

TICUA Policy Update

April 2, 2009

Senate Education Passes Scholarship Bill

The Senate Education Committee passed SB676, the Math/Science Teacher Scholarship bill. The program, which was drafted by TICUA, creates a \$1.5 million pool of funds to be used for high achieving math and science majors to acquire their teaching certification and then teach in Tennessee's public schools. The proposed \$5,000 per year scholarship is tied to a year of teaching for every year the student receives the scholarship. If the teaching commitment is not kept the scholarship must be repaid. To qualify, the student must have a 27 ACT composite score and a 27 in either the math or science sub-score. The program is a public-private partnership; the initial \$1.5 million will come from private funders and then the program will be sustained over time by the State of Tennessee. Senate sponsor Speaker Pro Tempore Jamie Woodson indicated that this one of the most exciting bills she's sponsoring this session. The bill will begin moving in the House this next week.

Speakers Seek a Finish Line for Legislative Action

Lt. Governor Ron Ramsey has instructed the Senate to move quickly toward ending the legislative activity for this session. He informed Senators that all bills must be put on notice for committee action by April 2nd or they will have to wait until next session to be considered. The Senate Education Committee has been notified that they should seek to complete their work by the week of April 27th.

House Speaker Kent Williams has asked Committee Chairs to expedite their work as well. He would like to see all the sub-committees to complete their work by the end of April. Both Leaders are moving to finish the legislative work before the Memorial Day holiday.

Higher Education Budget Hearings Scheduled

The higher education budget hearings have been scheduled for this month in Committees for both the House and Senate. There will be two hearings in the House; April 8th for the Education Committee and April 23rd for the Finance, Ways, and Means Committee. The Senate will hold one budget hearing in the Education Committee on April 7th. Budgets for the Board of Regents, University of Tennessee, Higher Education Commission, and the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation will all be considered.

Lottery Bills Still on the Move

This week the Senate unanimously passed three bills related to the lottery scholarship programs. SB0037/HB0839 expands the Helping Heroes Act to include Tennessee National Guard members, SB0771/HB1143 is a technical corrections bill that clarifies the requirements for continuous enrollment for non-traditional students and SB1541/HB1544 renames the program from the Tennessee Hope

Scholarship to the Tennessee Cohen Hope Scholarship. Only the technical corrections bill passed out of the House Higher Education Subcommittee this week. The Subcommittee will continue its review of the lottery bills this next week.

Keep the Student Letters Coming!

The Tennessee Student Aid Alliance has launched a student “thank you” writing campaign for those students benefiting from the Tennessee Student Assistance Award. It is important that the emails from students flood the halls of the Legislature in order to secure any improvements in the State’s only purely need-based aid program.

Please continue to have your students go to www.tnsaa.org click on the Action Center and following the “Take Action” button. The more letters we can generate the better!