**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE For Additional Information, Contact:**

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PHS US Government Teacher

 *sandy.hodges@trentonssd.org*

(731) 855-2601

**Students from Across Tennessee Lend Their Insight**

**To Issues Facing Public Education**

Students fromTrenton Special School District joined 246 of their high school peers in Nashville on March 11 to express their views on public education in Tennessee at the Tennessee School Boards Association (TSBA) Student Congress on Policies in Education (SCOPE). The event took place on the campus of Belmont University.

Attending from Trenton Special School Districtwere: Taylor Hickerson, PHS Junior and Susanna Walters, PHS Junior.

Now in its 42nd year, SCOPE is designed to give students a voice where public education issues are concerned and to involve young people in finding solutions to the topics that are discussed. Attendees participated in mock school board sessions, where they assumed the roles of school board members, school officials, parents, students and concerned citizens. The sessions were led by school board members and superintendents from across the state.

Students then chose speakers to represent each of their 16 small groups who went on to take part in full-scale debates on current education issues. This year’s four debate topics and results from the poll were:

1. **All students must complete at least one post-secondary course in high school.**
(Agree: 40%, Disagree: 60%)
2. Uniforms shall be worn by all students.

(Agree: 18%, Disagree: 82%)

1. The school calendar shall be increased from 180 to 200 days.
(Agree: 31%, Disagree: 69%)
2. Every student will complete at least 30 hours of community service as part of a local graduation requirement.
(Agree: 39%, Disagree: 61%)

SCOPE delegates also elected the following 2026 SCOPE officers:

* **President: Chason Yates, Fayette-Ware High School, Fayette County**
* **1st Vice President: Akshay Vashist, Science Hill High School, Johnson City**
* **2nd Vice President: Chandler Cates, Shelbyville Central High School, Bedford County**

*The Tennessee School Boards Association was organized in 1939 to provide a united voice in education for local public school boards. In 1953, the State Legislature officially recognized TSBA as the “organization and representative agency of the members of school boards in Tennessee.”*

*The Tennessee School Boards Association is a service organization to all the state’s school boards. It serves as an advocate for the interests of Tennessee’s public school students and school districts and provides in-service training and assistance for the state’s 987 board of education members.*

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