

November 2017

EXCELLENCE FOR ALL:

How Tennessee Can Lift Our
Students To Best In The Nation







TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3** Letter From Senator Bill Frist And Jamie Woodson
- 5** Excellence For All – Summary Of Priorities
- 9** A Decade Of Progress In Tennessee Public Education
- 13** How Tennessee Can Lift Our Students To Best In The Nation
- 35** About SCORE
- 36** SCORE Board Of Directors
- 37** SCORE Steering Committee
- 38** SCORE Team
- 41** Notes



LETTER FROM SENATOR BILL FRIST AND JAMIE WOODSON

Dear Education Supporters,

Public education in Tennessee has come a long way in just 10 years. In 2007, Tennesseans resolved we would no longer accept being ranked at the bottom nationally for academic achievement. We knew our students deserved better.

Education advocates began to form bipartisan alliances and coalitions at the local and state levels to work together for a student-focused approach to reform. The State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) was founded in this spirit in 2009. One of the first things SCORE did was engage a broad set of education stakeholders to develop a shared vision for K-12 education in Tennessee. What we heard was that Tennessee urgently needed to improve education so our students would make faster gains in academic achievement than students elsewhere.

Out of those discussions, SCORE developed *A Roadmap For Success*, a report that outlined the changes in policy and practice that would be needed to turn around student academic achievement in Tennessee. The report laid out four major recommendations with specific action steps.

Through collective action, Tennessee turned this vision into reality. This work stretched across two governorships, and the state's resolve remained



strong. Together we have made major changes, and our students and educators have seen substantial success. As measured by the Nation's Report Card, Tennessee students advanced in national rankings from 46th to 25th in fourth-grade math, 41st to 30th in eighth-grade reading, and 30th to 19th in fourth-grade science. Tennessee **did** become the fastest-improving state for student achievement.

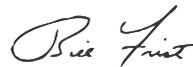
However, Tennesseans have bigger aspirations for our students than "middle of the pack." This year SCORE again invited Tennesseans to share their insights on what should come next for K-12 public education, and we heard a clear consensus. Tennesseans want the public education system to be nothing short of excellent and innovative. Tennesseans want schools that prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and habits to build a productive career in a competitive, global economy. Tennesseans want schools that innovate with an eye not toward the 21st century, but the 22nd century. Tennesseans want Tennessee students to rank among the best in the nation and the world.

In 2018, Tennesseans will elect a new governor and many new members of the Tennessee General Assembly. Voters rank K-12 education among the top issues in the state, so there is no better time for those of us who care deeply about Tennessee students to put forth a new vision for achieving success for them. That is the purpose of this report, *Excellence For All: How Tennessee Can Lift Our Students To Best In The Nation*.

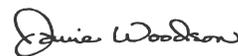
Grounded in goals that have already been set – to remain among the fastest-improving states, to close all achievement gaps, to prepare every student to succeed in postsecondary study and work – while looking farther ahead to 2025, this report aims to help Tennessee lead our students to another decade of progress and success.

We believed in 2009 – and still believe in 2017 – that the future prosperity of Tennessee depends on giving all public school students an excellent education so they are able to succeed in our economy and fully participate in our democracy. Tennesseans are confident we can achieve bold goals for Tennessee students by working collaboratively, embracing innovation, and focusing on five specific priorities. We are eager for the next decade of progress, for the hard work to achieve excellence for all, and for the day when Tennessee students reach the top for academic achievement.

Very truly yours,



Bill Frist
Founder and Chairman
SCORE



Jamie Woodson
Executive Chairman and CEO
SCORE



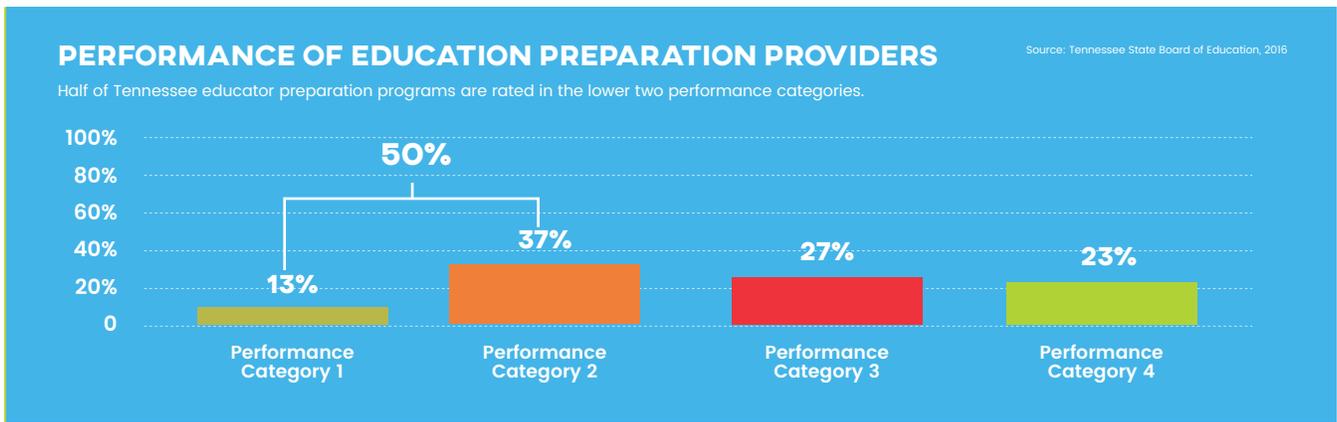
EXCELLENCE FOR ALL

Summary of Priorities

This report outlines five student-focused priorities, reflecting a consensus in Tennessee about what must happen in public education to advance excellence for all.

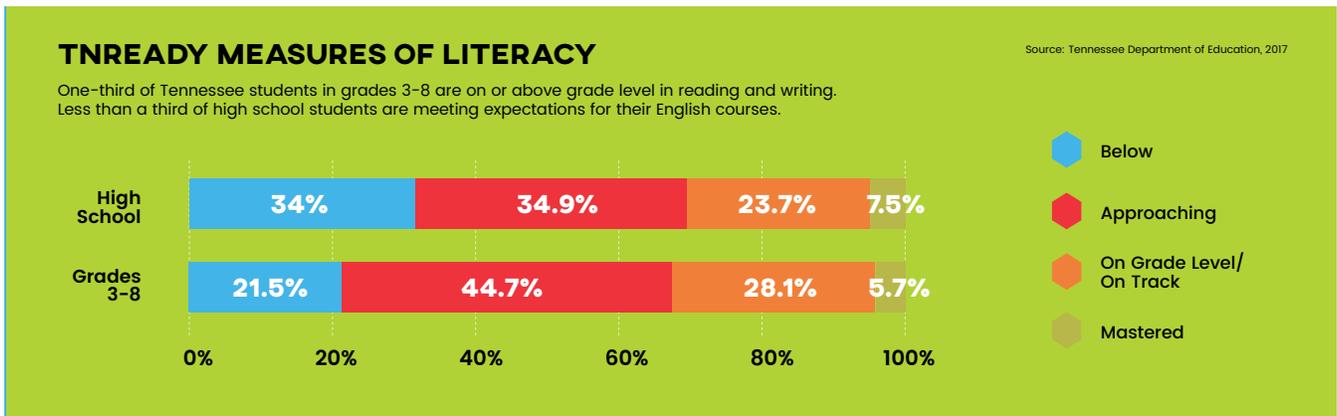
Make Tennessee The Best State To Live, Work, And Grow As A Teacher

The single most important factor in school for raising student achievement is an excellent teacher. To give every student a great teacher for each class, Tennessee must attract people with strong potential and passion for the teaching profession, prepare them to be effective teachers on day one, and make it professionally and personally rewarding for them to stay in the classroom.



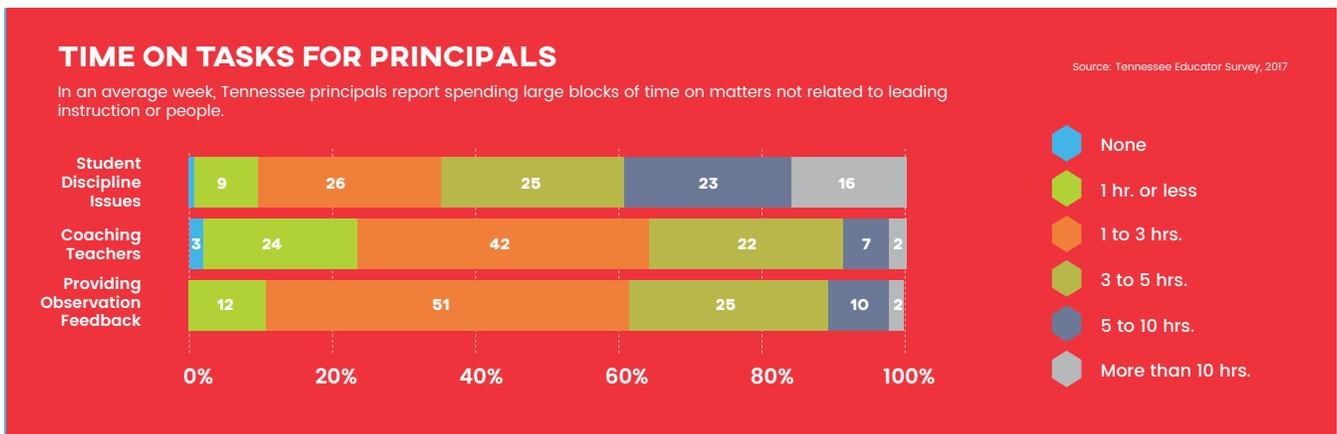
Support Every Student To Become A Strong Reader And Writer

Prospering in a fast-changing world requires being able to learn throughout life, and lifelong learning depends on the reading skills developed in the first years of school. A child who meets reading and writing expectations in the third grade is four times more likely to graduate high school than a child who does not. During the time that Tennessee students have shown unprecedented gains in math and science on national assessments, there has been less progress in reading outcomes. Tennessee needs the teaching strategies, student-centered practices, and quality materials that will make our students the fastest improving in reading.



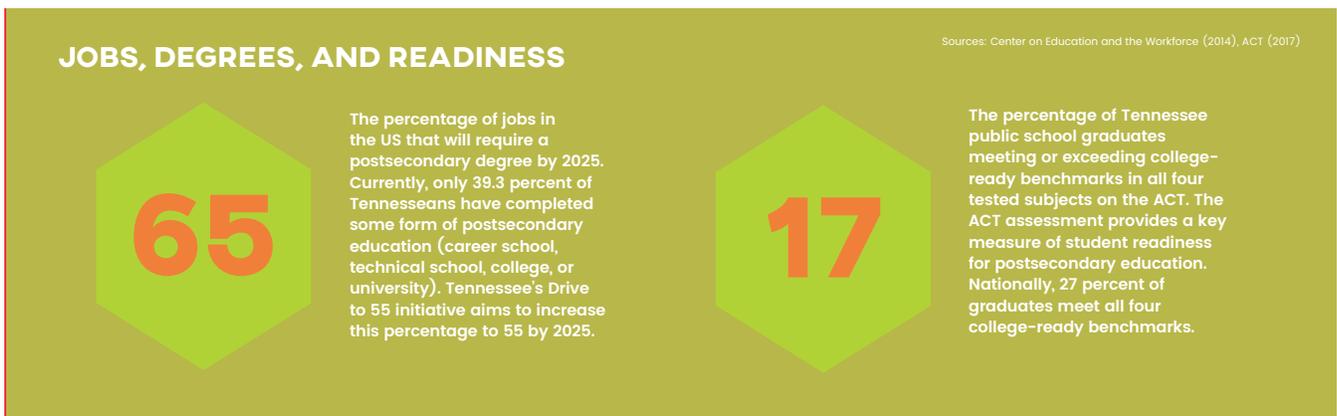
Develop School Leaders Who Are Ready To Lead People And Learning

The second-most important factor at school for raising student achievement is a great principal. The top priorities for principals have shifted from building operations and discipline to the student-focused work of leading instruction and a high-performing team of education professionals. To develop great principals, Tennessee must give them better preparation before they assume leadership roles and more support in their first years as school leaders.



Ensure High School Is The On-Ramp To Postsecondary Studies And Jobs

Today only about one in five Tennessee public school graduates is ready for college courses in reading, English, math, and science, according to ACT. Less than half of Tennessee students are participating in early postsecondary opportunities in high school that earn credits toward a postsecondary credential or industry certification. Every student deserves to find a path in high school that will lead to success in postsecondary studies, military service, and work. To achieve that, Tennessee must focus high schools on postsecondary readiness, give students the coursework that prepares them to succeed in the next steps after high school – more study, military service, and work – and develop strong partnerships between high schools, higher education, and employers.





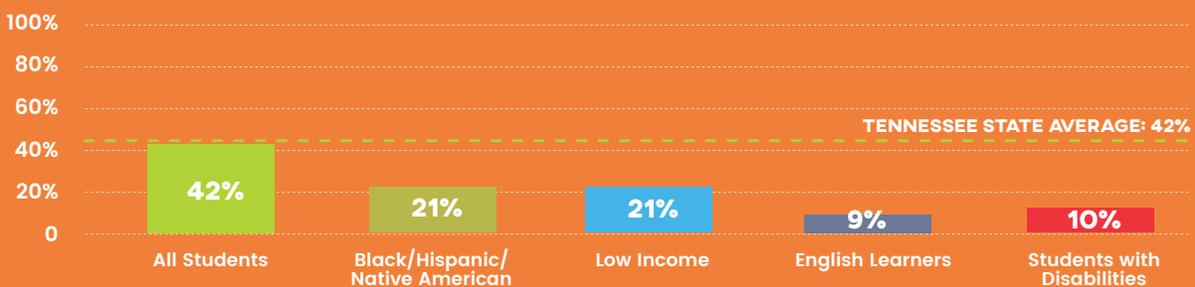
Provide Tennessee Students With The Greatest Needs A High-Quality Education

For too long, certain groups of Tennessee students have been overlooked and underserved in school. These are often the students of color, the students who live in economically distressed homes or communities, the students with disabilities, and the students who are learning English. A high-quality education for the students with the greatest needs requires providing them with highly effective teaching, strong school leadership, and the innovative supports that have been proven to help them learn at their highest levels.

STUDENTS SCORING 21+ ON ACT

Source: ACT, 2017

Tennessee students with the greatest needs are much less likely to earn a composite score of 21 on ACT, the level necessary to qualify for a HOPE scholarship.





A DECADE OF PROGRESS

When you ask education advocates in Tennessee for a defining moment for their cause, many will point to 2007, when the state received F's from the US Chamber of Commerce for exceptionally weak academic standards and postsecondary and workforce readiness. Then-Governor Phil Bredesen and then-Senator Jamie Woodson were among those who found the low marks a reason to act, not just agonize. "The governor's response was to hit it head on. He began a very thoughtful conversation in Tennessee about public education," Woodson said in 2012. "It wasn't a matter of changing the F to a better mark, but more importantly, really thinking about what to do about it."

Tennessee's pursuit of better academic outcomes for students followed earlier steps toward greater

accountability and transparency, especially for historically underserved students – statewide assessment in 1988, the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System in 1992, and the federal No Child Left Behind Act in 2002. After the 2007 US Chamber report, Tennessee introduced sweeping improvements to policy and practice, addressing tough issues like academic standards, educator evaluation, and statewide assessment.

Ten years later, the proof of the work that has been done by two different governors, five commissioners of education, six sessions of the General Assembly, and tens of thousands of educators is seen in historic progress by Tennessee students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the Nation's Report Card.



Timeline Of Tennessee's Education Progress

TIMELINE OF TENNESSEE'S EDUCATION PROGRESS

The Nation's Report Card

2002-17

1060

1020

980

940



FEBRUARY 28, 2007

F'S FOR TENNESSEE

The US Chamber of Commerce report, *Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Effectiveness*, gives Tennessee failing marks for academic expectations, achievement gaps for low-income and minority students, and college and career readiness. The report helps galvanize bipartisan support for education reform in Tennessee



OCTOBER 21, 2009

A ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

SCORE releases *A Roadmap To Success: A Plan To Make Tennessee Schools #1 In The Southeast Within 5 Years*. The report offers four recommendations – embrace high standards, cultivate strong leaders, ensure excellent teachers, and utilize data to enhance student learning – with more than 60 action steps for education stakeholders



JANUARY 28, 2010

TENNESSEE SHOOTS FOR THE TOP

Governor Phil Bredesen signs the First To The Top Act after the General Assembly passes the legislation with broad bipartisan support. The education package raises academic standards, incorporates student achievement and growth data into annual evaluations for teachers and principals, and creates the Achievement School District to strengthen school turnaround efforts

SPRING 2011

NEW GOVERNOR, NEW REFORMS

Governor Bill Haslam secures General Assembly approval of measures that remove the cap on the number of charter schools in Tennessee and incorporate teacher effectiveness ratings into decisions about tenure and compensation

AUGUST 2011

RAISING THE BAR AGAIN

Tennessee begins the three-year implementation of higher academic standards for English language arts and math for grades K-12

SUMMER 2013

TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

With the help of 700 core coaches, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) trains 30,000 teachers in the new academic standards and methods of instruction. During the three-year implementation, about 60,000 educators receive professional development in the standards

NOVEMBER 1, 2013

OUTPACING THE NATION

Governor Haslam announces that Tennessee is the fastest-improving state for student achievement with student progress on The Nation's Report Card. Former Governor Bredesen is a special guest at the announcement

OCTOBER 23, 2015

BREAKING INTO THE TOP HALF

For the first time ever, Tennessee students rank in the top 25 states on the Nation's Report Card with the results for fourth-grade math. Tennessee remains the fastest-improving state since 2011

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

INVESTING IN EDUCATION

Governor Haslam proposes the largest state budget increase for K-12 education without requiring a tax hike

APRIL-MAY 2017

TNREADY GRADES 3-11

The TNReady statewide assessment is administered to all grades for the first time

JULY 25, 2017

RIISING HIGH SCHOOL SCORES

The second year of TNReady results for end-of-course assessments show improvement across all subject areas, with a smaller percentage of students scoring at the lowest achievement level across all subject areas

2007

2009

2010

2011

2013

2015

2017

JANUARY 8, 2002

2002 NCLB, NEW ACCOUNTABILITY

President George W. Bush signs the No Child Left Behind Act, creating an accountability system in every state that tracks academic progress of schools and, for the first time, four subgroups of students: special education, English language learners, low income, and race/ethnicity

2008



JANUARY 26, 2009

RAISING THE BAR IN CLASSROOMS

Following a push by Governor Bredesen to build consensus for raising K-12 academic expectations, The Tennessee State Board of Education adopts the Tennessee Diploma Project (TDP) raising academic expectations for K-12. TDP, which is introduced in classrooms in 2009-10, increases academic standards and graduation requirements and makes the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) more rigorous

2010

MARCH 26, 2010 HALF A BILLION DOLLARS FOR K-12

In the wake of the changes from the Tennessee Diploma Project and First To The Top, Tennessee is awarded a \$501 million Race To The Top grant. The grant plus philanthropic investments help Tennessee implement the education improvements over the next few years

2011



FALL 2011

EVALUATIONS WITH MULTIPLE MEASURES

Tennessee becomes a national leader in improving teacher evaluation, introducing annual reviews that incorporate observational feedback with student achievement and growth measures. At the end of the school year, SCORE releases a report with seven recommendations for improving evaluation based on feedback from educators across the state during the first year of implementation

2012



JULY 26, 2012

REBOUNDING SCORES

TCAP proficiency rates, which declined the first year the more rigorous test was given, begin to rebound. By 2015, the percentage of students who are proficient or advanced increases in every tested subject

2014

FEBRUARY 3, 2014

TENNESSEE PROMISE

Governor Haslam introduces Tennessee Promise to provide tuition-free community college to graduating seniors who fulfill requirements for federal aid application, community service, and mentoring

2016

OCTOBER 16, 2016

TEACHER PREP IMPROVEMENT

SCORE offers eight recommendations for improving teacher preparation in Tennessee in a policy report, *Prepared For Day One: Improving The Effectiveness Of Early-Career Teaching*

OCTOBER 13, 2016

FREE ACT RETAKE

Tennessee becomes the first state to cover the cost of retaking the ACT for 12th-grade students. About 26,000 of the 70,000 seniors in the state participate

OCTOBER 21, 2016

REACHING TOP HALF AGAIN

Tennessee fourth-grade and eighth-grade students rank among top half of states for science on the Nation's Report Card

DECEMBER 16, 2016

TEACHER PREP REPORT CARD

The Tennessee State Board of Education releases a redesigned Teacher Preparation Report Card that improves reporting of program effectiveness

2017



AUGUST 8, 2017

HIGH MARKS FOR EVALUATION

The Tennessee Educator Survey finds that 74 percent of teachers report the teacher evaluation process has improved their teaching

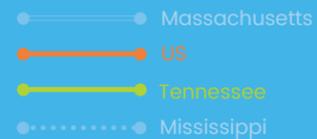
AUGUST 30, 2017

TENNESSEE SUCCEEDS

Tennessee receives approval of *Tennessee Succeeds*, the enhanced strategic plan for K-12 education developed with extensive public input in response to the Every Student Succeeds Act

COMBINED READING AND MATH SCORES ON THE NATION'S REPORT CARD FOR TENNESSEE VERSUS THE US AVERAGE. MASSACHUSETTS AND MISSISSIPPI RESULTS SHOW THE RANGE BETWEEN HIGH-PERFORMING AND LOW-PERFORMING STATES.

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2003-15



All scores through 2015



EXCELLENCE FOR ALL:

How Tennessee Can Lift Our Students To Best In The Nation

Over the past decade, Tennessee has made remarkable progress in K-12 public education thanks to a common vision that centered on the needs of students and the hard work and dedication of educators, parents, students, community leaders, and policymakers.

Since the 2009 release of the *Roadmap To Success*, SCORE has issued annual *State of Education in Tennessee* reports to help advance student achievement. These reports have presented the data from the past year, reviewed the progress made, and set recommendations for the year ahead. During this time, academic gains have been fast and impressive, but Tennessee has not yet risen above the national average on the Nation's Report Card.

Tennessee now stands at a pivotal point in the state's education improvement journey. In November 2018, Tennesseans will select a new governor and begin a major transition in state government. **The next eight years will determine whether our state takes the steps needed to help Tennessee students rise to among the best in the nation and world.** To support uninterrupted student progress, SCORE is reprising the approach of the *Roadmap To Success* and developing a collaborative set of priorities for education work in Tennessee through the year 2025.

From May through July 2017, SCORE visited all corners of Tennessee — from Memphis to Kingsport and Dyersburg to Chattanooga — to better understand what is needed to continue

moving K-12 education forward. Over the course of 10 community conversations, dozens of focus groups and interviews, and statewide surveys of educators, SCORE heard from nearly 1,700 Tennesseans.

Their feedback about the policies and practices that are working for Tennessee students and the next steps required to better serve children deeply informed the focus of the priorities in this report. The recommendations for each priority are grounded in research about promising approaches and the insight of educators and stakeholders who are fully engaged in K-12 education efforts in Tennessee.

Tennesseans have told SCORE they want to build on the progress our state has made. They want to lift Tennessee students to the best in the nation, and they offered specific ideas for how to accomplish this. The following priorities reflect Tennesseans' highest aspirations and deepest commitments to improve their communities through public education. If implemented well, these priorities have the potential to make the difference for students across Tennessee and for the future of our state. These priorities will help us achieve our state's student achievement goals — to remain among the fastest-improving states, to close all achievement gaps, and to prepare every student to succeed in postsecondary study and work.



VOICES OF TENNESSEANS

By The Numbers

Community conversations

- 10 communities
- 243 elected officials, business leaders, educators, community leaders

Focus groups and interviews

- 143 teachers
- 12 superintendents
- 14 public charter school leaders
- 21 state education leaders
- 3 national education leaders

Statewide surveys of educators

- 783 teachers
- 463 school leaders

TOTAL: 1,682

Make Tennessee The Best State To Live, Work, And Grow As A Teacher

Teachers have a larger impact on student learning than any other factor in a school.¹ Having an effective teacher can determine whether a student excels or falls behind.² The work of teachers is crucial to preparing students – and our state and nation – for success, so the benefits of entering and staying in the classroom should equal the importance of the profession.³

Time and time again in conversations with SCORE, Tennesseans have described great teachers who insist on high expectations for each and every student, no matter the circumstance, and work long hours to help the students meet those expectations. Many teachers take on big challenges – including poverty and trauma – with steadfast focus on student learning. Ultimately, Tennesseans strongly believe great teachers are foundational to the long-term success of the state.

Tennessee has been focusing on effective teaching as a fundamental lever for academic achievement since the First to the Top Act passed in 2010 with policies such as annual teacher evaluations with multiple measures. This year, three out of four teachers said on the Tennessee Educator Survey that evaluation has contributed to improved teaching, and assessment results also show positive effects on student learning. Clearly, providing teachers actionable feedback through evaluation helps them and their students and should continue to be part of the bedrock of Tennessee's education reforms.

To continue supporting students in even greater achievement, making our state the best place to live, work, and grow as a teacher should be a top-line priority for Tennessee. Increasing the effectiveness of teaching is fundamental to improving academic achievement across the state.



“Teachers are really the most important people beyond parents in a student’s life. They shape their beliefs, they shape the way they see the world. We need to treat them professionally and pay them that way as well.”

- Lottie Ryans, Community Advocate, First Tennessee Development District

In addition, existing and looming teacher shortages require solutions. Urban and rural districts struggle to find effective teachers, particularly in subjects like science, English as a Second Language (ESL), and world languages.⁴ Matching the diversity of the teaching workforce to the diversity of the student population is another need. About 35 percent of Tennessee's students are African American, Hispanic, or Native American, while only 15 percent of Tennessee educators belong to one of those racial or ethnic groups.⁵

The solutions lie in better recruitment, preparation, support, and retention of teachers. To become the best state to live, work, and grow as a teacher, Tennessee must:

- Recruit the best and brightest to become teachers
- Prepare teachers well and support them intensively through the first years in the classroom
- Keep great teachers in the profession by honoring their work through pay, professional support, and leadership development

To place a great teacher in every classroom, Tennessee must **recruit the best and brightest to become teachers**. These efforts must be aligned to the needs of Tennessee schools for diversity, potential to be effective, and ability to teach high-needs subjects well.

In 2017 Tennessee launched a statewide campaign – *Teach Today. Change Tomorrow* – to encourage millennials to join the teaching profession.⁵ Given the direct linkage between teaching quality, student achievement, and economic growth, this type of recruitment should be continued and coupled with financial incentives for young people who go into teaching. As Tennessee continues to make college affordable through programs like Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Reconnect, and the HOPE Scholarship, the legislature and next governor’s administration should invest in making college affordable for Tennesseans seeking careers in teaching, especially in hard-to-staff subjects. Tennessee should consider loan forgiveness or additional scholarships for individuals who are committed to teaching in Tennessee. Additionally, Tennessee should consider offering college credit for high school students who take the career-technical education course “Teaching as a Profession” to encourage greater numbers of qualified students to choose teaching as a profession.

Tennessee is experiencing teacher shortages in certain subjects and grade levels, particularly in rural and low-income communities.⁷ To address these shortages, the state should work to expand the teaching pipeline with high-quality candidates. There should be multiple points of entry for those who have the interest and potential to become effective teachers. More school districts and educator preparation programs should partner to recruit, support, and license career-changers,



current education assistants, or paraprofessionals. More nonprofit organizations, charter schools, and school districts with a proven track record of preparing effective candidates should consider licensing teachers by becoming education preparation providers.⁸

In schools across Tennessee, diversity in the teaching workforce has not kept pace with the diversity in the student population. All students, in particular students of color, benefit from having a diverse mix of teachers.⁹ The 2016 report from SCORE, *Prepared For Day One: Improving The Effectiveness Of Early-Career Teaching*, highlighted approaches that can diversify the ranks of teachers. Teaching residencies that make recruiting a diverse cohort of teacher candidates an explicit focus of their program are one way



to promote diversity in the teaching profession. School districts, preparation programs, and other partners could also invest in “grow-your-own” programs that identify and develop qualified high school students who are interested in teaching as a career.¹⁰ And the state and educator preparation programs (EPPs) should set specific diversity goals and report progress.

After recruitment, Tennessee must **prepare teachers well and support them intensively through the first years in the classroom.**

Tennessee has made significant investments in improving the way we prepare teacher candidates for the classroom. Preparation programs have access to rich data about their graduates and their impact in the classroom. High school and college students can now use the State Board of Education’s report card tool to make more informed decisions about which program to enter.¹¹ Continuing this momentum requires better alignment between what teacher candidates learn in their programs and the skills they need for the classroom. There also must be greater focus on supporting teachers during their first years in the classroom.

The *Prepared For Day One* report offered eight specific recommendations. In the following year, the state has made progress in promoting greater collaboration between preparation programs and school districts and providing financial incentives to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of teachers. Other recommendations that must be addressed to fully prepare teachers are improving classroom-based experiences for teacher candidates – including better matching mentor teachers with student teachers – and providing more incentives for highly effective educators to become mentor teachers. Teaching residencies are another way to improve the effectiveness of early-career teaching, although districts may need to think creatively and be flexible to make such programs financially feasible and sustainable.

Tennessee’s new English language arts standards, which reflect higher expectations in student literacy, must be woven into the training that aspiring teachers receive in educator preparation programs. This will help teachers entering the classroom support students to read and write – even students who may be years behind in middle and high school. Teaching candidates must also be equipped to understand how learning is impacted by adverse childhood experiences (e.g., poverty, abuse, parental separation or divorce) and how to work with students and families, and leverage community resources to enable all students to achieve their full potential.



Educator preparation programs and school districts must work together to create an onboarding system that supports a new teacher's successful transition into a full-time role, such as structured induction programs or pairing new teachers with qualified mentors.¹² Preparation programs should also require their faculty members to regularly visit K-12 classrooms and collaborate with district and school leaders so that they are aware of the expectations for student teachers. In fact, a state law passed in 2017 requires faculty member participation in K-12 schools.¹³ In turn, districts should solicit the feedback of preparation programs in selecting and providing coaching to mentor teachers. Together, educator preparation programs and districts could strategically match mentor teachers with student teachers, identify the essential skills and knowledge for first-year teachers, and create new opportunities for coaching early-career teachers.

Once effective teachers are in the classroom, our state must **keep great teachers in the profession by honoring their work through pay, professional support, and leadership development.** Since 2011-12, the state of Tennessee has committed more than \$447 million in new money for teacher compensation as Governor Haslam has worked to make Tennessee the fastest-improving state in teacher salaries.¹⁴ Compensation that honors the teaching profession is an important tool for recruiting and retaining effective teachers. However, Tennessee trails the national average in teacher compensation;¹⁵ it is

crucial for the state to continue investments in its educators. In addition to statewide investment in compensation, districts should expand strategic compensation in order to lead more effective teachers to enter and stay in classrooms – especially in schools that serve students with the greatest needs.¹⁶

Developing and supporting teachers is another strategy to keep effective teachers in the classroom. Teachers need personalized professional development designed in collaboration with their school leaders so that they can enhance their teaching and better meet the needs of their students. When principals provide follow-up to professional learning, nearly 90 percent of teachers report they are better able to apply the learning to their practice, versus 55 percent of teachers who do not receive follow-up.

Teachers across Tennessee say they want opportunities to lead from outside their classroom. Most teachers in Tennessee – 88 percent – report they are encouraged to take on leadership roles in their schools.¹⁷ To help teachers develop as professionals and to keep them in the profession, Tennessee should continue to expand teacher leadership opportunities, such as the state teacher-leader network and the Tennessee Educator Fellowship, and continue enhancing quality. These opportunities could take the form of formal mentoring and master teacher roles or informal advocacy and community roles.



Support Every Student To Become A Strong Reader And Writer

A student who does not meet reading expectations by third grade is four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than a child who reads proficiently by that time.¹⁸ Students with the greatest needs face even larger barriers. Low-income students who do not master reading by third grade are 13 times less likely to graduate on time than more advantaged students.¹⁹ Even more staggering, national statistics show that two-thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the end of fourth grade will end up in jail or on welfare,²⁰ making it abundantly clear that literacy is critical for students' lifelong success.

Fewer than half of Tennessee students demonstrate literacy proficiency by the end of third grade, and in some districts, fewer than one in four students are proficient in reading and writing.²¹ In 2016, Tennessee set a goal of having 75 percent of third-graders reading on or above grade level by 2025.

In conversations across the state, Tennesseans have drawn a bold line connecting student literacy in early grades and success in high school, college, and career. Tennesseans commend Read To Be Ready while also emphasizing that more must be done because improving early-grades literacy is such an urgent priority for the state's future economic and social well-being.

Low literacy levels often prevent high school students from mastering other subjects. Additionally, poor readers struggle to learn in text-heavy courses, which frequently prevents them from taking more academically challenging courses.²² Educators called for Tennessee to shine a light on student achievement in early grades and bolster supports for teachers to help students learn to read and write.

“A strong literacy foundation is important for all students because that is how we learn. If you can't do that basic reading, then it is going to be a rough road ahead of you. Literacy is that foundational building block.”

– Dr. Judy Blankenship
Cheatham, Provost and Vice
President for Academic Affairs,
Martin Methodist College

Through Read to Be Ready, Tennessee is building literacy coaching and training networks across the state to better implement reading standards.^{23,24} To support high standards, new research shows that high-quality instructional materials are an important lever in improving student achievement.²⁵ Tennessee can do more to support teachers, particularly with instructional materials. This support starts with a foundation of strong instructional materials that are vetted, curated, and selected to support Tennessee



standards-aligned instruction. Tennessee must build the capacity of leaders and teachers to make informed decisions based on a deep understanding of literacy development.

To equip and support teachers to accelerate student literacy, Tennessee can:

- Expand access to high-quality, affordable instructional materials aligned to Tennessee’s literacy standards
- Strengthen training and support for teachers to help students become better readers and writers
- Build leader knowledge of literacy standards and instructional shifts to support effective teaching

Tennessee’s work to improve teaching quality has been crucial to Tennessee’s significant student achievement growth, and new studies support that giving teachers strong materials is another important lever for better student outcomes. Tennessee must **expand access to high-quality, affordable instructional materials aligned to Tennessee’s literacy standards**. Research shows that if schools adopted more rigorous textbooks, student achievement could significantly improve.²⁶ Although the effectiveness of the teacher still remains the most important factor determining

student achievement, new research shows that strong curricular materials can have larger positive impacts on student learning than other common interventions, such as class-size reductions, and generally offer a more cost-effective intervention.²⁷

Accessing high-quality materials is a frustration for Tennessee teachers in early grades, who report spending an average of 4.5 hours each week creating and sourcing materials for their reading blocks.²⁸ More than half of teachers in grades K-3 report that they create or acquire daily instructional tasks themselves or in collaboration with other teachers, rather than using a district or school-provided curriculum.²⁹ These searches cut into the time available for planning strong lessons for students. Data from Tennessee schools suggest that the materials teachers are creating and curating are insufficient to build the knowledge and skills students need to be successful. In a sample of Tennessee classrooms, only 19 percent of the assignments teachers created were sufficiently rigorous for the grade and subject.³⁰

Improving literacy starts with giving teachers access to great instructional materials.³¹ Tennessee operates on a seven-year textbook adoption cycle, which determines what instructional materials teachers can easily access. Tennessee’s revised textbook review process requires publishers to go through a process that ensures textbooks are aligned to Tennessee’s academic standards and



support the needs of all students. Because the last English language arts textbook adoption cycle occurred in 2013, prior to the state's revision of academic standards, districts have made the best choices they could from a textbook list that hasn't yet caught up to the rigor of Tennessee's standards.

Before the next English language arts textbook adoption cycle in 2020, districts should receive more support to select high-quality, standards-aligned materials. The state can provide more information about how and why each textbook was approved and share existing, strong reviews completed by the state Textbook Advisory Panel or national nonprofits, such as EdReports, which partners with educators to review curricular materials. The state can create tools to help districts evaluate options for instructional materials and supports to implement them well. Districts should spread their own best practices as well as learn from the experience of peer districts that are using higher-quality materials.

To ensure these high-quality instructional materials are used well, Tennessee must **strengthen training and support for teachers to help students become better readers and writers**. Teachers need training that incorporates the current understanding of how language and literacy develops in readers, the instructional practices required by Tennessee's standards, and how instructional materials should reflect those instructional practices and standards.

Teachers must be supported to continuously improve their instructional practice by helping them use materials well. Once teachers enter the classroom, professional learning is often focused on general strategies that are not tied to materials. But when professional learning is tied to the materials teachers use, teachers are more likely to apply what they learn in daily practice, accelerating the pace of progress.

Building their literacy knowledge base and changing the nature of literacy instruction is deep and intense work for teachers. Not only will it take time, it will require the reallocation of resources toward focused professional learning and job-embedded coaching supports for literacy grounded in quality instructional materials.



Greater coordination between the state, educator preparation programs, and literacy coaching networks is another way to accelerate student literacy in Tennessee. Because all teachers should be able to help students read and write, Tennessee must provide the training and supports to enable them to do this.

Educator preparation programs (EPPs) can deepen training on how literacy develops and what strategies teachers can use to support that development. The Tennessee Department of Education should share information with EPP leaders to ensure preservice teachers have a working knowledge of the state's Read to be Ready program. In turn, EPP program leaders should fully implement the recently adopted higher standards for literacy instruction to ensure that preservice teachers have strong literacy knowledge and skills at all levels. To do this, EPPs should build on current momentum to increase the number of courses in literacy for all aspiring teachers, with a substantial focus on literacy for elementary teachers. As the state narrows the list of approved instructional materials to focus only on high-quality, aligned resources, they should share that information with EPPs, so that preservice teachers can be trained on how to prepare lessons from strong resources, rather than the current focus, which is often on planning lessons from scratch.

In recent years, professional networks of superintendents, reading coaches, and other educators have dedicated significant attention to understanding Tennessee's literacy challenges and how to overcome them. These networks include: the Read to be Ready Coaching Network, the Networked-Improvement Communities of the Tennessee Early Literacy Network (TELN), and Leading Innovation for Tennessee Education (LIFT). These practitioner networks should purposefully collaborate to share learnings and struggles with each other, make learnings available publicly, and focus on building district capacity so literacy progress continues. Districts engaged in this innovative work should partner with EPPs to make sure there is alignment between the preparation of teacher candidates and the demands of the district specific to early literacy. This could include inviting EPP representatives to teacher trainings and classroom walk-throughs, as well as ensuring that EPPs have a deep understanding of the instructional materials in their districts and the support structures in place to help teachers effectively use these materials.

Finally, Tennessee must **build leader knowledge of literacy standards and instructional shifts to support effective teaching.** Implementing

a strong, cohesive literacy program aligned to Tennessee's new, more rigorous English language arts standards is a difficult and complex task. Purchasing new instructional materials and providing teachers with large-group professional learning sessions will not be enough to improve instruction and student outcomes. In addition, school and district leaders must make decisions about implementation driven by what their students need to become proficient readers and writers.

Strong classroom-level instruction in literacy requires school and district leaders to provide the right structures, systems, and resources. To develop this closely coordinated approach, school and district leaders need a strong foundation in literacy development, a vision for leading change, and opportunities to collaborate with peers.

Literacy instruction has changed significantly in recent years, and some practices used in the past do not align to the depth of rigor required by Tennessee's literacy standards. For example, teaching comprehension skills, such as finding the main idea, in isolation is not leading students to build the knowledge needed to become proficient readers across all subjects and grades. Leaders need to develop a deep, up-to-date understanding of the best instructional practices to be able to align their structures, systems, and resources accordingly.

For example, K-2 teachers need 150 minutes for Tier 1 instruction in literacy, with at least 90 minutes of that time uninterrupted to allow adequate time for teacher modeling and student practice.³² Tennessee should provide principals the training that gives them a strong grounding in research-based literacy practices so they are familiar with what it takes to shift practice in their schools. With this knowledge, principals can determine how to structure the school day for teacher and student success – from class schedules and literacy block structures to teacher planning time – and support teachers and literacy coaches in better lesson planning and use of screeners and assessments.

Leaders also need more opportunities to learn from each other. Coaching networks should coordinate with principals to engage in walk-throughs to help build capacity, and principals should be encouraged to attend Read to be Ready trainings with their teachers. Leaders need opportunities to engage in shared learning to inform their thinking on how the new state standards impact traditional literacy block schedules, types of assessments, and intervention practices.



Develop School Leaders Who Are Ready To Lead People And Learning

Great schools have strong school leaders. Principals are second only to teachers as an influence on student learning³³ and can account for up to a quarter of in-school factors that affect student performance.³⁴ Furthermore, the principal's impact on student academic improvement can be nearly twice as large in high-poverty schools.³⁵

Across Tennessee, educators and community leaders have emphasized the critical role principals play in supporting teacher growth, developing cultures of excellence, and finding and retaining great teachers. Tennessee higher education leaders, district leaders, and policymakers have called for heightened focus on principal preparation and support.

When principals devote time and attention to instruction, teachers teach better and students achieve more. For example, students benefit when principals provide instructional coaching and feedback and organize the structure of the school day for teachers to work with one another on problems of practice.³⁶ A principal's approach to hiring decisions significantly impacts student outcomes as well.³⁷

While we know that the most effective principals spend their time on instruction and developing their teams, a national study found that principal preparation programs have been largely disconnected from these core areas of school leadership, focusing instead on school laws, administrative requirements, and procedures.³⁸ The impact of this instruction is evident in principal behaviors. A survey of Tennessee principals shows that they report spending significant time on activities unrelated to instruction or leadership. Two out of three principals report spending three hours or less per week coaching teachers

“Great leaders create great school culture where students want to come to learn. One of the opportunities for growth for Tennessee education is to ensure that we have the correct leadership aligned to every school to make sure we have success in every school.”

– Dexter Murphy, Upper School Dean, Emerald Academy Public Charter School

or providing feedback on instruction.³⁹ A similar number are spending three to ten – *or more* – hours a week on student discipline.⁴⁰

It is clear that a focused effort to build strong leadership skills in principals could lead Tennessee to higher student achievement. To develop strong school leaders, Tennessee should:

- Empower and support principals to focus on what matters most: excellent instruction and development of highly effective educators



- Center principal preparation and supports on best practices and measure the impact
- Invest in building high-quality, sustainable principal preparation programs

Principal development must **empower and support principals to focus on what matters most: excellent instruction and development of highly effective educators**. Research shows that when principals focus significant time and resources on raising the quality of instruction and making the right people management decisions, student achievement follows.⁴¹

Effective principals improve student achievement by defining and promoting high expectations, addressing teacher professional learning needs, and building leadership among staff.⁴²

Tennessee's principal development programs, including district-level leadership pipelines, can place explicit focus on these areas to better equip principals for their role. The Center for Educational Leadership at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and the Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning & Innovation at Lipscomb University provide examples of preparation program design, content focus, and cohort training models that target high-impact principal duties that could be adopted more widely.

Some Tennessee educators with a credential from an approved program still need additional preparation to become strong principals. Tennessee's Governors Academy for School Leadership (GASL) is designed to improve instructional leadership and management competencies of individuals not prepared through



programs rooted in best practice. GASL is currently working with 25 candidates from across the state each year. To meet the numbers of quality leaders Tennessee needs and ensure geographic distribution, the state should expand GASL.

Additionally, Tennessee also needs to improve the design and delivery of professional learning supports for current school leaders. Rural districts, principal preparation programs, and philanthropic organizations should come together to build professional learning communities that overcome geographic and resource barriers. Efforts like the Administrators Planning Innovation for Rural Education (ASPIRE), incubated through the Center for Educational Leadership, should be expanded. This expansion would help more principals form strong professional networks to continuously improve their leadership.

In addition, Tennessee should provide principals guidance and training on effective use of school administrative staff, such as assistant principals. This guidance should equip principals with clear strategies on how to empower support staff to improve teachers' instructional skills and manage day-to-day operations of the school, freeing principals to lead educational program design and orchestrate implementation.⁴³

To fill an estimated 270 principal vacancies each year with effective school leaders, Tennessee must **center principal preparation on best**

practices and measure program effectiveness. In 2015, Tennessee leaders set out to identify key elements of high-quality principal preparation programs through the Tennessee Transformational Leadership Advisory Council. The council identified eight key elements of preparation program design.⁴⁴ Out of this work, the Tennessee Transformational Leadership Alliance (TTLA) was formed to promote and align principal preparation and district pipeline programs with best-practice design elements. The TTLA has done important work and merits investment and a strengthened organizational structure to lead efforts to improve principal pipelines – from preparation through continuous development.

With a firm foundation in best practices and expanding data on school leader performance, Tennessee should hold principal preparation programs accountable for program design and effectiveness. Tennessee should identify sound measures that show whether or not principal preparation and leadership programs have a positive impact on student achievement in the schools their graduates lead. The first step in this process is to ensure all principal preparation programs are accountable for implementing best-practice design elements to improve leaders' skills and abilities.

To give principals the training and skills to lead student achievement in their school building, Tennessee must **invest in building high-quality, sustainable principal preparation programs.** Many Tennessee schools – particularly those demonstrating the lowest levels of performance and highest levels of student need – have an urgent need for skilled and visionary leaders who can lift staff and students to academic excellence. The state and philanthropic partners should provide financial support to districts and universities to ensure more educators can be trained in best-in-class principal preparation programs.

These programs include standards-based academic content, a residency component that places candidates in internship or assistant principal positions, and continued coaching for the first three years on the job. These programs yield better student outcomes, including higher rates of graduation and postsecondary placement. Investments should be tailored to individual and regional needs to effectively target principal vacancies and existing program quality. By working together, the state and philanthropic partners can find and replicate models that improve and sustain school leadership, and there should be a particular emphasis on ensuring more principals are ready to lead low-performing schools.





Ensure High School Is The On-Ramp To Postsecondary Studies And Jobs

In the last decade, Tennessee K-12 education policy has been guided by one primary goal: Every student must graduate ready for postsecondary education, entry into the workforce, or military service. Public education is fundamental for children to grow into independent and successful adults who will lead Tennessee and drive sustained economic growth.

Tennessee has made notable gains in postsecondary readiness on several fronts. The state has improved the graduation rate to 89.1 percent; funded and simplified retaking ACT as a senior so more students qualify for college and HOPE scholarships; enrolled more high school students in dual-credit opportunities; and reduced college remediation rates. The *Tennessee Succeeds* plan has raised the bar for high schools, incorporating early postsecondary opportunities and ACT achievement as measures of effectiveness.

High schools play a central role in preparing students for postsecondary completion and work. However, nearly half of graduates from the classes of 2011 to 2014 said in a nationwide poll that the expectations they faced in high school were lower than the expectations of higher education and the workplace, and about two-thirds said they wished they had taken more challenging coursework in high school.⁴⁵

In conversations across Tennessee, community leaders have described high school as disconnected from the demands of the modern economy. Business leaders have emphasized that graduates need to be critical thinkers and can manage complex projects and solve problems in a team environment. Community leaders have urged that every student should be able to connect their learning in high school to future career paths and

“Tennessee should make high schools a top priority in education because it is the foundation that everyone needs either for the workplace or a postsecondary institution. The better prepared students are when they leave high schools, the more successful they will be in life.”

– Dr. Jeff Sisk, Director,
TCAT Jackson

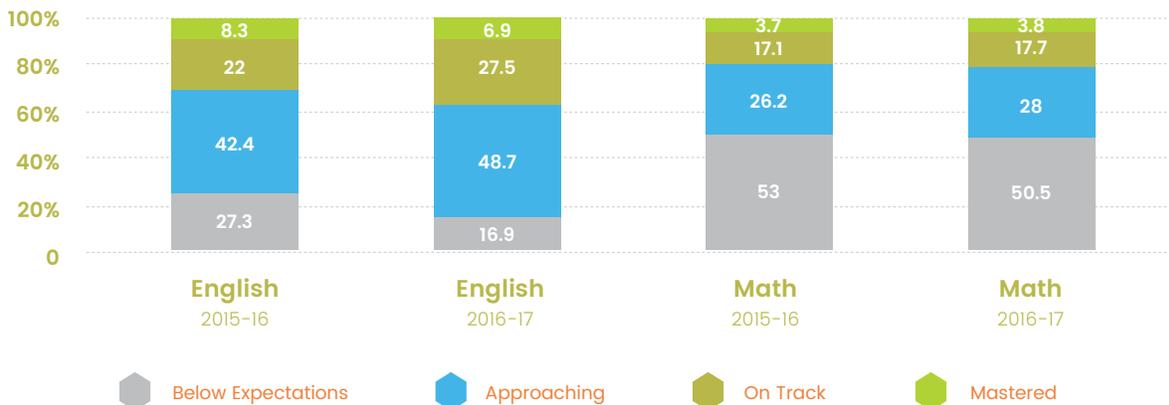
earning power. Other stakeholders have called for tight-knit partnerships between high schools and postsecondary institutions to offer coursework that is relevant to future livelihoods.

High schools juggle multiple, complex priorities – ensuring student academic success and graduation, helping students enroll in college, and ultimately, preparing students for success in the workforce.⁴⁶ Today’s mainstream high school model – the comprehensive high school – has attempted to meet these priorities for

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS

While students showed improvement in the second year of TNReady, most have not yet met expectations in their English and math courses.

Source: Tennessee Department of Education, 2015-17



half a century.⁴⁷ The results are troubling. Out of 129 school districts with high schools across Tennessee, only three districts show 50 percent or more students meeting expectations in high school math.⁴⁸ Although nine in ten students graduate from high school,⁴⁹ about six in ten graduates require remedial coursework in college.⁵⁰ Lack of strong academic preparation also hurts job readiness; fewer than half of Tennessee graduates demonstrate the skills for two-thirds of jobs available in Tennessee.⁵¹ While the comprehensive high school model has produced success in some communities, it has not delivered an excellent education for most Tennessee students.

It is time for Tennessee to refocus high school to offer clear paths of learning so each student graduates ready to succeed in college, military service, technical or career training, or the workforce. When high schools gear learning toward postsecondary readiness, student academic improvement follows.⁵² For example, community college students who took dual-credit coursework in high school are significantly more likely to obtain a bachelor's degree than their peers who do not take such courses.⁵³ Low-income students see the largest impact of college-coursework completed in high school.⁵⁴

Apprenticeships show particular promise in making high school relevant to career. A 2012 Department of Labor study found that, on average,

participants in registered apprenticeship programs earn \$300,000 more in lifetime earnings and benefits than students not in such programs.⁵⁵ For every dollar spent by the federal government on registered apprenticeships, the return is \$27, the same study found.⁵⁶

Postsecondary success for every student cannot be achieved from a single high school model. To build the diverse array of school strategies and models that will ensure all students graduate ready for a lifetime of achievement, Tennessee should:

- Redesign high schools to ensure postsecondary success and completion
- Increase student access to and completion of rigorous coursework aligned to workforce opportunities
- Build the infrastructure needed to initiate and sustain employer, K-12, and postsecondary partnerships

Tennessee has the opportunity to revisit what high school looks like to ensure every student has a path through school that leads to success as adults. This work can begin by **redesigning high school to ensure postsecondary success and completion**. This should be done through innovative efforts that meet the needs of diverse

students. Districts should consider personalized learning opportunities, high-quality career and college counseling, and career-related experiences for students.⁵⁷

One innovative model is the early college or middle college high school, which combines high school coursework with early postsecondary opportunities for students. In Tennessee, these schools are specifically designed to engage students with the greatest needs, who might not otherwise have access to such opportunities.⁵⁸ Students in early college high schools are more likely than their peers in traditional high schools to graduate, enroll in college, and earn a college degree.⁵⁹ Students in Tennessee who attend middle college high schools also demonstrate higher graduation rates and ACT scores than the state average.⁶⁰ In 2017, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a law to fund a scholarship program for middle college students in the state.⁶¹ State lawmakers should continue investing in middle college high schools so that more students in Tennessee are able to attend such schools.

High school students also require a learning environment where they can focus on rigorous coursework and develop skills to be successful after high school. Small, theme-based learning communities, such as career and technical education schools where students earn credits for high school and college simultaneously, can also significantly boost college enrollment⁶² and employment rates.⁶³

One model called P-TECH 9-14 blends high school and community college to prepare students for careers in high-growth industries. While in a P-TECH school, students follow a six-year path to a high school diploma, industry-recognized associate degree, and relevant work experience. Employers partner with the schools to support students in being ready for jobs in their chosen fields upon graduation. This model has emerged on a small scale, but the on-time completion rate of the first cohort in Brooklyn was roughly four times greater than the national completion rate for traditional community college students.⁶⁴

High schools that provide a robust system of supports for incoming middle school students and pair students with teachers and advisors who move with them through grade promotion have a positive effect on student outcomes.⁶⁵ If high schools provide a strong system of advising, proactive remediation, and foundational, pre-college coursework in the early years, by the 12th grade students should have the opportunity to

attend courses that are flexible to their schedule and reflect the college-going experience, while providing sufficient supports if students falter.⁶⁶ Doing so creates high school learning experiences that resemble college.⁶⁷

By focusing on instruction and program designs that enhance student postsecondary readiness, Tennessee can build a broad portfolio of innovative high school models to ensure all students have multiple pathways to success. Whole-school science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) schools have shown promise,⁶⁸ and Tennessee recently developed a framework defining what STEM schools should look like.⁶⁹ Districts can use this framework and strike up partnerships with employers to strengthen these models.⁷⁰

To ensure high schools are providing every student a path to a postsecondary or industry credential, Tennessee must **increase student access to and completion of rigorous coursework aligned to workforce opportunities**. Early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) – such as college level examination program (CLEP), dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), and industry certification – elevate student learning. These types of courses help improve student performance in high school and postsecondary.⁷¹

Tennessee's district and school accountability system assesses how many students are ready for college, the military, or the workforce, and measures student readiness in part by assessing enrollment and completion of EPSOs. In an effort to ensure all students have early post-secondary opportunities, the Tennessee General Assembly has worked to provide students with access to EPSOs at little or no cost through dual-enrollment grants and AP funding.⁷²

Tennessee schools must leverage this funding and continue to expand access to EPSOs, especially for low-income students and students of color, and increase the rigor of the courses. To foster expansion, Tennessee can provide targeted resources, such as competitive grants, to districts without higher education partners nearby. This investment would enable districts to build EPSO capacity, such as technical equipment or teacher training, and could support proven teacher externship models.⁷³ Tennessee must continue to provide an array of funding options to districts to cover dual-enrollment and dual-credit fees – particularly for low-income students.⁷⁴

Tennessee must also increase the uniformity of dual-credit acceptance and transferability among



postsecondary institutions. The state can do this by building upon the Tennessee Transfer Pathway to help students understand the connection between college courses taken in high school and terminal degrees and certificates. Tennessee can also promote EPSOs that align to high-demand workforce opportunities. Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology already work with K-12 schools and districts to do this, and more community and state colleges should adopt this practice.

Teachers and school counselors play a critical role in connecting students to EPSOs. New software and online tools can help educators understand student motivations, career interests, and academic strengths – and how these student characteristics align to economic opportunities. Innovative student survey tools can draw connections between

subjects and extracurricular activities students enjoy, their career aspirations, and potential career paths. These tools can help teachers and school counselors guide individual students toward the right EPSOs for them, increasing access, and ultimately, completion. Tennessee should continue piloting these efforts with districts, evaluate their effectiveness, and expand best practices.

Tennessee K-12 schools can provide students with expanded career exploration and work-based learning opportunities by **building the infrastructure needed to initiate and sustain employer, K-12, and postsecondary partnerships.** Work-based learning programs and apprenticeships are important opportunities to better prepare students for their career. Intermediary organizations, such as chambers of commerce, nonprofit organizations, and philanthropic organizations all play major roles in connecting business and education leaders to build paths from K-12 to college and career. These organizations are key allies in the work to provide students pathways to postsecondary studies and careers.

Partners across Tennessee can build the foundation to grow work-based learning opportunities. Districts can compete for available grants to expand work-based learning programming and cover key expenses, such as required workplace insurance for students in these unpaid roles.⁷⁵ Additionally, guidance and support is needed for businesses that offer these opportunities to provide them with information on building registered apprenticeship programs.⁷⁶

Grants from Tennessee's Labor and Education Alignment Program (LEAP) address gaps between workforce skills and employer needs. Tennessee should continue to monitor the impact of LEAP and increase investment in this program.

In 2012, Tennessee became one of the first six states to join the Pathways to Prosperity network. Pathways Tennessee is a state-level initiative to build community partnerships and ensure alignment among K-12 schools, higher education, and employers. Pathways Tennessee provides a crucial framework to implement LEAP grants. Pathways Tennessee can be strengthened by infusing more structure and investment in regional partners, such as development districts and chambers of commerce. Pathways partner regions should develop and implement coordinated plans of action to enhance regional K-12 instruction to improve student postsecondary enrollment, completion, and employment. Tennessee should measure and report on these efforts, and share best practices.

Provide Tennessee Students With The Greatest Needs A High-Quality Education

During the decade of Tennessee’s historic statewide improvement in academic achievement, the gains have not benefited all groups of students equally. Tennessee must be honest about these discrepancies and better serve the students who need more support so our state can close unacceptably large gaps in academic growth and achievement. For example, years of data show higher-income students in Tennessee have caught up to and sometimes surpassed their peers nationally, but low-income students in Tennessee have lagged behind similar students nationally and only recently demonstrated growth. Tennessee can never rise to the top of the nation for academic achievement until equity and excellence are provided to the students who need it the most.

Achievement data show that students with the greatest needs are often students of color, students whose families are low-income, students who live in the most rural or most urban communities, students who are learning English, or students who have special needs. These students achieved impressive growth between 2009 and 2015 on the Nation’s Report Card in science. This academic growth underscores that children with the greatest needs can learn at higher levels when they receive appropriate supports.

In conversations across the state, Tennesseans have expressed deep concern for the students with the greatest needs and have described significant barriers to helping them. Community leaders in low-income and rural communities have cited the challenges of attracting and retaining top educator talent and inadequate funding for technology. Educators at all levels have asked for solutions to principal and teacher turnover in low-performing schools.



“One thing that I would do for students in Tennessee is to ensure that all of them have equal access to opportunities. We need to address those external barriers to our children actually being able to attend school ready to learn.”

– Natalie McKinney, Director of Whole Child Strategy, Memphis Education Fund

More transparency on the performance of students with the greatest needs is the first step toward action. Transparency requires strong data, and the now fully implemented TNReady assessments are providing deeper data on student learning. The state also has begun implementing Tennessee Succeeds, the state plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act, and its new school accountability system that provides school-level information about how specific groups of students are performing compared to all students. Schools,

TENNESSEE STUDENTS PROFICIENT OR ABOVE

There are significant gaps in proficiency rates between white, African American, and Hispanic students in Tennessee, according to the Nation's Report Card.

Source: 2015 National Assessment Of Educational Progress

	African American	Hispanic	White
Grade 4 Math	20%	32%	48%
Grade 4 Reading	16%	27%	39%
Grade 4 Science	18%	31%	51%
Grade 8 Math	9%	24%	34%
Grade 8 Reading	5%	23%	38%
Grade 8 Science	12%	23%	47%

parents, and communities will now clearly be able to see which student groups are underserved. Additionally, Tennessee Succeeds creates a refined approach to school turnaround that will help districts identify which schools need the greatest support. Going forward, schools and districts must use this data to provide targeted supports to the students with the greatest needs.

Data show which schools are excelling and meeting the needs of their students and which are not. By understanding what is working in the most successful schools, leaders in other schools can adopt the right practices to give students targeted support for greater learning. Schools and districts must also use data to ensure all students have access to some of the most important resources – effective teachers and technology.

To propel dramatic gains in learning among students with the greatest needs, Tennessee should:

- Ensure the equitable distribution of highly effective educators
- Identify and expand innovations that get results for students with the greatest needs
- Leverage technology to advance student learning

Because teachers are the most important in-school factor for student achievement, Tennessee should more aggressively **ensure the equitable distribution of highly effective educators**. Evidence shows that Tennessee's students

with the greatest needs are disproportionately taught by less effective teachers. Students are clustered together at low-performing schools⁷⁷ and suffer the consequences of teacher and principal turnover that is significantly higher than in better-performing schools.⁷⁸ In recent years, Tennessee has put laws in place to provide districts flexibility in compensating teachers and provided data to district and school leaders detailing concentrations of less-effective teachers. However, district efforts to ensure students in the lowest-performing schools have highly effective teachers have not been successful at the rate that is necessary to move these students forward. The state should explore how to make this data easier to understand and use in order to support good decision-making at the district level.

School districts should consider the use of strategic compensation plans, where educators in the lowest-performing schools are rewarded for taking on greater challenges.⁷⁹ One way to do this is by creating paid leadership roles, such as an instructional coach or master teacher, to recognize experienced and effective teachers who commit to teaching in low-performing schools and help them spread best practices to others. In order to ensure districts have the flexibility to make these decisions, Tennessee should consider offering financial support to districts.

Educators in Tennessee's lowest-performing schools also need additional support. Effective preparation and coaching are critical to improving retention of effective teachers in low-performing schools. Some organizations, for example, pair effective principals in high-needs schools with



aspiring principals, who receive intensive coaching and mentoring.⁸⁰ Tennessee can also increase state capacity to provide coaching for principals and teachers in high-poverty schools, which could help improve retention among educators. Highly experienced and effective teachers, for example, could be recruited to low-performing schools to help lead and coach other teachers in improving student achievement.⁸¹

The state should develop a clear process to help all Tennessee school districts understand the current distribution of effective educators, identify policies or procedures that contribute to inequities, and work to remove barriers. In parallel, the state should work with schools in the bottom 5 percent to ensure they employ effective, experienced teachers so that students with the greatest needs have access to educators with foundational experience leading a classroom.

There are innovations happening in schools across Tennessee that are leading to student achievement growth. Schools and districts must **identify and expand innovations that get results for students with the greatest needs.**

Innovative practices are happening in traditional public schools, district-led Innovation Zones, public charter schools, and all other public school models. According to 2016-17 data, 519 out of 1,556 schools with assessment data scored at the highest levels of academic growth – Level 5, according to TVAAS. These 519 schools represent approximately one-third of Tennessee schools overall, and nearly half of them – 240 – serve student populations that are one-third or more economically disadvantaged. These schools are a mix of traditional public and public charter schools, and they move students to the highest levels of growth despite significant challenges.



A key challenge in supporting improvements for students with the greatest needs is the lack of constructive dialogue about innovations that work. For example, many Tennessee communities are beset by unproductive conversation about the type of school models, (particularly about public charter schools vs. traditional schools) rather than the effectiveness of those schools and their impact on students. Tennessee urgently needs productive dialogue about strategies that work across any kind of public school to achieve academic excellence in communities with the greatest needs. Communities should identify and examine the schools where the students with the greatest needs are making strong growth to find promising practices that can be replicated. Whether these schools are traditional public schools or public charter schools, it is time for Tennessee to get past labels and talk about what policies and practices translate to student learning gains.

Not only do we know which schools are delivering important gains for students, we also know which schools are not meeting the needs of their students. Since 2012, Tennessee has identified the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools and put in place a system of interventions to turn around performance. Since those interventions were implemented, 24 schools have moved out of the bottom 5 percent of schools.⁸² In 2016, Tennessee seized the opportunity to use the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to create a refined continuum of supports for the lowest-performing schools. Tennessee's Innovation Zones (iZone), the state-run Achievement School District (ASD), and newly proposed efforts like a Partnership Zone each reflect deliberate efforts to turn around low-performing schools through strengthened instruction and expanded supports for students. These efforts must ensure that Tennessee's lowest-performing schools do not go longer than three years without a meaningful intervention.

Since the creation of the ASD, the proficiency rate for schools in the bottom 5 percent – called Priority Schools – has increased by more than 10 percent.⁸³ Some schools in district-led iZones are producing even greater results for students.⁸⁴ Significant progress has occurred because low-performing schools are receiving targeted supports and are providing students with the greatest needs access to highly effective teachers.

With many turnaround models to learn from and better-than-ever data about which students need more support, it is time for schools and districts to act decisively and for education stakeholders to support them so academic improvement occurs quickly.

To meet the needs of our most underserved students, Tennessee must **leverage technology to advance student learning**. The US Department of Education has described access to technology as a fundamental educational right, while describing this access as only the first step to equitable learning opportunities.⁸⁵ To realize the full potential of learning technology, it needs to be available to students with the greatest needs and implemented to personalize their learning and enhance the quality of instruction.

The use of technology has become central to success in the workforce, and its role in education has never been more important. Technology can meet students where they are in their learning and pull them toward their potential. Evidence shows that when teachers use technology to help students learn⁸⁶ there can be significant positive effects on student academic achievement.⁸⁷ Furthermore, when every student has access to a laptop or tablet, student engagement, classroom management, and student collaboration improve.⁸⁸

Governor Haslam and the General Assembly have removed barriers to Internet access and increased school technology funding, but student access to technology continues to vary widely by community. All schools, especially schools in low-income areas, must have equitable access to devices and adequate support for teachers to use technology to help students learn.

Technology can be a powerful gateway to learning, especially for students with the greatest needs. Tennessee must ensure students are learning the skills needed to be successful in their future careers. Computer coding, for example, helps students to build and refine problem-solving skills. Over the past decade, computer programming has permeated a range of occupational fields, such as biology, chemistry, physics, medicine, engineering, art, music, and social sciences.⁸⁹ Computer coding can help students understand complex challenges and strengthen critical reasoning. With the help of visual coding software, Tennessee can expand coding coursework not only in high school, but in early grades as well.⁹⁰

Crucially, teachers need high-quality training and sustained supports to implement technology to deepen learning. In 2017, Tennessee created a teaching endorsement in computer science.⁹¹ Educator preparation programs can work with the Tennessee State Board of Education to develop strong guidelines to prepare more teachers for this important qualification. School districts can ensure teachers have instructional coaches with expertise in using technology to make the most of devices and software for individualized student learning.



TENNESSEE'S HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY

It was not that long ago that Tennesseans were either unaware of or indifferent about low expectations for the academic performance of our students. Only in the last decade has there been a statewide determination to expect more of our students and, most importantly, demand more of ourselves as adults. In response, Tennessee policymakers, educators, parents, community members, and our students quickly rose to the challenge of meeting these higher expectations.

The state laid the foundation for K-12 education progress through courage, collaboration, and committed leadership. Together, we set stronger academic standards based on the knowledge and skills students need for postsecondary study and work, and the state has improved assessment to better track progress. Together, we established a transparent accountability system centered on how well all students are learning in the state's public schools and an evaluation system focused on helping teachers improve instruction. Together we made historic investments to remove financial barriers to postsecondary education. Because Tennesseans shared a vision for education, our commitment remained steady even as leadership at the state level changed.

These policies have turned into results for students and made the state an education leader on the national stage. Tennessee students have improved enough to place our state in the top 25 on the Nation's Report Card for fourth-grade math and science and eighth-grade science.

At the same time, reading performance is flat. While measures of postsecondary readiness have improved, they still show most students are not fully prepared to succeed in college-level courses. Especially troubling, there are large groups of students who have been underserved historically and are not advancing as fast as more privileged students.

Having tasted success, Tennesseans are setting our student achievement sights even higher – looking all the way to the top of the nation. The *Excellence For All* priorities build upon the foundation firmly in place and show us how to work with collaboration and optimism and again ensure progress continues through future transitions in leadership. Together, Tennesseans can realize this new vision and lift our students – and ultimately our state – to the highest levels of academic achievement.



TOP PRIORITIES THROUGH 2025

- ◆ **Make Tennessee The Best State To Live, Work, And Grow As A Teacher**
- ◆ **Support Every Student To Become A Strong Reader And Writer**
- ◆ **Develop School Leaders Who Are Ready To Lead Learning And People**
- ◆ **Ensure High School Is The On-Ramp To Postsecondary Studies And Jobs**
- ◆ **Provide Tennessee Students With The Greatest Needs A High-Quality Education**

“In the state of Tennessee, we have a vision of where we want to be and how to get there. These two things combined, with continuous support from the state of Tennessee in achieving these goals, are critical for moving students forward.”

– Dr. Michael Gonzales,
Assistant Director, Giles
County School System



ABOUT SCORE

The State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) drives collaboration on policy and practice to ensure student success across Tennessee. We are an independent, nonprofit, and nonpartisan advocacy and research institution, founded in 2009 by Senator Bill Frist, MD, former US Senate Majority Leader.

SCORE works collaboratively to support K-12 education throughout Tennessee, and we measure our success by the academic growth of Tennessee's students.

To help Tennessee achieve academic success for all students, SCORE:

- **Advocates for critical policies that advance student success**
- **Convenes and supports state and local partners to advance a shared agenda**
- **Promotes the implementation of promising practices that work**
- **Fosters and supports strong networks of education leaders**



SCORE Board of Directors

As of November 10, 2017

Senator Bill Frist, MD
Chairman and Founder
SCORE

Janet Ayers
President
The Ayers Foundation

Chuck Cagle
Attorney
Lewis, Thomason, King, Krieg & Waldrop

Kevin Clayton
CEO
Clayton Homes, Inc.

David Golden
Senior VP, Chief Legal & Sustainability Officer
Eastman Chemical Company

Zan Guerry
CEO
Chattem, Inc.

Dee Haslam
CEO and Founder
RIVR Media, LLC

J.R. "Pitt" Hyde III
Chairman
The Hyde Family Foundations

Orrin Ingram
President and CEO
Ingram Industries, Inc.

Alan Levine
President and CEO
Mountain States Health Alliance

Dr. Greg Nelson
Retired
Eastman Chemical Company

Scott M. Niswonger
Chairman and Founder
Landair Transport

Joelle Phillips
President
AT&T Tennessee

Christine Richards
Retired
FedEx Corporation

Jamie Woodson
Executive Chairman & CEO
SCORE

SCORE Steering Committee

As of November 10, 2017

Dr. Deborah Boyd

Dean & Director of Graduate Studies, College of Education
Lipscomb University

Chairman Harry Brooks

House of Representatives
Tennessee General Assembly

Maya Bugg

Chief Executive Officer
Tennessee Charter School Center

Miles Burdine

President & CEO
Kingsport Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Dan Challener

President
Public Education Foundation

Etta Ryan Clark

Vice President
Global Public Affairs & Policy
Eastman Chemical Company

Representative John DeBerry

House of Representatives
Tennessee General Assembly

Dr. Nancy Dishner

Executive Vice President
Niswonger Foundation

Senator Bill Frist, MD

Chairman and Founder
SCORE

Chairman Dolores Gresham

Senate
Tennessee General Assembly

Dr. Tammy Grissom

Executive Director
Tennessee School Boards Association

Lindsey Hagan

Assistant Principal
Hamilton County Schools

Mike Krause

Executive Director
Tennessee Higher Education Commission

Dr. Dale Lynch

Executive Director
Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents

Dr. James McIntyre

Executive Director
Center for Educational Leadership,
University of Tennessee

Amy Kate McMurry

Fourth-Grade Math & Science Teacher
Williamson County Schools

Dr. Candice McQueen

Commissioner of Education
Tennessee Department of Education

Sarah H. Morgan

President
Benwood Foundation

Dr. Sara Morrison

Executive Director
Tennessee State Board of Education

Phyllis Nichols

President & CEO
Knoxville Area Urban League

Dr. Claude Pressnell

President
Tennessee Independent Colleges
and Universities Association

Teresa Sloyan

Executive Director
Hyde Family Foundation

Renata Soto

Co-Founder & Executive Director
Conexión Américas

Senator Reginald Tate

Senate
Tennessee General Assembly

Oliver "Buzz" Thomas

President
Great Schools Partnership

Clay Thompson

President
Cat Financial Insurance Services

Greg Thompson

Program Officer
The Pyramid Peak Foundation

Denine Torr

Director of Community Initiatives
Dollar General Corporation

J. Laurens Tullock

President
Tullock Consulting

Chairman Mark White

House of Representatives
Tennessee General Assembly

Cicely Woodard

Eighth-Grade Math Teacher
Metro Nashville Public Schools

Jamie Woodson

Executive Chairman & CEO
SCORE

SCORE Team

As of November 10, 2017

Jamie Woodson
Executive Chairman and CEO

David Mansouri
President

Dr. Sharon Roberts
Chief Strategy Officer

Lauren Baer
Grants Manager

Courtney Bell
Director of Educator Engagement

Sarah Brown
Special Projects Coordinator

Indira Dammu
Senior Policy and Research Analyst

Taylor Hall
Director of Outreach

Carolyn Hanesworth
Executive Assistant

McKenzie Manning
Deputy Director of Communications

Jeremy Meredith
Policy and Research Analyst

Mary Cypress Metz
Chief of Staff

Julian Sanchez
Finance and Operations Coordinator

Molly Sears
Senior Director of Finance and Operations

Peter Tang
Tennessee Educator Fellowship Coordinator

Jennie Verner
Director of Government Relations

Teresa Wasson
Director of Communications

Graduate Fellows
Madeline Chimka
Jack Powers
Alisha Woodson

Interns
Paul Aderemi
Kendall Bernard
Bridgette Brown
Dylan Guthrie
Erin Savoie



NOTES

1. RAND Corporation. (2012). Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement. Retrieved September 18, 2017 from <http://www.rand.org/education/projects/measuring-teacher-effectiveness/teachers-matter.html>.
2. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. (2010). Learning about Teaching: Initial Findings from the Measures of Effective Teaching Project. Retrieved January 4, 2017 from <https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/preliminary-findings-research-paper.pdf>.
3. Committee for Economic Development (2009). Teacher Compensation and Quality: A Statement by the Policy and Impact Committee of the Committee for Economic Development. Retrieved September 15, 2017, from <https://www.ced.org/pdf/Teacher-Compensation-and-Teacher-Quality.pdf>.
4. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Preparation Through Partnership: Strengthening Tennessee's New Teacher Pipeline. Retrieved August 22, 2017, from http://tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/Preparation_through_Partnership_report_final_web.pdf.
5. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Tennessee Department of Education Awards Planning Grants to Spur Innovation in Increasing Educator Diversity. Retrieved September 15, 2017, from <https://www.tn.gov/education/news/53031>
6. <https://teachtodaytn.org/>.
7. http://www.tennessee.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/Preparation_through_Partnership_report_final_web.pdf
8. American Institutes for Research. (2017). Impact of TNTP's Teaching Fellows in Urban Districts. Retrieved on September 18, 2017, from <http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/TNTP-Teacher-Fellows-Evaluation-Summary-May-2017.pdf>.
9. Dee, T. (2004). The Race Connection: Are Teachers More Effective with Students Who Share Their Ethnicity? Education Next. Retrieved October 19, 2017, from <http://educationnext.org/the-race-connection/>.
10. Zuber, T. (2017, March 14). Diversifying the Teacher Workforce through Grow Your Own: A Snapshot of Three Programs. Center on Great Teachers and Leaders. Retrieved October 19, 2017, from <http://www.gtlcenter.org/blog/diversifying-teacher-workforce-through-grow-your-own-snapshot-three-programs>
11. Tennessee State Board of Education. (2017). Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs. Retrieved October 19, 2017, from <https://www.tn.gov/thec/article/report-card>.
12. Ferlazo, L. (2013). Response: Creating a Culture of Improvement With Peer Assistance and Review. Education Week. Retrieved September 18, 2017, from http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazo/2013/02/response_creating_a_culture_of_improvement_with_peer_assistance_review_par.html.
13. Tennessee General Assembly. (2017). House Bill 695/Senate Bill 614. Retrieved September 17, 2017, from <http://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/BillInfo/Default.aspx?BillNumber=SB0614>.
14. Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration. (2017). Budget Information. Retrieved September 17, 2017, from <https://www.tn.gov/finance/topic/fa-budget-information>.
15. Education Commission of the States. (2016). State Teacher Salary Schedules. Retrieved October 19, 2017, from <https://www.ecs.org/ec-content/uploads/State-Teacher-Salary-Schedules-1.pdf>.
16. Pham, Nguyen, & Springer (2017). Teacher Merit Pay and Student Test Scores: A Meta-Analysis. Vanderbilt University. Retrieved September 5, 2017, from <https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2017/04/11/teacher-merit-pay-has-merit-new-report/>.
17. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Educator Insights: Takeaways from the 2017 Tennessee Educator Survey. Retrieved September 6, 2017, from https://tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/data_survey_report_2017.pdf.
18. Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010). Double jeopardy: How third grade reading skills and poverty influence graduation rates. Retrieved July 2017 from <http://www.aecf.org/resources/double-jeopardy/>.
19. Ibid.
20. Begin To Read. (2015). Literacy Statistics. Retrieved October 19, 2017, from <http://www.begintoread.com/research/literacystatistics.html>
21. Tennessee Department of Education (2017). Data Available for Download. 2015 District-Level Aggregate Accountability File. Retrieved July 7, 2017, from <http://www.tn.gov/education/topic/data-downloads>.
22. Alliance for Excellent Education (2002). Reading Between the Lines: What the ACT Reveals About College Readiness in Reading. Retrieved October 25, 2017, from https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/act_reading_between_the_lines_research_ela.pdf.
23. Baron, et. al. (2017). Journey Mapping a Path to Early Literacy in Tennessee. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Carnegie Commons Blog. Retrieved October 19, 2017, from <https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/blog/journey-mapping-a-path-to-early-literacy-in-tennessee/>.
24. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Read to Be Ready Coaching Network Website. Retrieved September 6, 2017, from <https://www.tn.gov/readtobeready/section/read-to-be-ready-coaching-network>.
25. Kane, T. (2016, March 3). Never judge a book by its cover—use student achievement instead. Retrieved September 6, 2017, from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/never-judge-a-book-by-its-cover-use-student-achievement-instead/>.
26. Ibid.
27. Polikoff, M., and Koedel, C. (2017). Big Bang For Just A Few Bucks: The Impact Of Math Textbooks in California. Economic Studies at Brookings. Evidence Speaks Reports. Retrieved October 19, 2017, from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/es_20170105_polikoff_evidence_speaks.pdf.
28. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Educator Insights: Takeaways from the 2017 Tennessee Educator Survey. Retrieved September 6, 2017, from https://tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/data_survey_report_2017.pdf.
29. 2017 Tennessee Educator Survey. https://tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/data_survey_report_2017.pdf.
30. <https://lifteducationtn.com/resources/>
31. Chingos, M. M. & Whitehurst, G. J. (2012). Choosing blindly. Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings. Retrieved August 2017 from https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0410_curriculum_chingos_whitehurst.pdf.
32. Tennessee Department of Education. (2016). Response to Instruction and Intervention Framework. Retrieved October 24, 2017, from https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/rti2/attachments/rti2_manual.pdf
33. Seashore-Louis, K., et al. (2010). Investigating the links to Student Learning: Final Report of Research Findings, Wallace Foundation. Retrieved July 7, 2017, from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Investigating-the-Links-to-Improved-Student-Learning.pdf>.
34. National Association of Elementary School Principals. (2013). Leadership Matters: What the Research Says about the Importance of Principal Leadership. Retrieved July 7, 2017, from <http://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/LeadershipMatters.pdf>.
35. Branch, G., et al. (2013). School Leaders Matter. Education Next. Retrieved July 7, 2017, from <http://educationnext.org/school-leaders-matter/>.
36. MDRC. (2004). High School Reform Conference. Using Rigorous Evidence to Improve Policy and Practice. Retrieved August 4, 2017, from <http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/The%20High%20School%20Reform%20Conference%20Series.pdf>. (2004).
37. Branch, G., et al. (2013). School Leaders Matter. Education Next. Retrieved July 7, 2017, from <http://educationnext.org/school-leaders-matter/>
38. Darling-Hammond, et al. (2007). Preparing School Leaders for A Changing World: Lessons From Exemplary Leadership Development Programs. Stanford University. Retrieved September 17, 2017, from https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/preparing-school-leaders-changing-world-lessons-exemplary-leadership-development-programs_1.pdf.
39. 2017 Tennessee Educator Survey. <http://educatorsurvey.tnki2.gov/>.
40. Ibid.
41. Grissom, J., et al. (2013). Effective Instructional Time Use for School Leaders: Longitudinal Evidence From Observations of Principals. Retrieved August 25, 2017, from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.3102/0013189X13510020>.
42. Wallace Foundation. (2016). <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Pages/key-responsibilities-the-school-principal-as-leader.aspx>
43. Hilliard, A., Newsome, S. (2013). Value Added: Best Practices for the Utilization of Assistant Principals' Skills and Knowledge in Schools. Bowie State University. Retrieved October 11, 2017, from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ101427>.
44. Tennessee Department of Education. (2016). Tennessee Transformational Leadership
45. Advisory Council Report. Retrieved August 25, 2017, from https://tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/Transformational_Leadership_Report.pdf.
46. Achieve (2014). Rising to the Challenge Survey, Part One: Recent High School Graduates. Retrieved October 28, 2017, from <https://www.achieve.org/rising-challenge-survey-1>
47. Cuban, L. (2004). Why Has Frequent High School Reform Since World War II Produced Disappointing Results Again, and Again, and Again? High School Reform Conference Series: Using Rigorous Evidence to Improve Policy and Practice. Retrieved August 29, 2017, from <https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/The%20High%20School%20Reform%20Conference%20Series.pdf>.

48. MDRC. (2004). High School Reform Conference. Using Rigorous Evidence to Improve Policy and Practice. Retrieved September 15, 2017, from <https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/The%20High%20School%20Reform%20Conference%20Series.pdf>.
49. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). Data Available for Download. Retrieved September 15, 2017, from <http://www.tn.gov/education/topic/data-downloads>.
50. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). News Release. Tennessee High School Graduation Rate Reaches Highest Rate On Record. Retrieved September 15, 2017, from <https://www.tn.gov/education/news/tennessee-high-school-graduation-rate-reaches-highest-rate-on-record>.
51. Tennessee Higher Education Commission & Student Assistance Corporation. (2017). Reports Show More Students Than Ever Going to College, Demonstrate Progress Toward Drive to 55. Retrieved August 4, 2017, from <https://www.tn.gov/thec/news/49822>.
52. The ACT. (2017). The Condition of College and Career Readiness. Retrieved October 24, 2017, from <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/cccr2017/Tennessee-CCCR-2017-Final.pdf>
53. American Institutes for Research. (2014). Press Release. Report Confirms Early College High School Students Much More Likely to Earn College Degree. Retrieved on September 16, 2017, from <http://www.air.org/news/press-release/report-confirms-early-college-high-school-students-much-more-likely-earn-college>.
54. Blankenberger et al. (2017). Dual Credit, College Type, and Enhanced Degree Attainment. American Education Research Association Journal June/July 2017. Retrieved on September 16, 2017, from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0013189X1718796>.
55. Ibid.
56. Rips, E. (2016). Medieval to Millennial: Building and Marketing Modern, Youth Oriented Apprenticeship Programs. Young Invincibles. Retrieved October 25, 2017, from http://younginvincibles.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/YIApprenticeshipReport_Final.pdf
57. Ibid.
58. U.S Department of Education. (2013). Fact Sheet: Redesigning America's High Schools. Retrieved October 13, 2017, from <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-redesigning-americas-high-schools>.
59. Tennessee Public Acts, Chapter 459 (2007). Retrieved October 27, 2017, from <http://tennessee.gov/sos/acts/105/pub/pc0459.pdf>
60. Berger, A. (2013). Early College, Early Success. Early College High School Initiative Impact Study. American Institutes for Research (AIR). Retrieved August 29, 2017, from http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/ECHSI_Impact_Study_Report_Final_0.pdf.
61. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). State Report Card. Retrieved August 29, 2017, from <https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/report-card>.
62. Tennessee General Assembly. (2017). House Bill 0980/Senate Bill 0720. Retrieved October 13, 2017, from <http://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/BillInfo/Default.aspx?BillNumber=SB0720>
63. MDRC (2014). New Findings Show New York City's Small High Schools Boost College Enrollment Rates Among Disadvantaged Students. Retrieved September 19, 2017, from <http://www.mdrc.org/news/press-release/new-findings-show-new-york-city-s-small-high-schools-boost-college-enrollment>.
64. Berger, A. (2013). Early College, Early Success. http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/ECHSI_Impact_Study_Report_Final_0.pdf.
65. IBM (2017). News Release. IBM-Inspired P-TECH Schools Graduate 100 Teens with College Degrees, Tech Career Skills (2017) Retrieved October 26, 2017, from <https://www-03.ibm.com/press/us/en/pressrelease/52484.wss>.
66. Quint, Janet. (2006). MDRC. Meeting Five Critical Challenges of High School Reform: Lessons From Research on Three Reform Models. Retrieved July 27, 2017, from https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_440.pdf.
67. Nagaoka, J., Holsapple, M. (2017). Beyond Academic Readiness. Building a Broader Range of Skills for Success in College. Jobs for the Future. Retrieved October 9, 2017, from <http://www.jff.org/publications/beyond-academic-readiness-building-broader-range-skills-success-college>.
68. Ibid.
69. STEM Pathways to College and Careers Schools: A Developmental Guide. (2012). Retrieved August 29, 2017, from https://www.ibm.com/blogs/citizen-ibm/wp-content/uploads/STEM-Pathways-Playbook_Feb-2012.pdf.
70. Tennessee STEM School Designation. (2017). Retrieved August 29, 2017, from <http://thetsin.org/designation/>
71. ConnectEd. (2008). Evidence From California's Partnership Academies: One Model of Linked Learning Pathways. Retrieved on August 7, 2017, from http://www.connectedcalifornia.org/downloads/LL_Evidence_CPA%20Summary_web.pdf.
72. Blankenberger, B. Lichtenberger, A. (2017). Dual Credit, College-Type, and Enhanced Degree Attainment. Retrieved August 29, 2017, from <http://journals.sagepub.com/stoken/default+domain/PQyev8JdfQfymkrPBM2/full>.
73. Tennessee Higher Education Commission & Student Assistance Corporation. (2017). Dual Enrollment Grant. Retrieved August 29, 2017, from <https://www.tn.gov/collegepays/article/dual-enrollment-grant>.
74. Cooksey, L. (2016). Teacher Externships: Connecting Industry Experience to the Classroom. Classroom Chronicles. Retrieved August 29, 2017, from <http://tnclassroomchronicles.org/teacher-externships-connecting-industry-experience-classroom/>.
75. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). EPSO Implementation Guide: Achieving Equity, Access, and Success through a Portfolio Approach to Early Postsecondary Opportunities. Retrieved September 25, 2017, from https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/EPSo_Implementation_Guide_FINAL.pdf.
76. Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. (2017). Apprentice Training Grant Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved September 25, 2017, from https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/labor/attachments/Apprenticeship_Training_Grant-FAQ.pdf.
77. Apprenticeship Carolina. Retrieved September 25, 2017, from <http://www.apprenticeshipcarolina.com/about.html>.
78. Tennessee Department of Education. (2016). Equitable Access to Highly Effective Teachers for Tennessee Students. Retrieved September 25, 2017, from https://www.tn.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/equitable_access_web_3-29-16.pdf.
79. Grissom, J. Can Good Principals Keep Teachers in Disadvantaged Schools? Linking Principal Effectiveness to Teacher Satisfaction and Turnover in Hard-to-Staff Environments. Retrieved October 24, 2017, from <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/jasongrissom/files/2012/05/principal-effectiveness-TCR-version.pdf>.
80. Travers, J., Christiansen, B. (2010). Strategic Staffing for Successful Schools: Breaking the Cycle of Failure in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Retrieved on September 17, 2017, from https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/ED_Case_Study_Strategic_Staffing.pdf.
81. Rodel Principal Initiative. (2017). Retrieved September 19, 2017, from <http://rodelaz.org/initiatives/principal-initiative/>.
82. Tatter, G. (2014). Chalkbeat. To turn around failing schools, Nashville turns to experienced teachers. Retrieved September 19, 2017, from <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/tn/2014/10/15/to-turnaround-failing-schools-nashville-turns-to-experienced-teachers/>.
83. Tennessee Department of Education. (2017). ESSA State Plan. Every Student Succeeds Act: Building on Success in Tennessee. Retrieved September 19, 2017, from http://www.tennessee.gov/assets/entities/education/attachments/TN_ESSA_State_Plan_Approved.pdf. School Accountability. Retrieved October 30, 2017, from <http://www.tn.gov/education/article/2017-school-accountability>
84. Camera, L. (April 2017). Tennessee Schools Learn a Lesson in Reform. U.S. News. Retrieved October 25, 2017, from <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2017-08-11/tennessee-moves-beyond-ambitious-school-turnaround-model>
85. Ibid.
86. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Education Technology (2014). Learning Technology Effectiveness. Retrieved April 12, 2017, from <https://tech.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Learning-Technology-Effectiveness-Brief.pdf>.
87. Means, B. et al. (2010). Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies. US Department of Education. Retrieved on April 12, 2017, from <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>.
88. Doran, L. and Harold, B. (2016, May 16). 1:1 Laptop Initiatives Boost Student Scores, Study Says. Education Week. Retrieved April 12, 2017, from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2016/05/18/1-to-1-laptop-initiatives-boost-student-scores-study.html>.
89. Bebell, D., Kay, R. (2009). Birkshire Wireless Learning Initiative: Final Evaluation Report. Boston University. Retrieved April 12, 2017, from http://www.bc.edu/research/intasc/researchprojects/bwli/pdf/BWLI_Year3Report.pdf.
90. Florez, F., et al. (2017). Changing a Generation's Way of Thinking: Teaching Computational Thinking Through Programming. American Educational Research Association: Review of Educational Research. Retrieved April 12, 2017, from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/003465431710096>.
91. Ibid.
92. Tennessee General Assembly. (2017). House Bill 0918/Senate Bill 0232. Retrieved September 17, 2017, from <http://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/BillInfo/Default.aspx?BillNumber=SB0232>

TNSCORE.ORG

 @score4schools

 fb.com/score4schools

 youtube.com/TNscore4schools



1207 18th Avenue South
Suite 326
Nashville, TN 37212
615.727.1545