

TennesseeCAN 2023 Legislative Session Summary

TennesseeCAN empowers parents, community members and policymakers to advocate for improved K-12 education policies that put Tennessee's children first. We believe students succeed when they are taught by well-supported, effective educators and that all students deserve equitable access to a high-quality education.

Top Highlights:

HB0433/SB0012 *Passed*

Education Savings Accounts—This legislation extends eligibility for the Education Savings Account Program to students in Hamilton County.

HB1545/SB1532 *Passed*

Governor's Budget—TennesseeCAN supported passage of significant educational investments made in the Governor's budget. Some key items included \$22 million in recurring funding for charter facilities through TISA, \$350 million recurring for TISA, and \$60 million recurring for extending summer learning camps.

HB1086/SB0980 *Passed*

Charter Schools—This legislation cleaned up current code regarding charter schools by tightening the requirements for closing a low-performing charter school, decreasing the number of students from outside the district to be in the lottery, and allowing a low-income preference in lottery.

In addition to the top highlights listed above, there were several pieces of legislation that are relevant to our core policy priorities: **Excellence**, **Equity**, **Choice** and **Transparency**. Below is a list of additional bills that we tracked and engaged on throughout the 2023 legislative session.

Excellence

Guaranteeing excellence in Tennessee's schools requires setting rigorous academic standards and providing an annual aligned assessment—while rewarding our teachers and principals for their achievements and setting the bar high for the students in their schools.

HB1244/SB0910 *Failed*

Elected Superintendents—This bill would have allowed county or city school districts to reestablish the office of elected school superintendent and outlined the qualifications of an elected superintendent. This would limit a district's ability to hire the highest quality candidates and potentially create inefficiencies in governance.



Win



Win



Win

HB0437/SB0300 *Passed*

Assessments—This legislation expands promotion eligibility for students not testing on grade level on the third grade ELA TCAP to students who score at least 50% on a state-approved benchmark assessment. It also allows school systems to support parents in their repeal of a retention decision and mandates that a student in grades K-3 have a tutor if they are retained.



Win

Equity

Tennessee’s policies should provide a high-quality education to every student, regardless of their socioeconomic background, where they live or any other life circumstance.

HB0364/SB0348 *Taken Off Notice*

Fair Funding Formula—This legislation would have required the TISA, a student-focused funding formula, to revert back to a resource-based formula to fund one full-time licensed professional school counselor position for every 250 students.

HB0423/SB1374 *Taken Off Notice*

Fair Funding Formula—This legislation would have required the TISA, a student-focused funding formula, to revert back to a resource-based formula to fund one full-time licensed professional school nurse position for every 750 students.

Choice

Whether it’s a traditional public school, public charter school, private school or homeschooling, every Tennessee family should have the ability to choose the educational option that best meets their children’s unique needs.

HB0559/SB0638 *Passed*

Education Savings Accounts—This legislation expands eligibility for the Education Savings Account Program to include students who were eligible for but could not take advantage of the ESA program due to the legal proceedings regarding the ESA program.



Win

HB0741/SB1024 *Taken Off Notice*

Education Savings Accounts—This legislation would have deleted the Education Savings Account Program.

HB1191/SB0135 *Taken Off Notice*

Charter Schools—This legislation sought to expand access to high-quality facilities by redefining vacant and underutilized facilities, allowing charter schools to access vacant and underutilized facilities, and ensuring rent is at or below fair market value.

HB1435/SB1519 *Taken Off Notice*

Charter Schools—This legislation would have taken away appellate and direct approval authority from the Tennessee public charter school commission, and would have terminated the commission on July 1, 2023.

Transparency

Tennessee must protect our accountability system and provide for greater transparency of information on student, teacher, school and district performance, as well as taxpayer investments in public education.

HB0959/SB0973 *Taken Off Notice*

Open Enrollment—This legislation would have required LEAs to be more transparent about the space available within their schools for enrolling nonresident students. It sought to establish a framework and greater transparency for interdistrict open enrollment. While the current law already allows for the admission of students from outside a school system, this bill would have given greater transparency to that process.

HB0745/SB1026 *Taken Off Notice*

Charter Schools—This bill would have required public charter schools to report all salaries and other payments made to each charter school employee.

HB0902/SB0461 *Taken Off Notice*

Career Technical Education—This bill would have created a transparent, formalized process for data use to better align K-12 and higher education systems with workforce needs and to inform education and workforce policy and investments. The bill would also have created a data center modeled after Kentucky’s renowned KYstats, a web-based platform to provide an overview of progress from education into the workforce.