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Dogwood Elementary PTO: Legislative Chair Report · November 2026 · Covering October 2026 activity

Prepared by Monica Burt, Legislative Chair · Updated November 9, 2026, with unofficial election results

updated November 9

Updated November 9: the November 3 results are in. They are unofficial until the county certifies them, which is expected by Monday, November 23. The results and what comes next are just below. The rest of this edition, including the voting guide, is kept as first published on October 28.

If you only read this

1. Joy Williams joins the school board in Position 4.
2. State House District 83 is 335 votes apart, with provisional ballots still out.
3. State Senate District 31 is headed for a special election.
4. The legislature convenes January 12.

so close!

335

votes separate the two candidates in state House District 83, with provisional ballots still out.

43.9%

of Shelby County's registered voters cast a ballot.

save the date

Jan 12

The 115th General Assembly convenes in Nashville.

Results and What's Next (updated November 9)

unofficial for now

Every result here is unofficial. These are the election-night counts, and provisional ballots are not yet included. A provisional ballot is one set aside until the voter's eligibility or ID is checked. Each percentage is a candidate's share of all votes in that race, write-ins included. Shelby County races come from the Shelby County Election Commission (SCEC) unofficial results. Statewide totals come from the Tennessee Secretary of State's election results site, which does not report write-ins, so statewide percentages are shares of votes for listed candidates only.

Germantown races

City and school board, unofficial

Race	Votes (share)
Mayor	Tony Salvaggio 12,880 (78.95%) Edgar Babian 3,308 (20.28%) Write-in 127 (0.78%)

Race	Votes (share)
Alderman, Position 1	Scott A. Sanders, unopposed, 13,868 (98.61%) Write-in 195 (1.39%)
Alderman, Position 2	Mary Anne Gibson 8,102 (51.91%) Todd Adams 7,447 (47.71%) Write-in 59 (0.38%)
School Board, Position 2	Dr. Heather Fisher, unopposed, 12,986 (96.95%) Write-in 409 (3.05%)
School Board, Position 4	Joy Williams 9,649 (57.70%) Vicki Gandee 7,044 (42.12%) Write-in 29 (0.17%)

On the school board, Joy Williams will join the five-member board in Position 4. That seat is held now by Vice Chair Angela Griffith, who did not seek re-election. Dr. Heather Fisher, appointed in August, keeps Position 2. Swearing-in dates are not yet posted.

At City Hall, Mayor-elect Salvaggio now holds Alderman Position 5, with two years left in that term. The Daily Memphian reports that city leaders must appoint someone to serve the rest of it, and that the city will announce the process later (Daily Memphian, election night coverage). He has also named a nine-member transition team that will finish its work before January 1. Its education member is Dan Haddow, a former GMSD chief of staff (Daily Memphian, November 4).

State races on Germantown ballots

Governor and the legislature, unofficial

Race	Votes (share)
Governor, statewide	Marsha Blackburn (R) 957,136 (45.52%) Jerri Green (D) 902,953 (42.95%) David Hatley (Independent) 195,564 (9.30%) Lauren Pinkston (Independent) 26,200 (1.25%) 11 other independent candidates, each under 0.25%
Tennessee Senate, District 31	Brent Taylor (R) 38,004 (51.71%) David Weatherspoon (D) 35,234 (47.94%) Write-in 252 (0.34%)
Tennessee House, District 83	Mark White (R) 13,238 (50.48%) Margaret Price (D) 12,903 (49.20%) Write-in 82 (0.31%)

Race	Votes (share)
Tennessee House, District 95	Kevin Vaughan (R), unopposed, 18,483 (94.65%) Write-in 1,044 (5.35%)

In House District 83, the unofficial margin is 335 votes, and provisional ballots are not yet counted. Legislative figures are the SCEC count. Senate District 31 lies entirely in Shelby County. In Shelby County alone, the governor's race was Green 64.72%, Blackburn 26.12%, and Hatley 6.78% (SCEC count, write-ins included). Statewide figures: Secretary of State, governor results.

Which state House race was yours? Most of Germantown is in District 83. Part of it is in District 95.

Not sure? Look up your districts on GoVoteTN.

District 83

Mark White leads Margaret Price by 335 votes.

13,238 to 12,903, unofficial. Provisional ballots are not yet counted.

District 95

Kevin Vaughan was unopposed.

18,483 votes, unofficial.

Federal races

- **U.S. Senate, statewide:** Bill Hagerty (R) 1,138,436 (55.08%); Marquita Bradshaw (D) 886,974 (42.91%); eight independent candidates, none above 0.5%.
- **U.S. House, District 8, districtwide (nearly all of Germantown):** David Kustoff (R) 114,045 (51.62%); Heidi Kuhn (D) 102,406 (46.36%); six independent candidates, none above 0.5%.
- **U.S. House, District 9, districtwide (a small part of Germantown):** Brent Taylor (R) 111,968 (49.63%); Justin J. Pearson (D) 109,429 (48.50%); Dennis Clark (Independent) 2,413 (1.07%); Michelle Davis Head (Independent) 1,804 (0.80%).

Source: Secretary of State, congressional results.

Senate District 31 will need a new senator

Brent Taylor won both the state Senate District 31 race and the U.S. House District 9 race on the unofficial counts. One person cannot hold both seats, so District 31 will open when he leaves the state seat. The timing is still to be confirmed.

The Tennessee Constitution (Article II, Section 15) sets the process when 12 months or more remain before the next general election for legislators. That election is in November 2028, so this rule applies:

- Voters in District 31 elect a successor in a special election. All of Germantown is in District 31. The winner serves the rest of the term.
- The Shelby County Commission may elect an interim senator to serve until that election. It is allowed to, but not required to.
- Only a qualified voter of the district can fill the seat.

Special election dates are not yet set. Source: the constitution's text, as quoted in Tennessee Attorney General Opinion 06-153. Sen. Taylor remains the District 31 senator until he leaves the seat.

All three amendments passed on the unofficial count

Statewide, unofficial

Amendment	Yes	No	Yes votes as a share of governor votes
1. Bail	1,330,845 (67.14%)	651,321 (32.86%)	63.3%
2. No state property tax	1,334,067 (66.74%)	664,715 (33.26%)	63.5%
3. Crime victims' rights	1,526,306 (76.06%)	480,508 (23.94%)	72.6%

An amendment passes only if it meets two tests. It needs more yes votes than no votes. Its yes votes must also be more than half of all votes cast for governor. This year 2,102,474 votes were cast for governor, so half is 1,051,237. On the unofficial count, all three amendments clear both tests. Passage becomes official only after the results are certified. In Shelby County alone, the yes shares were 59.44%, 57.29%, and 70.56%. Sources: Secretary of State, amendment results, and the amendments page for the official text.

Talking about it at dinner?

Tennessee has a big rulebook called the constitution. Grown-ups voted on three changes to it, and most people said yes to all three. Once the votes are made official, the changes pass.

Turnout

In Shelby County, 257,109 ballots were cast out of 585,373 registered voters. That is about 43.9 percent, unofficial. Early and absentee voting reached 183,908 votes through October 29. All of early voting in 2022 came to 120,650, so this year was about 52 percent higher. The last day was the busiest, with 23,818 votes. These are countywide numbers; a Germantown-only turnout figure is not published. Sources: SCEC unofficial results and early voting report, as of October 29.

When the results become official

The SCEC holds a special audit meeting on Thursday, November 12, at 3:00 p.m., at 980 Nixon Drive. Its agenda covers the audit of the November 3 election (agenda). County certification is expected by Monday, November 23, the third Monday after the election. The SCEC's meeting page lists a regular commission meeting, rescheduled to November 22 at 2:00 p.m., at 980 Nixon Drive. The posting does not say whether the commission will certify results at that meeting.

A new legislature and a new governor in January

The 115th General Assembly convenes on Tuesday, January 12, 2027. The Tennessee Constitution sets that first meeting for the second Tuesday in January (Article II, Section 8). The new governor takes office in mid-January; the exact date is still to be confirmed.

Lawmakers began pre-filing bills for the new session on November 4. As of November 9, ten bills are filed (House Bills 1 to 6 and Senate Bills 1 to 4), and none is about education. You can follow any bill on the state legislature website. I also re-checked every bill this report tracks on November 9, and none has changed.

Chalkbeat Tennessee reports that Governor-elect Blackburn wants to expand the Education Freedom Scholarship program, the state's voucher program, to all Tennessee families. It also reports she would revisit teacher licensing, and that naming a new

education commissioner may be an early decision. She told Chalkbeat, "Our schools need to be adequately funded so that they are able to provide the resources and opportunities that our students deserve." Source: Chalkbeat Tennessee, November 4. The GMSD board states its own positions on state education issues in its yearly legislative agenda.

Where the TISA reports stand

Our district's TISA report was due to the state Department of Education by November 1. It was on the October 27 business meeting agenda for citizen input and a board vote. The minutes of that meeting are not yet posted, so I cannot yet report the outcome. The state TISA Review Committee's top-ranked recommendation is to add Medicaid data to how the state counts students from low-income families, at an estimated $233.04 million in state and local money. None of the committee's ideas takes effect unless the General Assembly acts. Details are in the TISA section below.

Dates ahead

- **Tuesday, November 10, 9:15 a.m.:** Dogwood PTO meeting.
- **Tuesday, November 10, 5:30 p.m.:** GMSD board work session, District Office, 3350 Forest Hill Irene Road, per the district calendar. One posted agenda lists November 17, so check the district's board meeting dates before you go. The agenda lists Budget Amendments #12 and #13.
- **Wednesday, November 11, 1 to 2 p.m.:** Dogwood Veterans Day event.
- **Thursday, November 12, 3:00 p.m.:** SCEC special audit meeting.
- **Tuesday, November 17, 6:00 p.m.:** GMSD board business meeting. The agenda is not yet posted.
- **Friday, November 20:** State Board of Education meeting.
- **November 22, 2:00 p.m.:** SCEC regular commission meeting, as posted on its meeting page.
- **Monday, November 23:** county certification expected (the third Monday after the election).
- **Tuesday, December 8, 9:15 a.m.:** Dogwood PTO meeting.
- **Tuesday, December 15, 4:00 p.m.:** GMSD combined work session and business meeting.

- **Tuesday, January 12, 2027:** the 115th General Assembly convenes.

The city has not yet announced the Alderman Position 5 appointment process. Watch the city's Board of Mayor and Aldermen page for it.

START HERE

The Month in Six Lines

The summary as first published on October 28. Each line jumps to its section below. For results, see the section above.

- **Last day to vote early is Thursday, October 29:** two sites are in Germantown, and both are open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- **Election Day is Tuesday, November 3:** 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at your own precinct, with a photo ID. An expired Tennessee driver's license counts.
- **Your ballot depends on your street:** everyone in Germantown is in state Senate District 31. Your state House and U.S. House races depend on your address.
- **Early voting is well ahead of 2022:** 141,369 county votes through October 27, compared with 89,153 at the same point four years ago.
- **Two school funding reports came due:** both cover TISA, the state funding formula. One is from our district on reading and math goals, and one is from a state committee.
- **Money moved in October:** the city sold school bonds, the board funded a new track and field from its reserves, and leftover summer camp money will help pay for tutors at each elementary school.

About This Edition

This edition goes out the night before the last day of early voting, so I put the voting details first. You will find the hours, the Germantown sites, the ID rules, and a district-by-district guide to your ballot. I list every candidate evenly, and I do not endorse anyone.

Our district is the Germantown Municipal School District (GMSD), and our group is the Dogwood Elementary Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). October was a busy month for school money: two reports on TISA (Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement), the state's school funding formula, came due, the city sold bonds, and the school board put a $10 million city transfer for Houston High on its agenda. The board also approved a new track and field, paid from district reserves, and more tutoring at our elementary schools. I also correct two district details from last month.

Update, November 9: I added the unofficial results and next steps at the top. The voting sections below are kept as first published, so their dates have passed.

How to Vote

Early voting: last day is Thursday, October 29

Any Shelby County voter may use any early voting site, and satellite sites are open **11 a.m. to 7 p.m.** The Shelby County Election Commission (SCEC) office at 157 Poplar Avenue is open **9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

In Germantown: Compassion Church, 3505 S. Houston Levee Road, and New Bethel MB Church, 7786 Poplar Pike.

See every site: SCEC early voting locations and hours.

Election Day: Tuesday, November 3

Polls are open **7 a.m. to 7 p.m.**, and anyone still in line at 7 p.m. may vote.

On Election Day you must vote at **your assigned precinct**, which may not be the place where you voted early.

Find your polling place and your exact ballot on GoVoteTN, from the Tennessee Secretary of State, or in the free GoVoteTN app.

On paper? Scan this code with your phone camera to open GoVoteTN (sos.tn.gov/govotetn), where your address shows your polling place, your districts, and your exact ballot.

Not sure you are registered? Check your status on the state's voter lookup. The deadline to request an absentee ballot passed on October 24. Source for dates and hours: the SCEC key dates and voter checklist.

Bring a photo ID

Tennessee requires a photo ID to vote in person, and some IDs count even if they have expired.

Accepted, even if expired

- Tennessee driver's license with your photo (a Real ID is not required)
- U.S. passport
- Photo ID from the federal government or the State of Tennessee
- U.S. military photo ID
- Tennessee handgun carry permit with your photo

Not accepted

- College student IDs
- IDs from other states
- City or county IDs, including library cards

One exception: first-time voters who registered by mail or online and bring an expired ID must also show a document with their name and address, such as a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, or paycheck.

No ID with you? You can vote a provisional ballot, which is set aside until your ID is checked. You then have two business days after the election, which is Thursday, November 5, to show an accepted ID at an SCEC office. Some voters are exempt, such as people with a religious objection to being photographed. Read the full rules from the Tennessee Secretary of State or the SCEC.

Early voting so far

Through Tuesday, October 27, Shelby County counted **141,369** early and absentee votes. That is about 59 percent higher than the 89,153 counted at the same point in 2022. This year's count has already passed the total for all of early voting in 2022, which was 120,650. These are countywide numbers, not Germantown alone. In 2022, the last day of early voting was the busiest, with 18,229 votes countywide, so if you plan to vote on Thursday, plan for a possible wait. Source: SCEC early voting daily report, as of October 29 (final), which also shows the October 27 figures.

Your November 3 Ballot, by District *as of October 28*

If your family lives outside Germantown, for example as a tuition transfer family, you will not see the city or GMSD school board races. Check your own ballot on GoVoteTN.

Every Germantown voter sees the same city races, the governor's race, the U.S. Senate race, and three state amendments. Two races change with your address: your state House seat and your U.S. House seat. Tennessee redrew its U.S. House map in a special session on May 5 to 7, 2026 (Memphis City Council resolution), so your district may differ from 2024 (Associated Press report). Here is how the city splits, based on SCEC precinct data.

TENNESSEE SENATE
District 31
All of Germantown.

TENNESSEE HOUSE
District 83 or 95
Depends on your address.

U.S. HOUSE
District 8 or 9
Nearly all of the city is in 8. Only a small part is in 9.

Your ballot at a glance

Race	If you live in State House District 83	If you live in State House District 95
Mayor	Yes	Yes
Alderman, Positions 1 and 2	Yes	Yes
School Board, Positions 2 and 4	Yes	Yes
Governor	Yes	Yes
U.S. Senate	Yes	Yes
Tennessee Senate	District 31	District 31
Tennessee House	District 83	District 95
U.S. House	District 8 for most addresses; District 9 for a small area in precinct 12-03	District 8
Three constitutional amendments	Yes	Yes

To see your own districts and your exact ballot, type your address into GoVoteTN. You can also use the SCEC district and polling place lookup.

Two corrections from last month. My October edition said Germantown is split across more than one state Senate district. That was wrong. All of Germantown is in Senate District 31. Only the state House is split, between Districts 83 and 95. October also described Brent Taylor's U.S. House District 9 race without saying that only a small part of Germantown votes in it. Nearly all of the city is in U.S. House District 8. Source: SCEC precinct data, behind its district lookup. I am sorry for the mix-up.

Who decides what

The offices on your ballot do different jobs for our schools. Only the school board and the state decide how our schools are run; the city's role is money and buildings.

Shelby County also helps fund GMSD. In the district's revised general fund budget for this year, county property, sales, and wheel taxes total about $29.6 million, or about 37.5 percent. City money, mostly the yearly contribution, is about $3.5 million, or about 4 percent. The County Commission is not on the November 3 ballot. Source: GMSD September financial report.

Per student, Germantown's city cash payment is the highest of the six suburban districts, at about $510. That figure uses 2026-27 budget amounts reported by the Daily Memphian and federal enrollment counts. City officials told the paper the city gives more than the law requires, counting debt on school buildings and grounds care. The city's budget summary lists $56 million in operating support and $47 million in capital investment since GMSD began. The state rule sets a floor equal to a 15-cent tax on property "for the current year." The school board reads that floor as rising when property values rise. Its May 19 minutes say passing the budget "should not be construed as a waiver of, or agreement with, the City's position." This report takes no side on that question.



1 The roof: the state

Sets the rules over everything: the TISA formula (Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement), the voucher program, and testing rules. State money is about half of our district's budget.

On your ballot: governor, state Senate, state House, 3 amendments

2 Inside: the school board

Runs the schools. Five elected residents set policy, prepare the budget, and hire and oversee the superintendent.

On your ballot: Position 4 (Position 2 is unopposed)

3 The foundation: the city

Helps pay and build, with no say in how schools are run. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA), with six elected members, sets a yearly school contribution of about $3.08 million. GMSD cannot issue bonds under Tennessee law, so the city issues bonds for school buildings and can repay them.

On your ballot: Mayor, Alderman 1 and 2

City of Germantown races (every Germantown voter)

Mayor (open seat, Mayor Palazzolo is not on the ballot)

Edgar Babian

MAYOR

On the ballot as: No party label · Status: Open seat

Current or most recent public role: Former deputy chief, Germantown Fire Department

Campaign website: edgarbabian.com

Tony Salvaggio

MAYOR

On the ballot as: No party label · Status: Open seat

Current or most recent public role: Alderman, Position 5

Campaign website: salvaggioforgermantown.com

Alderman, Position 2 (contested)

Todd Adams
ALDERMAN, POSITION 2
On the ballot as: No party label · Status: Not the incumbent
Campaign website: toddadams4germantown.com

Mary Anne Gibson
ALDERMAN, POSITION 2
On the ballot as: No party label · Status: Incumbent (also the current Vice Mayor)
Campaign website: maryannegibson.com

School Board, Position 4 (contested, open seat)

The current holder, Vice Chair Angela Griffith, is not on the ballot (board roster).

Vicki Gandee
SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 4
On the ballot as: Republican Party nominee · Status: Open seat
Listed on the official sample ballot: electionsshelbytn.gov

Joy Williams
SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 4
On the ballot as: Independent candidate · Status: Open seat
Campaign website: choosejoy4gmsd.com

Unopposed seats

Scott A. Sanders
ALDERMAN, POSITION 1 (UNOPPOSED)
On the ballot as: No party label · Status: Incumbent
Listed on the official sample ballot: electionsshelbytn.gov

Dr. Heather Fisher
SCHOOL BOARD, POSITION 2 (UNOPPOSED)
On the ballot as: Republican Party nominee · Status: Incumbent (appointed to Position 2 in August 2026)
Campaign website: drheatherfisher.com

Mayor and alderman candidates appear on the ballot without party labels. School board labels are as printed on the SCEC official sample ballot, which is also the source for every name on this page. Where I found no campaign website or Ballotpedia profile, the card links to that sample ballot. City incumbents are from the city's Board of Mayor and Aldermen page.

State races

Governor (every voter; open seat)

Marsha Blackburn
GOVERNOR
On the ballot as: Republican Party nominee · Status: Open seat
Campaign website: marshablackburn.com

Jerri Green
GOVERNOR
On the ballot as: Democratic Party nominee · Status: Open seat
Campaign website: greenforgovernor.com

Also running for governor, as independent candidates (in ballot order, each linked to a Ballotpedia profile): Misam Abidi, Dean Brewer, Ray Brown, David Hatley, Wendell Jackson, Charles Van Morgan, Eddie Lee Murphy, Lauren Pinkston, Victor L. Scoggin, Dave Seeman, Karl Knox Smithson, L. Webb Taylor, and Robert C. Vick. There is also a write-in line.

Tennessee Senate, District 31 (every Germantown voter)

Brent Taylor
TENNESSEE SENATE, DISTRICT 31
On the ballot as: Republican Party nominee · Status: Incumbent
Legislator page: capitol.tn.gov

David Weatherspoon
TENNESSEE SENATE, DISTRICT 31
On the ballot as: Democratic Party nominee · Status: Not the incumbent
Campaign website: davidweatherspoonfortn.com

Tennessee House, District 83 (many Germantown addresses)

Mark White
TENNESSEE HOUSE, DISTRICT 83
On the ballot as: Republican Party nominee · Status: Incumbent
Campaign website: votemarkwhite.com

Margaret Price
TENNESSEE HOUSE, DISTRICT 83
On the ballot as: Democratic Party nominee · Status: Not the incumbent
Campaign website: votepricetnhouse.com

Tennessee House, District 95 (some Germantown addresses)

Kevin Vaughan
TENNESSEE HOUSE, DISTRICT 95 (UNOPPOSED)
On the ballot as: Republican Party nominee · Status: Incumbent
Ballotpedia profile: ballotpedia.org

Incumbent status for state and federal races is from each candidate's Ballotpedia profile.

> **One name appears twice.** Brent Taylor is on the ballot for Senate District 31 and also for U.S. House District 9. Nearly all Germantown voters will see him only in the Senate 31 race, and if he wins the U.S. House seat, he would leave the state Senate seat.

Federal races

These offices sit further from day-to-day school decisions, so I list them in brief, with each name linked to a campaign website or a Ballotpedia profile.

U.S. Senate (every voter): Bill Hagerty (Republican, incumbent), Marquita Bradshaw (Democrat), and independent candidates Tharon Chandler, Andrew Gerena, Jeremy Dean Hearn, Robert Jones, James William Macon III, Yoshi D. Matthews, David Sutman, Jr., and Catherine Barcel "Barcy" Whitson.

U.S. House, District 8 (nearly all of Germantown): David Kustoff (Republican, incumbent), Heidi Kuhn (Democrat), and independent candidates Adam D. Austill, Wendell "Wells" Blankenship, Antonio Futch, Pamela Jeanine "P." Moses, Horace Taylor, and Henry J. Ward, III.

U.S. House, District 9 (a small part of Germantown): Brent Taylor (Republican), Justin J. Pearson (Democrat), and independent candidates Dennis Clark and Michelle Davis Head. No incumbent is running in District 9. The small part of Germantown in District 9 is in precinct 12-03, which votes on Election Day at St. Marks United Methodist Church, 8255 Winchester Road, Memphis (SCEC polling locations).

Three state constitutional amendments (every voter)

- **Amendment 1** would let a court hold a defendant without bail before trial for certain serious crimes, and the court would have to state its reasons on the record.
- **Amendment 2** would bar the legislature from imposing a state property tax. Tennessee has no state property tax today, and the city and county property taxes that help fund our schools are separate.
- **Amendment 3** would clarify existing rights for crime victims and add new ones.

One rule is worth knowing: an amendment passes only if it gets more yes votes than no votes, and its yes votes are more than half of all votes cast in the governor's race. So leaving an amendment blank while voting for governor makes it harder to pass. Read the official text and the Attorney General's summaries on the Secretary of State's amendments page. Ballotpedia has a plain-language version. This report takes no position on any amendment or race.

Questions to ask, local versus state

Ask everyone running for the same office the same things, which keeps it fair. The questions differ by level, because each office controls a different part of our schools.

Mayor and aldermen

- How will you work with the school board, and how often will you meet?
- How will the city keep kids safe around our schools, including traffic and crossings?
- How will new housing affect enrollment and space in our schools?
- When a school needs building help, how should the city decide?

School board

- What are your top priorities for the district?
- How will you keep class sizes manageable?
- How will you recruit and keep good teachers?
- How will you keep parents informed and involved?

Governor and legislature

- How should the state fund public schools through TISA?
- What is your view of the voucher program and its effect on districts like ours?
- What would you change, if anything, about state testing?
- What would you do about teacher pay?

Nonpartisan tools to research every candidate

- **GoVoteTN, from the Tennessee Secretary of State:** your exact ballot, districts, and polling place by address. sos.tn.gov/govotetn
- **Vote411, from the League of Women Voters:** candidates answer the same questions in their own words. vote411.org
- **Ballotpedia:** a page for each race and many candidates. ballotpedia.org
- **Shelby County Election Commission:** the official sample ballot and voting details. electionsshelbytn.gov

Two TISA Reports Came Due *follow the money*

TISA is the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement, the formula the state uses to fund schools. Last month I flagged one state TISA report due November 1. It turns out there are two: one from our district and one from a state committee. They are easy to mix up, so here they are side by side.

1. Our district's TISA report

Every district must set goals for student achievement each year and explain how its budget supports them (Tennessee Code 49-3-112). The report must go to the public for comment before it is sent to the state Department of Education by November 1. GMSD

presented it at its October 20 work session, and it was on the October 27 business meeting agenda for citizen input and board action. Sources: the October 20 agenda, the October 27 agenda, and the state's TISA guide.

The district's one-page summary reports these figures:

- **Third-grade reading:** 74.5 percent of GMSD third graders scored proficient or above in 2025-26. The district says it "narrowly missed its 75% target." The state's goal for every district is 70 percent.
- **Math:** the district says results beat its targets in every tested grade. In the elementary grades, 84 percent of second graders, 73.9 percent of third graders, 83.4 percent of fourth graders, and 79.3 percent of fifth graders were proficient.
- **Goals for May 2029:** 84 percent of third graders proficient in reading, and math proficiency in grades 3 to 5 rising from 79.3 percent to 83 percent.
- **Plans:** early reading work in kindergarten through second grade, small-group help, more tutoring, and math coaching.

Source: GMSD TISA report highlights, presented October 20 and attached to the October 27 agenda.

2. The state committee's TISA report

The state's TISA Review Committee writes an annual report for the governor and lawmakers, due by November 1 (Tennessee Code 49-3-113). This year a spring law also asked it to study how schools count economically disadvantaged students, meaning students from low-income families, who bring extra money through the formula. The committee met on October 28 with a vote on the report on its agenda, and the final report is posted. Its members include Rep. Mark White, the District 83 incumbent on this ballot, who chairs the House Education Committee (report, page 5).

The committee ranked five recommendations for the 2027-28 school year:

1. Add Medicaid eligibility data to how the state counts economically disadvantaged students. State staff estimate the cost at about **$233.04 million**: $163.1 million from the state and $69.9 million from local governments.
2. Add money for school buildings to the formula.
3. Add money for mental and behavioral health support.
4. Change how small districts are defined. GMSD is not a small district.

5. Raise funding for some special education categories.

The report also compares teacher pay. GMSD's weighted average salary for instructional staff in 2025-26 was $68,041.85, the 12th highest in the state. The statewide figure was $60,826. This is a state calculation based on each district's salary schedule, not the actual average paycheck. None of these recommendations take effect on their own; any change would need action by the General Assembly. Sources: the October 28 meeting page and the committee's final report.

> **Why this matters for Dogwood:** third-grade reading is the number closest to our school, and the district report shows where it stands against the district's own target. The state report is about the formula that provides about half of GMSD's budget. The report does not estimate what any change would mean for GMSD in dollars.

What Happened in October *a busy month*

The board met three times in October: a special-called meeting on October 6, a work session on October 20, and a business meeting on October 27. All were at the District Office, 3350 Forest Hill Irene Road, and meeting dates are on the district's board page.

New track and field, and more elementary tutors (October 6)

At a special-called meeting, the board voted 5-0 to award $3,176,285 for a new multipurpose track and field. It will turn two fields in the former Houston Levee Park area into one synthetic turf field with a track, bleachers, lighting, and a scoreboard. The money comes from the district's own reserves, through Budget Amendment #9, which moves $3.35 million from reserves for the project. This is district money, separate from the city's Houston High bond.

The board also voted 5-0 to roll over $156,681 in unspent state summer camp funds. The money will partly fund two part-time tutors at each elementary school, plus tutoring supplies. Sources: draft October 6 minutes and the October 6 agenda.

> **Why this matters for Dogwood:** Dogwood is one of the elementary schools set to share in the part-time tutors. Of everything the board did in October, this is the item that reaches our building most directly.

Houston High money moved on both sides

On October 7, the City of Germantown sold $13.185 million in general obligation improvement bonds. A general obligation bond is money the city borrows and repays from its general budget. It also sold $11.5 million in bonds to refinance older debt. Source: the Bond Buyer sale results, a trade publication.

On the school side, the October 27 consent agenda included Budget Amendment #11. It would record a $10 million transfer from the city for the Houston High cafeteria and fine arts project. A consent agenda is a group of routine items the board approves with one vote. Source: Budget Amendment #11.

The transfer policy vote is now on the record

Last month I reported that the board passed its transfer-priority change on September 29. The draft minutes of that meeting are now posted, and they record a 5-0 vote to approve revisions to Policy 6.201 (as listed in the minutes), the inter-district open enrollment policy. Andy Ellis made the motion, and Dr. Heather Fisher seconded it. Source: draft September 29 minutes.

The minutes do not spell out the tuition terms. The Daily Memphian reported on September 30 that grandchildren of Germantown residents may attend tuition-free if there is space, after resident students. Children whose parents graduated from Houston High, or from Germantown High before August 2014, also get enrollment priority, but pay tuition if they live outside Germantown. The change applies to enrollment for 2027-28. The district's current tuition for Shelby County families outside Germantown is $535 for 2026-27; the 2027-28 rate is not posted yet. Source: GMSD tuition page.

October 27 business meeting

These items were on the agenda, and since the minutes are not posted yet, I will report the outcomes next month.

- The district's TISA report, with time for citizen input.

- On the consent agenda: the September and October 6 minutes, a state compliance report, Budget Amendment #10 for a $157,138 school security grant, and Budget Amendment #11 for the $10 million Houston High transfer.

Source: October 27 agenda.

Tennessee State Legislature

The General Assembly is out of session until January 2027, so no bills moved in October. I re-checked each status on the state legislature website on October 28.

- **Voucher expansion (HB 2532): enacted, signed May 2026 (Public Chapter 963).** It raises the cap on Education Freedom Scholarships (EFS) to 35,000 for 2026-27; an EFS is a state-funded voucher a family can use toward private school costs.
- **Open enrollment (HB 349): failed.** It died in the House K-12 Subcommittee on a 4-4 tie on March 24.
- **School safety (HB 1507): did not pass.** It would have required a psychiatric exam before some expelled students return, and it died when the session ended.
- **Enrollment and immigration status (HB 793): did not become law.** As amended, it would have let school districts and charter schools refuse to enroll students without documents showing U.S. citizenship, pending citizenship, or legal immigration or visa status, unless the family paid tuition. It stalled in the Senate in March.
- **Low-income student study (SB 2385 / HB 2485): enacted as HB 2485 (Public Chapter 1032, signed May 21, 2026).** This is the law behind the state committee's TISA study above.

Rep. Mark White, the District 83 incumbent on this ballot, chairs the House Education Committee and serves on the state's TISA Review Committee (TISA report, page 5).

The State Board of Education held an October 22 public hearing on proposed rule changes, including the EFS rules. Its next meeting is November 20. Source: State Board hearing notice.

Why the state picture matters for Dogwood: state money makes up about 51 percent of GMSD's revised general fund budget for this year, based on the district's September financial report. (This total includes about $3.9 million drawn from reserves. Counting revenue only, the shares are about 54 percent state, 40 percent county, and 5 percent city.) Because those dollars follow enrollment, the voucher program and the TISA formula are worth watching over time.

Looking Ahead: Dates and How to Engage *save these*

- **Thursday, October 29:** last day of early voting. Satellite sites 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; SCEC office 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. See the sites.
- **November 1:** both TISA reports are due to the state.
- **Monday, November 2:** no school for Dogwood students (school calendar).
- **Tuesday, November 3:** Election Day, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at your assigned precinct. Find yours on GoVoteTN.
- **Thursday, November 5:** last day to show an ID if you voted a provisional ballot.
- **Tuesday, November 10:** Dogwood PTO meeting, 9:15 a.m. GMSD board work session, 5:30 p.m.
- **Wednesday, November 11:** Dogwood Veterans Day event, 1 to 2 p.m. (school calendar).
- **Tuesday, November 17:** GMSD board business meeting, 6:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday, December 15:** GMSD combined work session and business meeting, 4:00 p.m.
- **January 2027:** the new General Assembly convenes.

How to engage: confirm your registration (tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup), learn about the candidates, vote, attend a public board meeting, track bills at wapp.capitol.tn.gov, and bring questions to the Legislative Chair.

Questions from Dogwood Families *you asked*

Can I vote at any polling place on Election Day?

No. You may use any site in the county during early voting, but on November 3 you must vote at your assigned precinct. GoVoteTN shows you where it is.

My driver's license expired. Can I still vote?

Yes. A Tennessee driver's license with your photo counts even if it has expired, but college IDs and city or county IDs do not. If you are a first-time voter who registered by mail or online, also bring a document with your name and address, such as a current utility bill or bank statement. See the full ID rules.

What happens if I skip the amendments?

Your other votes still count. But an amendment needs yes votes from more than half of everyone who votes for governor, and a blank does not count toward reaching that bar.

Who should I vote for?

That is your call, and this report does not endorse anyone. The tools above treat every candidate the same, and the questions to ask work for any race.

Have a question for a future edition? Email the Legislative Chair at legislative@dogwoodpto.org.

Contact Directory

When reaching out, identify yourself as a Dogwood Elementary parent and reference the specific bill number or issue.

State Legislature

Rep. Mark White, State Representative, District 83 (R), rep.mark.white@capitol.tn.gov

Rep. Kevin Vaughan, State Representative, District 95 (R), for Germantown addresses in District 95, rep.kevin.vaughan@capitol.tn.gov

Sen. Brent Taylor, State Senator, District 31 (R), sen.brent.taylor@capitol.tn.gov. Note: Sen. Taylor also won U.S. House District 9 on the unofficial count. District 31 will get a new senator through a special election, and the Shelby County Commission may name an interim. See results.

GMSD School Board

Brian Curry (Chair), Angela Griffith (Vice Chair), Ryan Strain, Andy Ellis, and Dr. Heather Fisher (Position 2), all reachable through gmsdk12.org. Joy Williams won Position 4 on the unofficial count and will succeed Angela Griffith when seated.

GMSD Administration

Jason Manuel, Superintendent, through gmsdk12.org.

City of Germantown

Mayor Mike Palazzolo, through germantown-tn.gov. Mayor-elect Tony Salvaggio takes office after the results are certified; the swearing-in date is not yet posted.

Alderman Sherrie Hicks, Position 3, Education Commission liaison, shicks@germantown-tn.gov.

As always, I welcome questions from any Dogwood PTO member. My role is to keep our community informed and connected to the decisions being made at the school board, city, and state levels that affect our students and families.

Sources

The main sources behind this edition, grouped by origin. PRIMARY means an official record. PRESS or SECONDARY means a news or trade outlet.

Voting and the ballot, Shelby County Election Commission PRIMARY

Key dates for the November 3 election. View PDF (electionsshelbytn.gov)

Early voting sites and hours. View PDF (electionsshelbytn.gov)

Official sample ballot. View PDF (electionsshelbytn.gov)

Election Day polling locations. View PDF (electionsshelbytn.gov)

Voter checklist (polling hours). View PDF (electionsshelbytn.gov)

District and polling place lookup. View page (electionsshelbytn.gov)

Voter ID requirements. View page (electionsshelbytn.gov)

Unofficial results, November 3 election (added November 9). View results (app.enhancedvoting.com, linked from electionsshelbytn.gov)

Early voting daily report, as of October 29 (final). View PDF (electionsshelbytn.gov)

SCEC regular commission meeting, rescheduled to November 22. View page (electionsshelbytn.gov)

November 12 special audit meeting agenda. View PDF (electionsshelbytn.gov)

SCEC agendas and minutes. View page (electionsshelbytn.gov)

Tennessee Secretary of State and voter tools PRIMARY

GoVoteTN. sos.tn.gov/govotetn

Voter ID requirements. View page (sos.tn.gov)

2026 proposed constitutional amendments. View page (sos.tn.gov)

Statewide unofficial results, governor (added November 9). View page (elections.tn.gov)

Statewide unofficial results, constitutional amendments. View page (elections.tn.gov)

Statewide unofficial results, U.S. Senate and U.S. House. View page (elections.tn.gov)

Tennessee Attorney General Opinion 06-153 (quotes Article II, Section 15, on legislative vacancies). View PDF (tn.gov)

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Voter registration lookup. tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup

Rep. Kevin Vaughan, District 95 member page. View page (capitol.tn.gov)

City of Germantown, Board of Mayor and Aldermen. View page (germantown-tn.gov)

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Official bill pages. Re-pulled October 28 and again November 9, 2026.

HB 2532, voucher expansion. Public Chapter 963. View bill (wapp.capitol.tn.gov)

HB 0349, open enrollment (failed). View bill (wapp.capitol.tn.gov)

HB 1507, school safety (not enacted). View bill (wapp.capitol.tn.gov)

HB 0793, enrollment and immigration status (not enacted). View bill (wapp.capitol.tn.gov)

SB 2385 / HB 2485, TISA study. Public Chapter 1032. View bill (wapp.capitol.tn.gov)

115th General Assembly, first pre-filed bill (HB 1), added November 9. View bill (wapp.capitol.tn.gov)

TISA, State Board of Education, Department of Education PRIMARY

2026-27 TISA guide (district report rules, page 48). View PDF (tn.gov)

TISA Review Committee, October 28 meeting. View page (tn.gov)

TISA Review Committee 2026 final report. View PDF (tn.gov)

State Board rulemaking hearing, October 22. View page (tn.gov)

State Board Rule 0520-01-08, funding floor for city school systems. View PDF (publications.tnsosfiles.com)

GMSD board records, BOEconnect PRIMARY

Minutes for September 29 and October 6 are drafts posted for approval on the October 27 agenda.

Board meeting dates. gmsdk12.org/board

District calendar (November 10 work session). View page (gmsdk12.org)

November work session agenda (title lists November 17; notice lists November 10). View agenda (meeting.boeconnect.net)

October 6 special-called meeting agenda. View agenda (meeting.boeconnect.net)

October 6 draft minutes. View file (meeting.boeconnect.net)

October 20 work session agenda. View agenda (meeting.boeconnect.net)

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September 29 draft minutes. View file (meeting.boeconnect.net)

GMSD TISA report highlights. View file (meeting.boeconnect.net)

Budget Amendment #11, Houston High transfer. View file (meeting.boeconnect.net)

September financial report (state share of budget). View file (meeting.boeconnect.net)

May 19, 2026 business meeting minutes (budget vote and funding statement). View minutes (meeting.boeconnect.net)

GMSD tuition. View page (gmsdk12.org)

GMSD board roster. View page (gmsdk12.org)

Dogwood Elementary calendar. View page (des.gmsdk12.org)

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Daily Memphian, May 25, 2026, city cash payments to the six suburban districts (subscriber article). Read article (dailymemphian.com)

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Chalkbeat Tennessee, November 4, 2026, the governor-elect and education policy. Read article (chalkbeat.org)

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Prepared by Monica Burt, Legislative Chair · dogwoodwatch.com

This publication reflects the author's own research and analysis as an individual parent volunteer. It does not represent official positions of the Dogwood Elementary PTO, the Germantown Municipal School District, the City of Germantown, or the State of Tennessee.