



The Weekly Update

Tennessee General Assembly
House of Representatives

Rep. Gary Moore

House District 50

rep.gary.moore@capitol.tn.gov

www.moorefortn.net

35 Legislative Plaza ■ Nashville TN 37243 ■ 615.741.4317

Like a thoroughbred horse race, the Tennessee General Assembly had a fast start out of the gate last week.

As I'm sure you have heard, Governor Bredesen called the General Assembly into "Extraordinary Session" on January 12, 2010. The Extraordinary Session was called in order for legislators to focus on education reform as Tennessee and a number of other states begin to compete for new funding from President Obama's "Race to the top" initiative. This federal program would be worth nearly \$500 million to our state if we are successful in obtaining the funding.

With a background in negotiating, I understand the negotiation process. I have learned that neither side usually gets all they want. I also know that members of the Tennessee Education Association (TEA) and members of the Governor's staff have been in intense negotiations since December. After the many hours of negotiations, both sides came to an agreement they felt would be beneficial to both teachers and students in Tennessee.

As a legislator, I certainly did not like everything in this legislation; but with our education system broken and with too few students graduating high school and going to college, I certainly feel like this is a bill we needed to pass. With only three senators and only eight representatives voting against this bill, I think it is safe to say almost everyone here felt the same.

In closing, the Governor called this special session in order to meet the deadline to qualify to be in the running for this funding. However in no way does this vote guarantee that we will receive the federal dollars. Some key components of the legislation are:

- Tennessee Value Added Assessment System Data (TVAAS): Allows school systems to use the first two years of TVAAS data in the evaluation of probationary teachers, with the probationary period remaining at three years; makes teacher-effect data from TVAAS available to higher education institutions as long as the information is not personally identifiable.

- Use of Student Performance Data in Evaluations: The use of student performance data is capped at 50 percent. Of the 50 percent, 35 percent will be based on TVAAS for those teachers who have value-added data. For teachers who currently do not have value-added data, measures will be developed under the auspices of the Evaluation Advisory Committee. These measures will not necessarily be paper-and-pencil tests. The other 15 percent will be chosen from a menu of student performance options (i.e. percent of students meeting state benchmarks on state tests, district- or school-developed benchmark tests, AP Exams, unit tests from approved textbooks, student portfolio assessments, dropout rate, end-of-course assessments) that will be developed by the Evaluation Advisory Committee.
- Annual Evaluation: Requires annual evaluation of teachers utilizing a new streamlined evaluation system.
- Challenge to Evaluations: All teachers will have the right to challenge their evaluations based on inaccuracy of data or the evaluation procedure not being followed.
- Principal Evaluations: Principal evaluations will be based 50 percent on student growth data, the same as teachers.
- Evaluation Advisory Committee: A committee will be appointed to recommend a new, streamlined annual evaluation process for all teachers to the State Board of Education.
- Evaluation System: The new system becomes effective July 1, 2011.
- Evaluation Advisory Committee Composition: The committee will be composed of 15 members: a member from both the House and Senate Education Committees, a K-12 public school teacher appointed by the Speaker of the House and a K-12 public school teacher appointed by the Speaker of the Senate, plus nine members to be appointed by the governor, which must include three public school teachers, two public school principals, one director of a school district and three members representing other stakeholder interests.
- Tenure Hearings: To be conducted by an impartial hearing officer rather than school boards.
- Salary Schedules: The state salary schedule remains intact. Additional salary schedules can be negotiated (where applicable) at the local level.
- Achievement School Districts: Allows teachers to return to their school system if their school is taken over by the state.

I hope this is helpful in understanding the "Race to the Top" legislation. Please call me if you have any questions or comments.

Gary

Weekly Update is for informational purposes only.