



February 24, 2009

Media Advisory

For Additional Information, Contact:
Steve Doremus, *TSBA Communications Director*
Phone: 615/815-3907
E-mail: sdoremus@tsba.net

Please find the attached Press Release and Media Packet concerning the 2009 Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA) Day on the Hill and Legislative Agenda. The packet includes a general news release concerning Day on the Hill and TSBA's 2009 Legislative Agenda, as well as a listing of 2009 TSBA Legislative Agenda items.

Please feel free to use the included information as the foundation for news stories, which can be localized with comments from your local school board members who attended the Day on the Hill event. If you need additional information or would like to interview members of TSBA's leadership team, please contact me at (615) 741-4706, ext. 233, or by e-mail at sdoremus@tsba.net. For your convenience, this packet is available in .pdf format in the News Release section of our website, www.tsba.net.

The mission of the Tennessee School Boards Association is to assist school boards in effectively governing school districts. Through the years, TSBA has helped school boards and their members reach their highest potential through association programs, meetings and services. TSBA also provides school board members a collective voice in matters of legislation and public education concerns.

For additional information about TSBA, its goals, beliefs, and the 2009 Legislative Agenda, please visit our website at www.tsba.net.

Thank you in advance for your review and consideration of this material.



February 24, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Additional Information, Contact:
Steve Doremus, *TSBA Communications Director*
Phone: 615/815-3907
E-mail: sdoremus@tsba.net

School board members share views with legislators; TSBA takes stand against elected superintendent efforts

(Nashville, Tenn.) School board members from across the state gathered in Nashville on Feb. 24, for a day of legislative networking at TSBA's annual "Day on the Hill" event. This year, featured program speakers included Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey, House Speaker Kent Williams, Senate Education Committee Chair Dolores Gresham, and House Education Committee Chair Harry Brooks.

"Day on the Hill" is designed for school board members and superintendents to study pending education legislation and discuss priorities with local legislators. The event began with a breakfast at the Downtown Sheraton Hotel and was followed by visits to legislators' offices and committee hearings.

"Day on the Hill provides a terrific opportunity for school board members throughout the state to promote public education and seek assistance from the General Assembly with one collective voice," said David Pickler, TSBA President and Shelby County school board chairman. "We look forward to partnering with the General Assembly to continue to improve the quality of our schools in Tennessee and showcase the many successes of public education in our state."

Senator Joe Haynes (D-Nashville) received the "TSBA Legislative Award" for his support of public schools and local boards of education. Award winners are nominated by local school boards or school board members and chosen by the board of directors of TSBA's Legislative Network.

TSBA's 2009 Legislative Agenda

TSBA's 2009 legislative priorities include maintaining board-appointed superintendents, addressing issues related to funding of public education, and securing maximum flexibility for local boards of education in managing schools.

"We will continue to urge the legislators to resist reverting to the outdated practice of electing school superintendents," said Stephen Smith, TSBA's Assistant Executive Director. "With today's unprecedented accountability in public education and the recognition of education as the key to our future success, why would Tennessee want to join only three other states in the nation who limit the selection of a school

(continued)

system's chief executive officer to one who happens to live within a confined geographical area and has the political savvy to get elected?"

In addition to the elected vs. appointed superintendent issue, TSBA hopes the General Assembly will have a serious discussion of Tennessee's system of funding public education at the local level.

2007's adoption of the Basic Education Program (BEP) 2.0, provided much-needed revenue to school systems and a substantial step toward more appropriate funding for education in the state; however, several local governments used the increase to reduce local effort to public education. At a minimum, TSBA believes local governments should have to provide an inflationary adjustment to schools each year to recognize natural increases in education costs. In addition, TSBA would like to see school boards have more fiscal autonomy in school budgeting. Tennessee is one of only 11 states in the country where boards of education have no ability to raise revenue for schools.

"Boards of education have embraced accountability, but accountability without the authority to address funding to meet the very performance standards that have been mandated is, in our opinion, unreasonable," said Smith.

Smith added that the association will continue to urge legislators to recognize the importance of local management of schools and resist attempts to remove local flexibility. "There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution in public education," said Smith. "All of our priorities are designed to give school boards the flexibility, authority and tools they need to do the best jobs for their individual students and communities, all of which have their own unique strengths and challenges."

To view TSBA's complete 2009 Legislative Agenda and 2009 Position Statements, visit the Capitol Watch section of our website, www.tsba.net. To arrange interviews with TSBA officials, contact Steve Doremus, TSBA Director of Communications.

The Tennessee School Boards Association, a statewide, nonprofit organization, is a federation of the state's local school boards. It serves as an advocate for the interests of Tennessee's public school students and school districts.

2009 Legislative Agenda

TSBA firmly believes in the success of Tennessee's public schools and the opportunities they have provided and continue to provide to children. The association acknowledges the challenges that public schools face as well as the need for continued improvement, and its member boards of education are dedicated to reaching the goal of every child achieving to his or her highest potential. We believe we can help accomplish this goal by focusing our legislative efforts on the following areas:

Appointed Directors of Schools

- ✓ TSBA supports the appointment of the director of schools by the board of education and opposes any measure to revert to the process of electing superintendents.

Fiscal Independence

- ✓ TSBA supports a constitutional amendment to provide fiscal independence/taxing authority to boards of education.
- ✓ TSBA supports removing the prohibition on the creation of special school districts.

Basic Education Program/State Funding

- ✓ TSBA supports full implementation and funding of BEP 2.0.

Maintenance of Effort/Local Funding

- ✓ TSBA supports the revision of the definition of maintenance of effort to include an annual inflationary adjustment as well as legislation to prohibit local funding bodies from reducing the local effort made to public schools when the state increases its contribution to education.

Local Decision-Making and Flexibility

- ✓ TSBA supports maximum flexibility for boards of education, including legislation clearly permitting school districts to randomly drug test students who participate in voluntary extracurricular activities.

Collective Bargaining

- ✓ TSBA supports the recognition of principals as management personnel and the removal of principals from the teachers' negotiating unit under the Education Professional Negotiations Act.

Open Meetings/Executive Session

- ✓ TSBA supports legislation permitting boards of education to go into executive session for the purpose of contemplating prospective land purchases, evaluating the director of schools and conducting collective bargaining strategy sessions.

The Tennessee School Boards Association will actively support legislation relative to these and other issues, as determined by our 2009 Resolutions and Position Statements.