



LEGISLATIVE INSIDER

SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS LEGISLATIVE UPDATE NEWSLETTER

In this issue...

*SCS Legislative Agenda Topics
Start of 111th TN General Assembly
2019 Day on the Hill & Students Storm the Hill*



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA TOPICS

General Restrictions on Unfunded Mandates

Funding

Basic Education Program (BEP) & Response to Intervention (RTI)
Administrative Hearings Regarding Funding
Sales Tax

Opposition to the Creation of a Voucher Program

Charter Schools

Creation or Conversion of Charter Schools
Charter School Application Submissions & Evaluations
Charter School Renewal Application Evaluations
Charter School Revocations
Key Statutory Deadlines
Discipline and Enrollment at Charter Schools
Charter School Funding
Charter School Compliance

Students & Academics

Discipline
Postsecondary Opportunities
Behavioral Supports
Truancy

Teachers

Credentials and Licensure
Teacher Contract Damages
Hiring/Criminal Background Checks
Dismissal Hearings

Student Data Disclosure

Assessments/TNReady

ASD

2019 District Legislative Agenda
Adopted 12/4/2018; Revised 12/11/2018

111th TN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Opening day of the 111th General Assembly convened on January 8th, 2019. This first year of the two-year session, best described as a time of new beginnings for Tennessee politics, began with new leadership, new committees, and a record number of new legislators.

On November 6, 2018, William (Bill) Byron Lee was elected to become the 50th Governor of Tennessee replacing his predecessor Bill Haslam. Later, Governor-elect Lee announced Texas Deputy Commissioner of Education and former teacher Penny Schwinn as his pick to lead the Tennessee Department of Education. Shortly after his inauguration on January 19th, Lee hit the ground running and announced his first legislative initiative, the Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) to expand access to vocational and technical training for Tennessee students; and later announced the Future Workforce Initiative to increase science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) training in K-12 schools as part of his first-year legislative agenda for education.

The beginning of a new era, following eight-years of serving as Speaker of the House, Beth Harwell handed the gavel to Glen Casada (R-Franklin). Others elected to serve in newly elected leadership roles included Rep. Bill Dunn (R-Knox) as Speaker Pro Tem, Rep. Matthew Hill (R-Jonesborough) as Deputy Speaker, Memphians Mark White as House Education Committee Chair, and Karen Camper, the first African-American to hold the position of Minority Leader. Along with these historic changes, House Speaker Casada restructured several committees including combining two education committees and forming four subcommittees to manage K-12 and higher education legislation.

While in the Senate, membership and structure looked basically the same as the previous session with only a few changes that included the election of Jack Johnson (R-Franklin) replacing Memphian Mark Norris as Senate Majority Leader, Ferrell Haile (R-Gallatin) as Speaker Pro Tem, Ken Yager (R-Kingston) as Senate Republican Caucus Chair, Jeff Yarbrow (D-Nashville) as Minority Leader, and Memphian Raumesh Akbari as Senate Democratic Caucus Chair and 2nd Vice-Chair of the Senate Education Committee.

In addition to new leadership and committees, the 111th General Assembly had the largest freshman class since 1973 with 28 new members of the House and 6 new Senators according to Eddie Weeks, Legislative Librarian to the TN General Assembly.



SCS VISITS THE CAPITOL

ADDRESSING ISSUES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

DAY ON THE HILL

On February 18th and 19th the Tennessee School Board Association (TSBA) hosted its annual Day on the Hill event in which school districts from around the State came together for a time of legislative insight and networking. Board Members, the Superintendent and staff were out in full force all eager to meet with their elected officials and advocate on behalf of the District.

Day 1 of Day on the Hill began with Robert Gowan and Elizabeth Millsaps providing members of the Coalition of Large Area School Systems (CLASS) with an in-depth legislative briefing of pending educational bills and issues facing Tennessee public education.

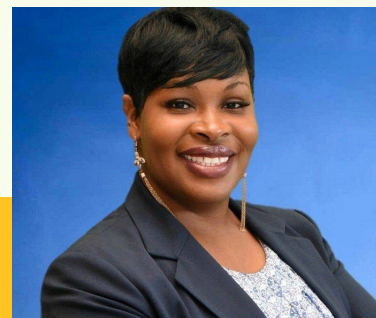
Day 2 of Day on the Hill was fast-paced and full. Beginning at 8:00 AM, Board Members and District staff attended a breakfast that included remarks from Senate & House Leadership, Penny Schwinn, and TSBA Deputy General Counsel Ben Torres. Following breakfast, everyone headed over to the Hill where a lot of ground was covered and meetings were held with several State legislators including House Representatives - Mark White, Jim Coley, Antonio Parkinson, Kevin Vaughn, Thomas Leatherwood, Barbara Cooper, and London Lamar; and Senators - Dolores Gresham, Raumesh Akbari, Sara Kyle, Katrina Robinson, and Brian Kelsey.

During the meetings, information regarding District accomplishments and challenges as well as specific legislation that may impact the District was discussed.

STUDENTS STORM THE HILL

Two-hundred and fifty students and thirty volunteers from Shelby County Schools (SCS) boarded buses in the wee hours of the morning of February 20th destined for the State Capitol in Nashville for Tennessee PTA "Students Storm the Hill" Legislative Day. Thanks to the District's Family and Community Engagement department, student leaders from every SCS high school were provided an exciting opportunity to tour the State Capitol, meet face-to-face with legislators, participate in a mock vote to learn how a bill becomes a law, and take a group picture with Tennessee Governor Lee.

Our time at Day on the Hill and Students Storm the Hill is over but our work has just begun. By the close of the bill filling deadline in early February, over 200 education related bills were introduced leaving the District sifting through a few contentious issues. Over the next couple of months, CLASS and District lobbyists and staff will continue to track bills moving through the Assembly and provide regular updates on the important legislative proposals that may impact SCS. Together, the District's lobbying team, Board, and staff will continue to fight to make a difference in the education of our students.



Stephanie P. Love
Legislative Committee Chair

Stay tuned for the next issue of the SCS Legislative Insider featuring an in-depth analysis of key legislative issues.