did not adequately include professional educators - the true experts on the subject of public education.

There seems to be this widely held belief that because of years spent in the classroom as a student, that a person has a certain level of understanding of the teaching profession and what it takes to help students succeed. As actual educators, of course, we know this couldn't be further from the truth.

To provide our children with the highest quality public education possible, there must be more meaningful input from the professionals who work, or have worked, with students every day.

Take the new Kindergarten and pre-K academic portfolio system that was implemented this year as an example. After successfully piloting a portfolio system for two years, the state made significant changes before implementing statewide. The state also made significant changes to the way student demonstrate ELA standards for Kindergarten.

Now our youngest students and their teachers are left with standards that most teachers feel are not age appropriate in their complex grouping in the scoring rubric and a portfolio system that dramatically eats into instruction time.

Decision-makers in Nashville say teachers were involved in the development of the portfolio system, but that correlation does not add up when you look at the results of TEA's survey of more than 1,200 Kindergarten teachers statewide.

Survey participants overwhelmingly disagree with the age-appropriateness of the clustered standards and oppose the cumbersome new portfolio system. So what went wrong?

It doesn't matter how many educator task forces you form or how much teacher feedback you gather, if in the end the opinions of non-educators are prioritized. We need true education professionals to be the driving force in evaluating quality instruction and implementing standards and assessments.

*There seems to be this widely held belief that because of years spent in the classroom as a student, that a person has a certain level of understanding of the teaching profession...*

Everything we work on, from testing transparency to demanding accountability of the test makers and how TNReady is scored, is about fair and appropriate assessments. It's time data helps improve instruction. I truly believe that can be a reality - if the decision-makers in Nashville listen to and respect the voices of Tennessee teachers.

Legislation filed by Sen. Becky Massey and Rep. Eddie Smith to establish 2017-18 as a pilot year includes a provision requiring meaningful engagement with educators to determine the best way to move forward with the portfolio system.

Maybe we could get that provision added to all of the proposed education bills? I bet that would result in better policies for our students and our educators. I'd put my money on the knowledge and expertise of our teachers any day.

**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](http://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.

## Education should be about life-long learning, not a single test

By Tracie Shelton, Carter County EA member

At the end of the year, I was as happy as any teacher before summer break. Prom, testing, graduation, and end of the year paperwork was over, and I was happy to have some time away from the classroom. Upon coming back to work from the break, test scores were given to me with disdain and dishonor. My personal overall growth score was a 1 for the 2016-2017 school year.

My score of a 1 not only brought my average down, but also my school's average. I had to endure numerous "closed door meetings" to listen to how my value as a teacher had fallen by the wayside and how I needed to be a better educator and focus on the test. It seems that the only thing that matters now is test scores, without any consideration for the many factors that influence student achievement – like the chronic absenteeism I was seeing with my students. My 23 years of being a teacher suddenly were minimized because of low tests scores from one single year.

The days and weeks that followed were full of low self-esteem as a teacher and had me questioning my worth as an educator. My family, friends, co-workers, and even my school board member rallied around me giving me their ultimate support, understanding that this test (and its "reported" results) were of little importance.

In mid-October, a Math teacher and I were informed of a mistake with the 2016-2017 EOC test in our subject areas. We were told that some of our tests were being re-scored due to an error and that our scores should improve. The only way for me to go was up, unless the state could get even more creative and put me in the negative.

Almost two weeks later, I received my new scores. After weeks, the wait seemed to finally be over. The scores did not have names attached, only the unique student identification numbers, forcing me to go through and match the numbers and scores to actual names. After developing charts with old scores, new scores, score changes and categories, I was able to put all the students in numerical order of scoring and categories. I discovered that 27 students jumped up to a higher category than originally given, with only one dropping to a lower category. The new scores should have considerably increased my growth score; however, no change has been

made to date.

For six months now, this test, its inconsistencies, and the run-around from the state department about scores and policies, have affected my job and my personal life.

I was also told I could have six evaluations due to my low growth score and have to go watch teachers at other schools who received higher scores. However, offering assistance in the classroom and an apology once the new scores came in would have been more beneficial than the manner in which it was handled.

My health, my spirit, and my love for my job have been bruised and broken. I love being a teacher. I absolutely hate what these tests are doing to educators, students and public education. If I have a student who wants to become a teacher, I feel compelled to tell them the good, the bad, and the ugly truths about what education has become, and what it can do mentally and physically.

I love teaching. I adore my students. I admire my co-workers.

I detest the testing.

Education should be for life-long learning, not for a single test. In reality, all that matters is an end-of-year test score, not what a student has actually learned and taken away from a class. That single score is used to judge a teacher's effectiveness more so than the actual student achievement.

Teachers throughout Tennessee are heavily affected with this testing process; I am just one who has had the "error" directed in my favor, and had the inconsistencies and maltreatment to do something about it. These "errors" cause a trickle down issue, but no one seems to be blamed or held accountable, except for the individual teacher. I have experienced this and it almost destroyed me as an educator.

High-stakes testing is out of control in Tennessee. Teachers today are going into testing with overwhelming stress and fear failure, low growth scores, and possible job loss.

We need to stand together to stop the insanity and protect the profession and students we love.

Teachers are already under-appreciated and underpaid. When you add the stress of high-stakes testing, who will want to become an educator?

# ASK TEA

## ANSWERS FROM THE EXPERTS AT THE TEA HOTLINE

**Q: I am a middle school teacher, and I have several students, some current and some former, who have asked me to "friend" them on social media. Is that a good idea?**

**A:** We do not recommend that you "friend" any students who are currently enrolled in your school system. By doing so, you essentially extend your classroom onto social media, and it is likely that your school employer will hold you to the same standard regarding use of language, subject of discussion, and tone on social media that would be expected in the classroom.

**Q: I was called at the last minute into a meeting with my principal and assistant principal, in which my principal yelled at me about the clutter in my classroom. I was very uncomfortable. If I am called into a similar meeting in the future, can I get up and walk out, if my principal starts yelling at me again?**

**A:** If you are directed to attend a meeting by your supervisor, you must attend that meeting or run the risk of being insubordinate, which is one of the causes for discipline of a teacher. If a supervisor discusses discipline in a meeting, or if you reasonably believe that the matters discussed in a meeting could lead to discipline, you should request a representative from your professional employees' organization to attend the meeting with you. Remember it is your responsibility to ask for a representative. The supervisor has no obligation to offer you representation.

**Q: Two weeks ago, my school system approved my request for leave. On the day of my leave, however, school closed because of snow. Is that leave time still counted against me even though the school system was closed on that day?**

**A:** No. State law provides that a teacher will not be charged with leave if the teacher's school or school district is closed because of some unexpected event, such as snow.

**Q: I am a high school history teacher, and my students just concluded a wonderful project on Alexander Hamilton. I would like to post pictures of my students in period costume on Instagram. Will that cause a problem?**

**A:** When dealing with student information and student photographs, it is best to be cautious. I would not recommend that you post any student-specific information (including photographs) on social media, unless it is an official school-related social media account, and you have obtained both parent and administration approval in advance.



*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.*

# TEA Civic

**Come to the Capitol! Teachers  
Stand up for education! Make your voice heard!**

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.

## TEA 2018 Legislative Agenda

*Move to a fair system*

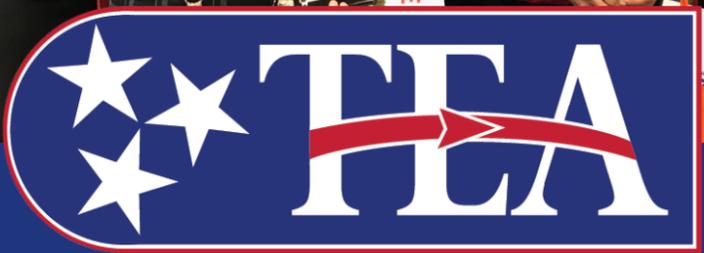
*Increase state funding*

*Secure funding for im*

*Defeat privatization*

*Empower teachers by*

*Pass legislation to str*



TENNESSEE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

**Register online now**

# civication

# 2018

## talk to your legislators!

## mileage reimbursed by TEA!

### Five Priorities:

*reduction of testing and evaluation*

*advocacy for salaries and unfunded mandates*

*implementation of community school model*

*reduction of attacks*

*advocacy for strengthening collaborative conferencing law*

*advocacy to strengthen profession and protect licensure*



[www.TEAteachers.org/Civication](http://www.TEAteachers.org/Civication)

# COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## TEA-backed legislation up in Senate Ed

One of TEA's top legislative priorities this session, HB 2472/SB 2393, sponsored by Rep. Harold Love and Sen. Steve Dickerson, moves to strengthen and expand existing state law on the creation and funding of community schools. Action on the bill was deferred in the Senate Education Committee last week, with the next hearing scheduled for this Wednesday, Feb. 21.

The transformational community schools model has a proven track record of success in creating community-led school improvement and improving student achievement. Communities stand behind what they create, and much prefer organic, community-led school improvement that can meet the unique needs of the children in that community.

TEA has seen a growing support for the transformational community schools model in the

statehouse.

"The model can be implemented in any school and in any community, whether it be an urban, suburban or rural district," said TEA President Barbara Gray, who has traveled with educators, district leaders and elected officials to visit successful community schools in other states to learn more about the model.

Along with partner organization Tennessee Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools, TEA has been gathering support for the community schools model which focuses on academics, child development, family involvement, health and social services, and community support which leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities.

Learn more about how the community schools model can transform Tennessee schools by visiting [www.TennAROS.org](http://www.TennAROS.org).

# Bill seeks to make licensure accessible for out-of-state teachers

As some districts in the state are already feeling the effects of a looming teacher shortage, some state legislators are looking at ways to make becoming a licensed Tennessee teacher more accessible for qualified applicants.

Proposed legislation, HB1529/SB1804, sponsored by Rep. Bryan Terry and Sen. Bill Ketron, seeks to exempt licensed teachers from states with reciprocity agreements from being required to take the Praxis test to transfer their teaching license to Tennessee if they receive a 4 or 5 evaluation score for two consecutive years.

The bill was already recommended for passage and placed on Senate Calendar Committee and is scheduled for the Finance, Ways and Means Subcommittee in the House this week.



"This is a common-sense legislation that removes impediments for experienced, qualified teachers seeking teaching positions in Tennessee," said TEA Chief Lobbyist Jim Wrye. "As the state faces the possibility of a serious teacher shortage, it is important that we do all we can to make Tennessee an attractive place for educators to work, while also maintaining our standards for licensed professional educators."

## Legislators take action on testing, evaluation

### Test transparency from page 1

fresh, non-redundant items that did not appear on the tests in the previous two years, instead of the previous four years for grades 3-8 and the previous three years for high school tests.

TEA is working with the bill sponsors to increase the requirement to 50 percent, which would free up a larger bank of questions that could be released to teachers and parents each year.

The bill has already passed the House Education Instruction & Programs subcommittee and is on the calendar for the full committee this week.

"Legislators overwhelmingly supported the concept of testing transparency and are now coming to realize that the law they put into place is not getting the results they intended," Gray said. "It is encouraging to see our elected officials take action to support the best interest of our students and teachers."

A second bill (HB2207/SB2264), sponsored by Rep. David Byrd (R-Waynesboro) and Sen. Joey Hensley

(R-Hohenwald), aimed at strengthening the test transparency law, revises the percentage of student achievement data based on student growth data that may be calculated in a teacher or principal's evaluation, in the 2018-2019 school year and in subsequent school years, based on the percentage of state test questions released by the department.

"TEA has long argued against the validity of using TVAAS data in evaluations," Gray said. "Rep. Byrd and Sen. Hensley's proposal would motivate the state to uphold their end of the bargain. It also puts a safeguard in place to prevent teachers and principals from being evaluated based on a test they have little confidence in and cannot see."

TEA is encouraging members and parents to contact their legislators to ask for their support of these two bills.

"The parents, teachers and legislators of our state have made it very clear that we want to see the test. It is long past time for the state to follow the law and release the questions," Gray said.



HB2247/SB1835 bill sponsors Rep. Faison (top) and Sen. Southerland



HB2207/SB2264 bill sponsors Rep. Byrd (top) and Sen. Hensley



### 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](http://www.unitedshelby.org).

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

**Retirement healthcare**  
from page 1

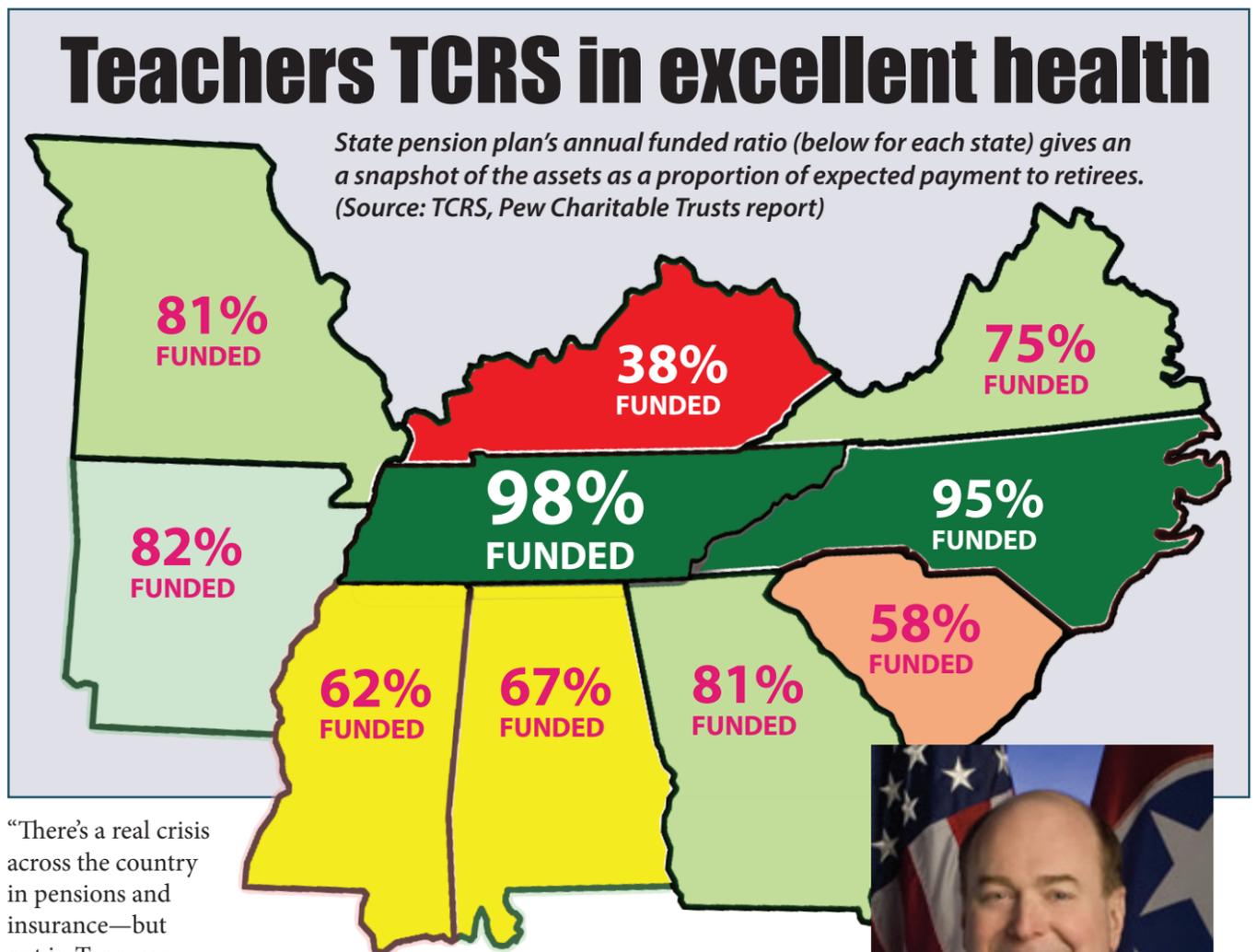
in a budget. Many systems have been putting aside funds to meet these future guarantees and reduce future “red link,” and the state needs to help.

State Treasurer David Lillard has been a leader in solving future retiree healthcare and pension costs, and has engaged TEA and drafted legislation to meet the challenges of promised benefits.

HB1817/SB2241, sponsored by Rep. David Hawk (R-Greeneville) and Sen. Mark Norris (R-Collierville) provides pre-funding future retiree health benefits by establishing a state trust, and setting what the state and local systems need to put into the trust to ensure this important benefit in future years. The bill also authorizes appropriations or other sources for the initial funding of the trust.

“I know things like saving for future benefits is not a head-turner for folks, but it’s critically important. Tennessee has one of the healthiest pension systems in the country, and one of the best fiscal situations of any state, and it is because we don’t shy away from our obligations,” said Jim Wrye, TEA chief lobbyist. “Establishing a trust for retiree health insurance is an important step to protect this critical benefit, and insulate it from future attacks.”

Wrye notes that other states’ retirement benefits are in danger because of years of neglect and debts. There is an effort in Kentucky to abolish public pensions because of politics and low funding levels, and retiree health benefits have been gutted in other states, like Texas and Kansas.



“There’s a real crisis across the country in pensions and insurance—but not in Tennessee—because we work together to fully fund the system, and plan for future bumps in the road,” said Wrye. “It is our tradition here, and one that serves educators well.”

HB1592/1647 by Rep. Charles Sargent (R-Franklin) and Sen. Bo Watson (R-Hixson) is another step in protecting future retirement benefits and to shield beneficiaries from possible harm. Last year with the support of TEA, new trusts were set up for traditional and hybrid TCRS plans, acting as shock absorbers if the plans became unsound or fell short of needed funds to pay beneficiaries.

The bills enhance these trusts, and focuses future use of these savings accounts to pay benefits, not fill in estimated future shortfalls.

“Actuarial tables and accounting rules are not at the forefront of educator concerns, but it is of their association. Making sure educators can retire in health and dignity after years of important public service is critical, one more important reason of having a strong TEA,” said Wrye. “It is sobering to look at the retirement and benefit crises of other states. It is not an accident that Tennessee continues to do what’s right.”



**State Treasurer David Lillard (above) pushed to have Tennessee become the first state to enact a requirement that all defined benefit pension plans offered by public entities, including school districts, must annually fund 100% of the Actuarially Determined Contribution, making sure pension plans remain healthy and sustainable.**

## Legislation could jeopardize many Tennessee teaching careers

**Licenses threatened**  
from page 1

strongest possible terms efforts to protect children and ensure any individual who would violate that sacred trust never sets foot in one of our schools again. What we don’t want are careers ended by minor infractions that are now handled at the local level.”

Taken together, the bills would provide new powers to the state board of education to issue reprimands, or suspend or revoke a teacher’s licenses for a broad array of conduct, much of which are defined in vague terms.

Current state law provides the state board of education authority to initiate licensure action against an educator under certain specific instances. This includes to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of a child, and in the case of a default on student loans or child support.

One of the proposed bills permits board action for violating the teacher code of ethics. Another expands the code of ethics to include terms as broad as “maintain a professional approach with the student at all times” and “conduct themselves in a manner that preserves the dignity and integrity of the education profession.” What’s worse than these vague terms threatening careers, language in the bill requires teachers to report any possible infraction by other teachers of these terms, or they too could face licensure action.

“Over the past years we’ve seen more license suspensions by the state board for things like

tardiness to class,” said Steve McCloud, head of TEA legal services. “Having a bureaucracy in Nashville with no licensed teachers or administrative experience deciding on who is fit to be a teacher, and overriding local administrators discipline decisions, is unacceptable to the profession.”

Violations included in the legislation are currently managed by a local administrator or supervisor, with resulting discipline approved by the local school board. The legislation essentially deems the local discipline process insufficient, and transferring that authority to the state board of education.

Reports of teacher suspensions by a local board of education would be sent to the state board, who would have the power to enhance the punishment to include licensure action using any of the newly described offenses added to the code of ethics.

Teachers understand well that in most cases, a licensure action such as a suspension represents the end of their career. That the state board would be empowered to take such action in virtually any circumstance given the

incredibly vague nature of the language in the bills should alarm every educator.

“No other profession in the state is governed by a board of individuals that have no experience in the field, much less by one who would have such broad latitude to destroy careers for virtually any offense,” said Gray. “It’s already difficult to teach, but can you imagine a simple mistake like being late to class can result in loss of a career by state action? Common sense needs to prevail.”

Other elements of the legislative package do incorporate the findings of the report, and include efforts to strengthen criminal background checks, transmitting discipline data to a national clearinghouse, adding language around sexual misconduct to the code of ethics, and creating a duty to report certain criminal convictions to the board of education. All these efforts support the report’s goal of enhancing safeguards in the hiring process, improving state record-keeping, and clarifying law and policies. All these goals are supported by TEA.

“This issue is too important to play politics with, and we fully support a straightforward attempt to implement the recommendations of the Comptroller’s report,” said Gray.



# TEA working with legislators to rein in unaccountable charter schools

After years of fights in the state legislature to rein in unaccountable charter schools, the 110th General Assembly is considering several bills that would introduce new accountability measures.

Case in point is HB1570/SB1664, sponsored by Rep. Harry Brooks and Sen. Steve Dickerson, which prohibits a charter from operating outside the jurisdiction of the authorizing LEA.

With strong bipartisan support, the bill passed unanimously in the Senate and is headed for the House floor vote.

“TEA has been always been opposed to unregulated or unwanted charter expansion, so we’re happy that more and more legislators are seeing charters for what they are — just another way for so-called “school reformers” to take crucial funding away from our public schools,” said TEA President Barbara Gray.

Tennessee has seen plenty of examples of charters cherry-picking the best students, taking over neighborhoods only to shut down schools later, leaving families and students without a school to turn to.

Since 2012, three state-run charter schools closed in Memphis alone, citing low enrollment and unsustainable operating costs.

To reduce such outcomes going forward, the Brooks-Dickerson bill limits the location of a charter school to the boundaries of the authorizing school

district and requires a charter school to seek a delay in opening if it has not secured a physical location 60 days prior to opening.

Another bill to be considered prevents releasing student information without prior consent by the student, parent or guardian, and limits the time during which a charter school can communicate with an eligible student to two months, from February 1 through April 1.

Filed by Rep. John Forgety and Sen. Steve Dickerson, HB 1463/SB 1605 states that “after April 1, no entity that has received eligible student information pursuant to this section shall communicate with an eligible student without prior written consent from the eligible student or the eligible student’s parent or legal guardian.”

On the other hand, HB 2425/SB 2606, filed by Rep. Mark White and Sen. Dolores Gresham, seeks to withhold state funds from a school district if it fails to provide student information to a chartering authority in a timely manner.

Charter operators rely on student information for recruiting purposes, but school districts in Memphis and Nashville have refused to turn over student data last year, citing federal law.

The White-Gresham bill appears to strong-arm school districts into complying with student data requests by charters by threatening to withhold up to \$35,000, equal to the charter authorizing fee.

In addition to money for salaries, the governor’s budget also includes additional funds for student enrollment increases, inflation for the funding formula, teacher health insurance and TCRS funding, and hiring RTI specialists statewide.

“Unfunded mandates like RTI have plagued districts all across the state, stretching resources and over-burdening teachers to pick up the extra work without extra compensation,” Crowder said. “Increased funding for meaningful programs like RTI will go a long way toward improved instruction and intervention for students, and working conditions for teachers.”

Education funding will be a big focus for TEA members attending Civication during their spring breaks, and for members back home calling and emailing the legislators.

“The governor’s proposed budget is a solid step in the right direction. Now we must follow it up with consistent pressure and communication to members of the General Assembly encouraging their continued investment in public education funding and challenge them to ‘Beat Bama!’” Crowder said.

Make plans now to attend TEA Civication on the Tuesday of your spring break to receive your own “Beat Bama!” button and stand with teachers statewide in advocating for public education funding. Register for free by visiting [www.TEAteachers.org/Civication](http://www.TEAteachers.org/Civication).

## TEA Bill Tracker *The ones to watch*

This 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

#### HB501/SB481 (Pitts/Green)

Adds funding for RTI positions to the BEP formula

#### HB2472/SB2393 (Love/Dickerson)

Community schools bill, see page 6 for more information

#### HB2164/SB1510 (Moody/Massey)

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

#### HB2335/SB2453 (Cooper/Harper)

Requires increases financial transparency for charter schools

#### HB1855/SB1806 (Rudd/Ketron)

Prohibits any mandated assessments beyond those in use during the 16-17 school year through the 21-22 school year

### Need to amend:

#### HB2165/SB2013 (Goins/Gresham)

Expands teacher code of ethics to include several new items

#### HB2009/SB2011 (Goins/Gresham)

Empowers state board of education to issue reprimands or suspend/revoke teaching licenses for violation of teacher code of ethics

### The Bad:

#### HB1481/SB1844 (Dunn/Gresham)

Ties funding for teacher prep programs to TVAAS scores.

#### HB1778/SB1896 (Kane/Gresham)

“Course Access Program Act” Provides for a “virtual voucher” where a student may take online classes paid for by a portion of the student’s BEP funding

### 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](mailto:asmirnov@tnea.org). The frequency of the email updates varies depending on actions taken by the legislature.



#### Teacher salary from page 1

That is a hard thing to accomplish if a teacher can drive across the state line for better pay and not worry about how she is going to pay her bills each month.”

Even with the consistent investment from Gov. Haslam over recent years, Tennessee still falls behind many of our neighboring states in average teacher salaries.

Compared to Alabama specifically, Tennessee’s average teacher salary falls about \$300 short. With an estimated 3 percent increase in Alabama’s budget, TEA estimates Tennessee will need at least a 4 percent overall state increase to “Beat Bama,” a cost of \$110 million.

“The hard work and dedication of our students and teachers have placed Tennessee above many Southeastern states in other benchmarks like graduation rates and academic gains,” Crowder said. “Gov. Haslam and the General Assembly now have the surplus funds to propel Tennessee ahead of our neighbors in teacher pay, too.”