

# 2021 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

*Shelby County Schools*  
*Memphis, Tennessee*

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# ABOUT THE DISTRICT

Largest public-school district in TN

23rd largest district in the U.S.

2nd largest employer in  
Memphis/Shelby County

## ENROLLMENT

Total: 106,700  
Non-Charter: 87,600  
Charter: 19,100

## DEMOGRAPHICS\*

73% African American  
16% Hispanic  
7% White  
3% Multi-Race  
1% Asian  
<1% Other  
57% Economically  
Disadvantaged

## OUR SCHOOLS

Total: 214  
District-Managed: 158  
Charter: 56

## OUR EMPLOYEES

Total: 13,800+  
Teachers: 6,600+

\*Race/ethnicity is not mutually exclusive so may not equal 100%.

# MISSION & VISION

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## Mission

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To prepare all students for success in learning, leadership, and life.

## Vision

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To be the premier school district attracting a diverse student population and effective teachers, leaders, and staff all committed to excellence.

# DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

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## SCS STUDENTS SHOW PROMISING GROWTH ON THE NATION'S REPORT CARD

SCS is one of only two U.S. districts with numerical academic growth in 4th/8th grade Reading and Math across various demographic subgroups according to the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

## 1:1 DIGITAL DEVICES

The District provided every SCS student access to a digital device as a part of our ongoing commitment to student equity and 21st century learning to prepare our students for college and careers. More than \$1 million in community donations were received to provide every student with a headset to enhance their virtual learning.

## PLOUGH FOUNDATION MAKES \$1 MILLION DONATION TO SUPPORT SCS SCHOOLS

The Plough Foundation presented Superintendent Dr. Joris M. Ray and SCS Board Members with a \$1 million check to go towards SCS' Continuous Improvement Zone schools.

## SCHOOL BOARD LAUNCHES SCS BOARD CARES INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS & FAMILIES

- Utility Assistance Fund: SCS partnered with SchoolSeed to raise money for families with outstanding utility bills during the virtual learning period. More than 400 families have been supported thus far.
- Mobile Food Pantries: SCS partnered with the Mid-South Food Bank to help families as they continue to face the uncertainties of the Covid-19 pandemic. Families were given a two-week supply of nutritious food.

# INSTRUCTION

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## IMPLEMENTATION FLEXIBILITY FOR RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI<sup>2</sup>)

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to work with the Department of Education in amending requirements of the Response to Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) framework to specifically grant LEAs (1) flexibility in the number of universal screenings required for 6th grade students, (2) autonomy to select the intervention instructional and accountability model to best address the needs of high school students and staff, and (3) authority to determine and implement frequency of the fidelity checks appropriate for the student population.

# COVID-19 RELIEF

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## FUNDING OPPORTUNITY GAPS

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to pass legislation to address existing opportunity gaps by providing funding to:

- Promote district strategies for equitable outcomes (e.g., support for students experiencing homelessness, restorative justice programs, or addressing disproportionate discipline)
- Provide additional post-COVID student support personnel (School Psychologists, Social Workers, Counselors, and Nurses) to ensure that schools are staffed with the necessary support structure for the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students
- Ensure that Tennessee school districts are capable of meeting the nationally recommended staff to student ratios for the following positions
  - School Psychologists, Social Workers, and Counselors  
(American Counseling Association recommended ratio is 1:250)
  - Nurses  
(National Association of School Nurses recommended ratio is 1:750)

# COVID-19 RELIEF

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## COVID-19 RELIEF

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to provide direct aid with the flexibility necessary for school districts to meet the unpredictable and ever-changing needs of schools, staff and students as a result of COVID-19; and to adopt legislation...

### **Mental Health**

Recognizing the need and providing funding for more mental health support for students, teachers and staff especially in the era of COVID-19 related changes to learning environments.

### **Physical Health**

Giving teachers and school staff a high priority to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, when available, to help ensure that schools can operate effectively with in-person education.

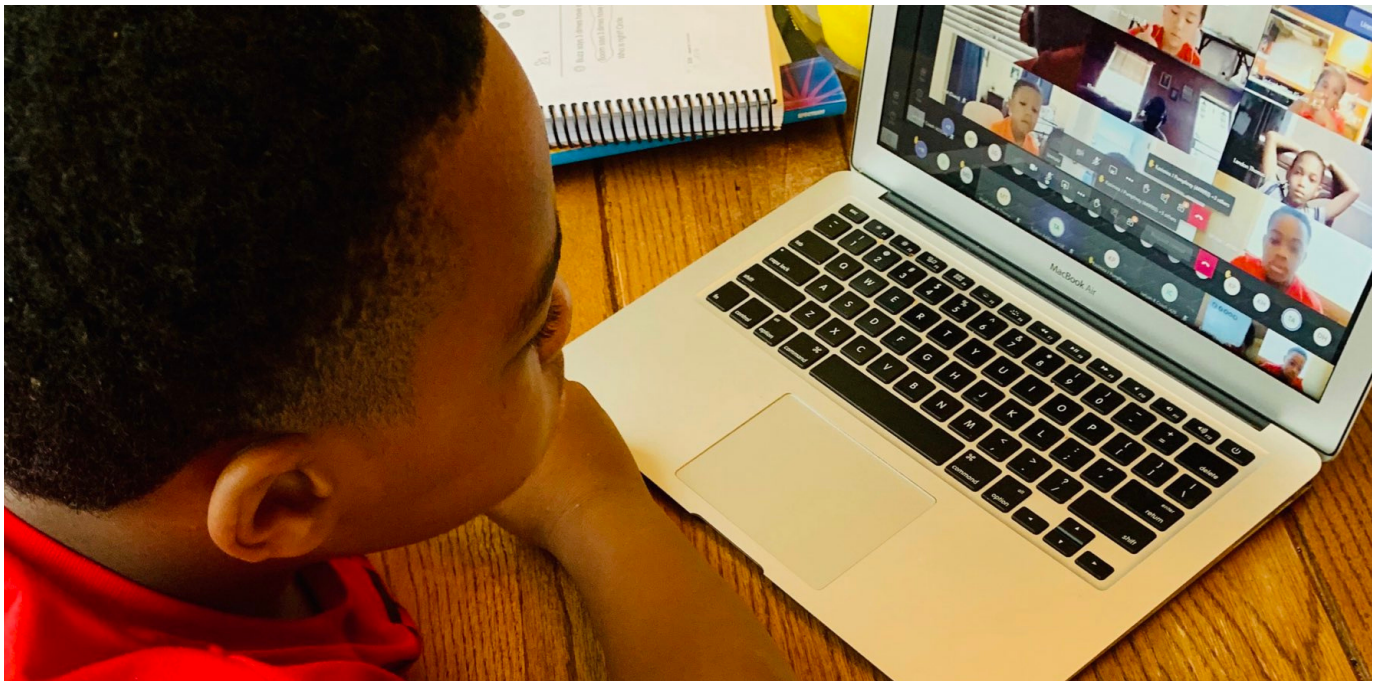
### **Ventilation Systems**

Establishing a statewide plan and funding for improving school ventilation systems to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other pathogens in school facilities.



# FACILITIES/SAFETY

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## **FUND TO REMEDIATE SOURCES OF LEAD IN SCHOOL DRINKING WATER**

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to establish a special recurring fund to ensure drinking water is safe from lead contamination. Appropriations into the fund shall be on an annual basis and made available to local education agencies (LEAs) and other governmental entities for the purpose of remediation of lead-contaminated drinking water sources in schools and child care facilities.

## **CYBERSECURITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS**

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to amend T.C.A. 49-6-801 et al to include cybersecurity as a part of the district-wide and building-level school safety plan that is deemed as confidential and not subject to any open or public records.

# MEDICAID

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## **MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES**

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to pass legislation, for the purpose of Medicaid reimbursement, recognizing TN health board licensed professionals as qualified to make determinations regarding the medical necessity for services provided to a student pursuant to an Individual Education Plan (IEP) when the professional is practicing within the scope of their practice in the school setting.

## **TIME LIMIT FOR FILING TENNCARE FEE FOR SERVICE CLAIMS**

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to require the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration Bureau of TennCare to develop rules establishing the timely filing deadline for submission of claims to a Managed Care Organization (MCO) from 120 days to 365 days.

# EMPLOYMENT

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## WORKER'S COMPENSATION

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to clarify ambiguities in T.C.A. 49-5-714 (a) & (b) relative to required benefit coverage for a teacher who sustained a personal injury caused by a physical assault or other violent criminal act in the course of his/her employment activities. Specifically,

- T.C.A. 49-5-714(a) – (1) clarification with regard to required “benefits, procedures, and standards for determining eligibility” obligations of an LEA without workers’ compensation coverage; and (2) amendment making clear that whether or not an LEA has workers’ compensation coverage, an LEA is not required to provide benefits in excess of one (1) year.
- T.C.A. 49-5-714(b) - (1) clarification with regard to the “full benefits” that the LEA must continue to pay until the earlier of the date on which the teacher is released by the teacher’s physician to return to work or the date on which the teacher is determined by the teacher’s physician to be permanently disabled from returning to work; and (2) amendment making clear that the “full benefits” addressed in subsection (b) references does not include payment of the teacher’s salary and does not require paid or unpaid leave in excess of the one (1) year period set forth in subsection (a) or other leave available under federal or state law.

# EMPLOYMENT



## TEACHER CONTINUING CONTRACT

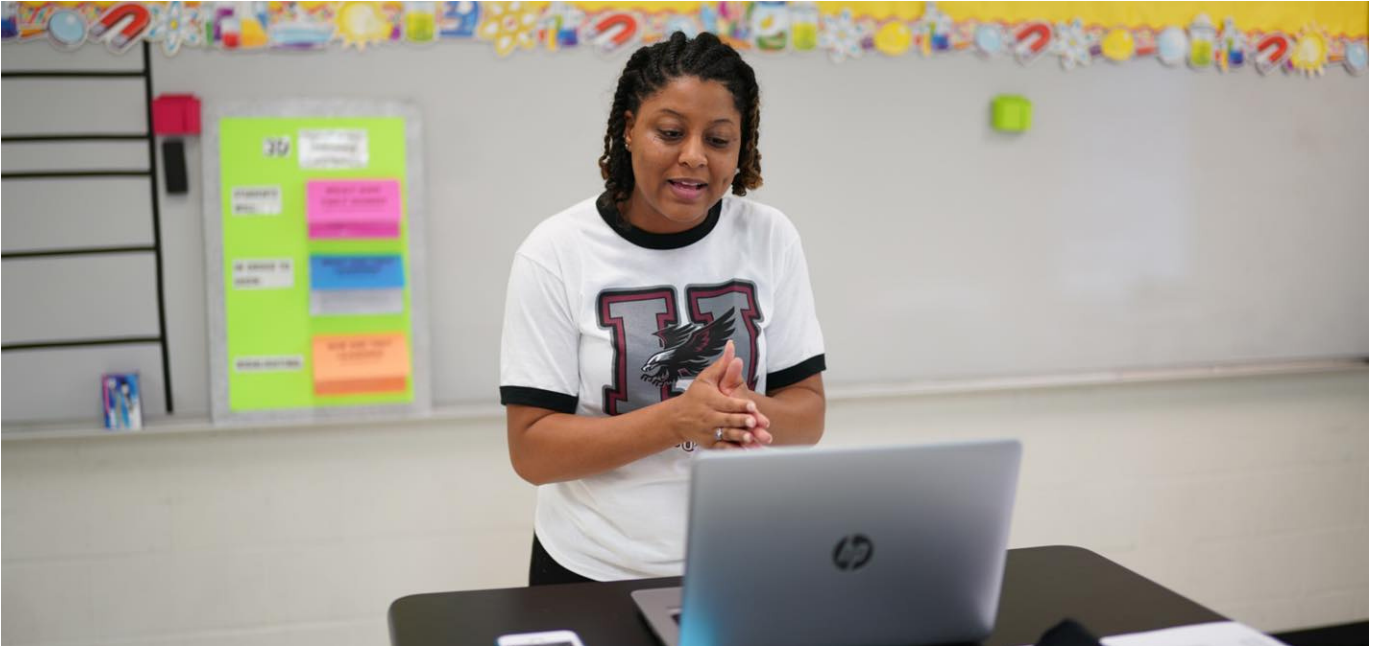
The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to amend T.C.A. 49-5-409 to require written notice of a teacher's dismissal or failure of reelection to be "sent within five (5) business days following the last instructional day for the school year" rather than "received" by this date. Additionally, the Board asks that the statute be amended to clarify that the phrase "last instructional day" refers to the last day of the school year on which teachers are required to report to work.

## BACKGROUND CHECKS

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to allow local education agencies (LEAs) flexibility in determining the suitability and fitness of individuals subject to criminal history record checks by granting time consideration for specific enumerated offenses.

# EMPLOYMENT

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## TEACHER TENURE

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to amend sections of the Teacher Tenure Act to clarify certain aspects of the suspension/dismissal process for tenured teachers. Specifically, the Board asks that the statute(s) be amended to clarify that the remedy set forth in TCA 49-5-511(a)(3) for payment of a teacher’s “full salary for the period during which the teacher was suspended” applies only to the period of suspension by the director of schools addressed in TCA 49-5-511(a)(3) and does not include any subsequent period of time following dismissal of a teacher by the local board of education pursuant to TCA 49-5-512 or to the appeal of such dismissal to the Chancery Court or any further appeal. Additionally, the Board asks that the statute(s) be amended to reflect that the amount of a teacher’s “full salary” pursuant to TCA 49-5-511(a)(3) shall be offset against any amount the teacher earned or should have earned in the exercise of reasonable diligence in some other employment.

# CHARTER SCHOOLS/ASD

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## CHARTER SCHOOL RENEWAL

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to amend T.C.A. 49-13-110 to require an initial charter agreement be granted for a term of five (5) academic years and renewed for five (5) years with autonomy provided to an authorizer to renew for a term not to exceed ten (10) years based on the performance, demonstrated capacities and particular circumstances of each public charter school.

## CHARTER AUTHORIZATION

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to provide an authorizer more discretion in the approval or denial of a public charter school application by taking into account the number of schools in an area and the overall enrollment in those schools.

# CHARTER SCHOOLS/ASD

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## **ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Shelby County Schools urges the Tennessee General Assembly to amend T.C.A. 49-1-614 (k), clarifying that any charter school authorized by the ASD identified as a priority school for two (2) consecutive cycles beginning in 2017 shall not be considered for return to the LEA; and that the agreement with such charter school shall be revoked in accordance with requirements set forth in T.C.A. 49-13-122.

## **SCHOOLS RETURNING TO THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY**

Shelby County Schools urges the Tennessee General Assembly to take legislative action specific to when a low-performing school is returned to a local education agency (LEA) from the Achievement School District (ASD) by (1) granting leniency associated with State-mandated educator evaluations and school/ district accountability metrics; and (2) providing additional funding to adequately address the needs of impacted students.

# CHARTER SCHOOLS/ASD

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## CHARTER SCHOOL COMPLIANCE

The Shelby County Board of Education urges the Tennessee General Assembly to strengthen the ability of authorizers to support and enforce the compliance of charter schools under its authority, and when necessary, assess fines for noncompliance.



# BOARD MEMBERS



**Miska Clay Bibbs, Chair**

**Althea Greene, Vice Chair**

**Stephanie P. Love & Sheleah Harris, Co-Chairs - Legislative Committee**

**Michelle R. McKissack, District 1**

**Kevin Woods, District 4**

**Shante K. Avant, District 6**

**William "Billy" Orgel, District 8**

**Joyce Dorse Coleman, District 9**

**Dr. Joris M. Ray, Superintendent**

