



LEGISLATIVE INSIDER

SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS LEGISLATIVE UPDATE NEWSLETTER



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Legislative Committee Co-Chairs



Stephanie P. Love
District 3



Sheleah Harris
District 5

112TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECAP

April is the month known for idyllic spring temperatures with mild days and cool nights. For those who live in Tennessee, however, April weather means teetering temperatures and being on guard for extreme weather changes at a moment's notice. The month in review for the Tennessee General Assembly can be compared to April weather. Beyond the national headlines of a transgender sports bill being signed into law (PC40) requiring students to prove their sex at birth, lawmakers passed bills expanding telehealth and mental health services, and several of the District's legislative priorities made their way through both chambers with bi-partisan support.

Below is a run down of several bills that represent issues supported by the District - the calm before the storm.

SB124/HB475 Allows school child abuse coordinators, school teachers, school officials, and other school personnel to provide information relevant to suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse to the child's parent or guardian when required by federal law or regulation.

SB414/HB973 Enacts the "SEM Advancement Act," requires a local board of education or charter school governing body to develop and adopt a policy that establishes criteria for the enrollment of students in grades 7-12 into available advanced English language arts, mathematics, and science courses.

SB479/HB533 Requires the state board of education to issue a teaching license that is equivalent to the teaching license that an individual possesses from another state if the state has a reciprocal agreement with the board. Specifies a similar requirement for principals or supervisors who are licensed in other states.

School Board Members



- Miska Clay Bibbs: Chair, District 7
- Althea Greene: Vice-Chair, District 2
- Michelle R. McKissack: District 1
- Stephanie P. Love: District 3
- Kevin Woods: District 4
- Sheleah Harris: District 5
- Shante K. Avant: District 6
- William "Billy" Orgel: District 8
- Joyce Dorse Coleman: District 9

SB1425/HB925 Requires the template prepared by the state-level safety team for schools to include policies and procedures relating to cyber security to determine risk, implement mitigation planning, and secure cyber infrastructure against cyberattacks.

SBSB1125/HB235 Increases from \$10,000 or more to \$25,000 or more, the amount for which a local board of education or the governing body of a public charter school located in a county having a population of 40,000 or more must make purchases or expenditures by competitive bids.

SB1424/HB1131 Establishes exceptions for certain misdemeanor offenses to authorize an employee or employer that has a contract with a local education agency (LEA), public charter school, or child care program to come in direct contact with children and enter the grounds of a school or child care center.



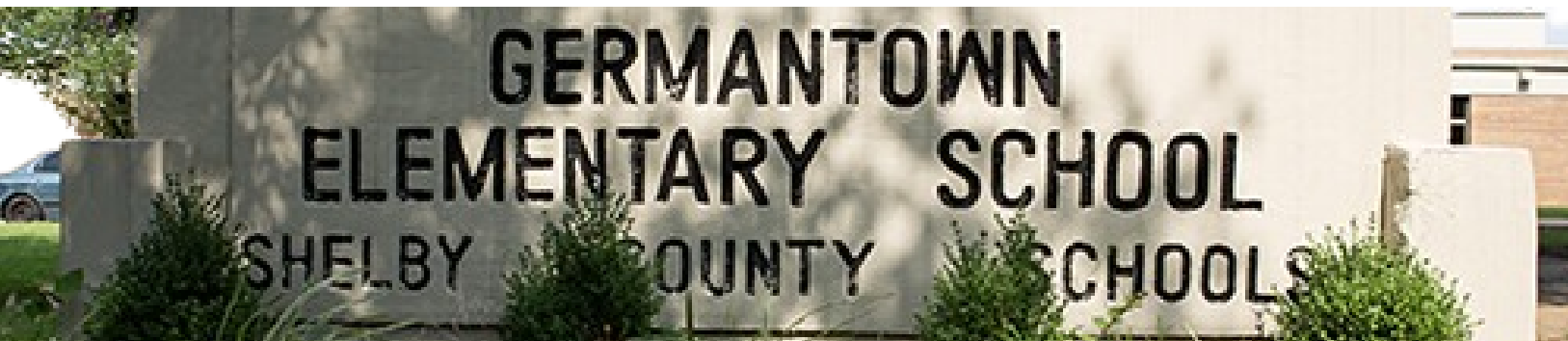
FIRST ALERT: COLD SNAP APPROACHING

March 30th was a beautiful and tranquil day with the high reaching 70 degrees in Memphis. Little did we know that a cold snap was approaching causing temperatures to drop almost 20 degrees within 48-hours. Around the same time, as though moving in tandem with the cold weather, amendments were filed on SB1336/HB1516 and SB898/HB917. A shift that even the most seasoned forecaster could not have predicted.

SB1336/HB1516, also known as the "Takeover" bill sponsored by Rep Scott Cepiky and Sen. Joey Hensley would allow the State to take over a school district based on fiscal and operational responsibility measures and remove a Superintendent and/or any part of the school board members upon recommendation of the Commissioner of Education to the State Board of Education. Action on the bills was deferred to the first calendar of 2022.

SB898/HB917, also known as the "3Gs" bill, sponsored by John Stevens and House Education Administration Chair Mark White, would require the District to cede (give up) ownership of Germantown Elementary, Middle and High Schools to Germantown Municipal School District and Lucy Elementary to Millington Municipal Schools. By a vote of 5 (yea) to 4 (nay), SB898 was defeated in the Senate Education Committee. Essentially preventing SB898/HB917 from having any chance of being signed into law. During the same committee meeting, Senate Education Committee Chair Brian Kelsey, following a brief recess, presented SB924 with a verbal amendment that included the same language as the previously defeated SB898. Senate bill 924 passed as amended by a 6 (nay) to 3 (yea) vote. Days later both White and Kelsey backed down from advancing the amendment in the Senate and House in order to allow conversations to occur at the local level without State intervention.

As April made its exit and May rolled in, we anticipated two things - warmer weather and the 112th General Assembly wrapping up its work. But once again, all necessary ingredients came together to make the weather and legislative temperatures colder than normal. On the final day of the 112th General Assembly, SB623/HB580 a "clean-up" bill to remove or revise obsolete (outdated) statutory language from the Education code was well on its way to becoming law but snowballed to include language banning k-12 instruction regarding systemic racism. A final version of the bill, negotiated via conference committee, was adopted by both chambers.



RECOGNITION and THANKS!

It would be remiss of us not to acknowledge and thank our Political Influencer and lobbyist Fred D. Thompson II for his dedicated service to the District.

Mr. Thompson, affectionately known as Tony, is a highly regarded government relations counsel with over 25 years of government affairs and lobbying experience at the state, local and federal levels. In addition to his work with Shelby County Schools, Tony has represented a wide variety of both public and private interests including global companies, national and state trade associations, medium, small and sole proprietorships, and Tennessee's 3rd largest city. A licensed attorney, Tony graduated from the University of Memphis Law School and Belmont University, and was ranked among the best lobbyists in Tennessee by Southern Political Report. Among his many accolades, Tony excels in the areas of managing complex legislation and political strategy, building non-partisan relationships, and network building among state advocates and key officials. With expert knowledge of the public policy process, Tony has used his skills and leveraged his relationships to help the District navigate the complex and ever-increasing maze of legislative challenges. One of the bright moments of this legislative session was April 7 when Tony testified before the Senate Education Committee and masterfully laid out the potential impact of the "3Gs" bill.

Thanks Tony for tirelessly working behind the scenes to promote the Board's legislative priorities and to protect the interests of the District.



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I have questions about what the intention is about them even wanting the schools... well that sounds like a real estate transaction to me. Not a school transaction about the kids.

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