

What does the future hold for the TSSAA?

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (WKRN) — The future of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) is in the air as legislators said they would research options for state involvement, a measure that recently failed in West Virginia.

In a Monday press conference, several state lawmakers — including Sen. Adam Lowe (R-Calhoun) and Rep. Scott Cepicky (R-Culleoka) — called for more transparency and accountability, arguing that parents and high school students should have greater representation within the organization. As such, state leaders announced they would research the possibility of either dissolving the body entirely or bringing it under state control over the summer.

"Parents deserve a seat at the table, or at the very least, a voice through their elected officials," Lowe said. "Student-athletes deserve a fair process, including the opportunity for unbiased, third-party reviews of disputes. It's important to remember that athletic programs exist to serve students — not the other way around."

The issue dates back to 2023, when Rep. Cepicky and Sen. Lowe told reporters the TSSAA promised to change its student-athlete transfer rules to allow a one-time transfer for non-athletic reasons.

However, the TSSAA only amended their rules this year after lawmakers filed a bill this session essentially forcing them to make the change.

The [bill](#) passed the Senate but stalled in the House and was ultimately deferred to the February 2026 calendar.

Lawmakers said that process revealed a lack of accountability and oversight within the TSSAA.

"I will say for two years, I thought the issue was transfer. It's not. It's accountability. That's the issue we've uncovered," Sen. Lowe said. "We had hoped that we could take the gains that they had shown us as a measure of good faith, but what it seemed to be was more of a smoke screen."

"In the House, there's been talk about, 'Has TSSAA become an institution of too much power and no oversight from the General Assembly?'" Rep. Cepicky added.

Lawmakers hope the TSSAA will give parents a seat at the table and/or allow the state to have more oversight. Their goal is to shift the TSSAA's governance model "to be more responsive to parents and lawmakers," according to a press release.

"At the very least, what we're asking for is consideration of input at the onset through a representative role at the table of student athletics and interscholastic athletics, or some oversight on the backend that brings them under some accountability, either legislatively or through the courts," Sen. Lowe said.

If the TSSAA doesn't cooperate, Rep. Cepicky and Sen. Lowe told reporters they would consider dissolving the organization, making room

for the General Assembly to take over.

A similar measure failed in West Virginia earlier this year after the state changed its student-athlete transfer rules. One Republican delegate told News 2 the new transfer policy has spiraled out of control, with high school coaches reaching out to student athletes offering incentives for them to switch schools.

"It was like a Trojan horse. Once it got through and got out, we've had problems ever since," Del. Dana Ferrell (R-Kanawha) said.

While Tennessee lawmakers made it clear they don't want to overhaul day-to-day athletic policies or create open-ended transfer opportunities for student athletes, Del. Ferrell believes the TN legislature should hold off on taking control of the TSSAA.

"In concept, it sounds great, but the application of it, I think really starts to bulk down and you probably end up with more problems than you solve," Del. Ferrell said. "If I'd advise you, in Tennessee, you have people who know what they're doing. They're not perfect, but let them do what they need to do to take care of the schools. I don't think your legislature is going to do it right. They're going to get their fingers in there, and then it really gets messy."

According to the organization's [website](#), the TSSAA was organized a century ago and the first state office was established in 1946.

A spokesperson for the TSSAA declined to comment.