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impact report



impact report

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About SCORE

The mission of the State Collaborative On Reforming Education (SCORE) is to catalyze transformative change in Tennessee education so that all students can achieve success. SCORE is an independent, nonprofit, and nonpartisan institution, founded in 2009 by Senator Bill Frist, MD, former US Senate Majority Leader. Striving to be a durable partner and trusted advisor on Tennessee education, SCORE is focused on driving change for students from kindergarten to career through policy and practice – and taking it to scale.

SCORE has **three goals** that guide the organization’s work to drive success for all students in Tennessee:

1. All students receive an excellent public K-12 education.
2. All students earn a credential or postsecondary degree of value that prepares them for a career enabling economic independence.
3. Economically disadvantaged students, students of color, and rural students see improved success across all goals relative to their peers.

To achieve these goals, SCORE has **four strategic priorities**:



Great teaching and leadership

Supporting great instruction and curriculum & recruiting, preparing, and retaining excellent educators



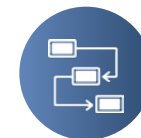
Innovative school models and approaches

Advancing approaches and programs that have promise in accelerating student success



Education-to-career pathways

Aligning K-12 and postsecondary programs with career success



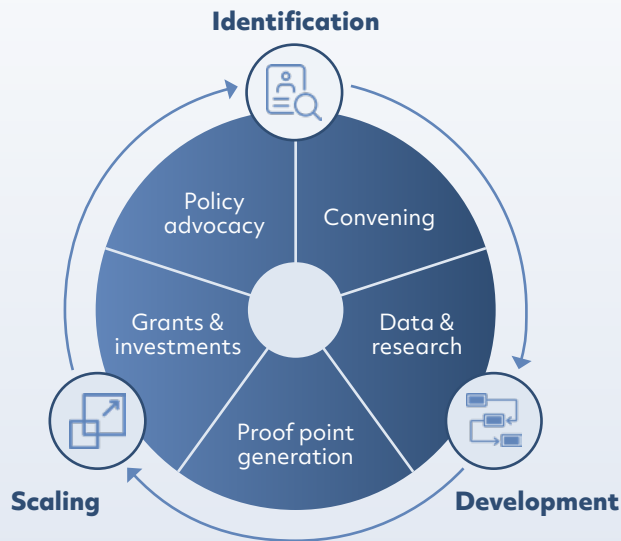
Supportive ecosystem

Supporting the broader education ecosystem to reach its potential and ensure educational excellence

The mission of SCORE is to catalyze transformative change in Tennessee education so that all students can achieve success.



SCORE's **theory of action** is oriented around an iterative cycle of effectuating change for students.



Specifically:

- We strive to be a **durable partner and trusted advisor** on Tennessee education, focused on advancing change through policy and practice – and taking it to scale.
- We **identify challenges and potential solutions** for students based on data and research, convene stakeholders, and link Tennessee to national conversations.
- We **develop effective approaches** by working directly with schools, districts, institutions, and employers to innovate and generate proof points.
- We **enable the scaling of promising solutions** by advocating for student-focused policy and activating philanthropy, assistance, and investment.
- We continue to **use data and research to monitor progress, measure impact, and identify additional areas of need for students**.

An Updated Strategy To Ensure All Tennessee Students Can Achieve Success

SCORE's goals, priorities, and theory of action reflect a refined strategic plan for the organization. In 2023, we engaged in a refresh of our strategic plan from 2019, which is when SCORE expanded its mission to include postsecondary success for all students. The 2023 strategic plan refresh focused on ensuring the organization was driving the needed **next phase of postsecondary reforms in the state while also recommitting to our long-standing K-12 work**. We conducted 20-plus external stakeholder interviews, including members of SCORE's Board of Directors and Advisory Council, both of which are made up of education leaders from across Tennessee. These stakeholder meetings and our research of the postsecondary landscape in Tennessee and across the United States resulted in a refreshed strategic plan that provides, in particular, important updates on SCORE's go-forward approach to postsecondary education. **SCORE's updated postsecondary goal is that all students earn a credential or postsecondary degree of value that prepares them for a career that enables economic independence**. External stakeholder interviews and research highlighted two primary unaddressed needs in the state where SCORE can meaningfully contribute:

- Lack of consensus on key postsecondary priorities across the state, in part due to limited accessible data on current opportunities and gaps, leading to a focus on data access and use to drive postsecondary outcomes
- Opportunity to expand high-quality, high-demand career paths, bolster postsecondary programs aligned to such careers, and support students in attaining relevant credentials, leading to a focus on supporting more students to graduate with credentials and degrees aligned to career opportunities

In the post-high school space going forward, SCORE will prioritize postsecondary research, data analysis, policy development, and stakeholder engagement. In addition, SCORE will convene Tennessee education, policy, and industry partners around a shared agenda to use localized data and research-backed practices to promote student success, particularly for historically underserved student groups.



Impact Snapshot

Monitoring Student Progress

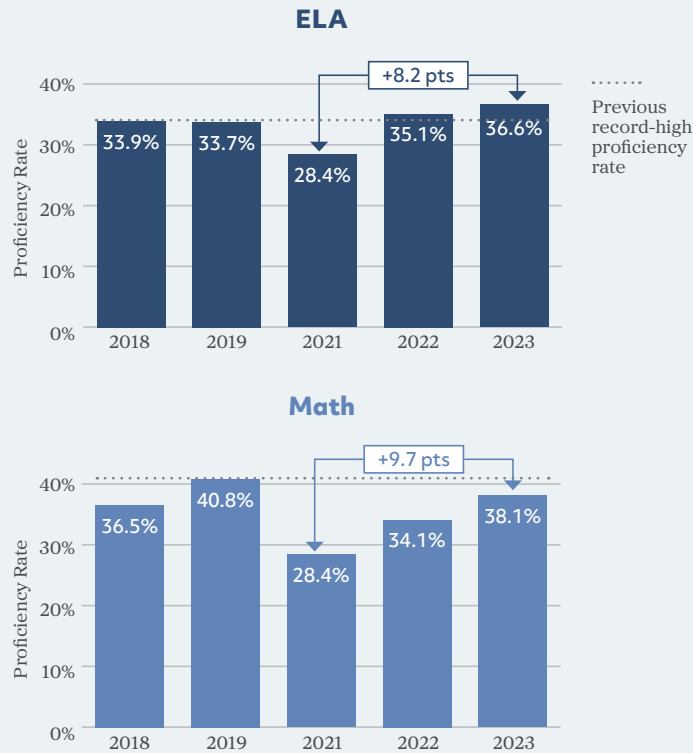
Tennessee's commitment to accelerating student learning in K-12 following the pandemic paid off in a big way in 2023. The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP), Tennessee's annual statewide assessment, revealed across-the-board increases in student achievement. This significant accomplishment was a direct result of the relentless efforts of Tennessee students, educators, parents, and leaders. These results also served as clear evidence that Tennessee's priorities, initiatives, and investments – such as strengthened early literacy policy and supports, high-dosage tutoring, expanded summer learning, and higher-quality curriculum – led to clear gains for students. In

addition, postsecondary college-going and attainment continued to trend upward following pandemic-related dips. Despite this positive growth for Tennessee students, achievement gaps for Tennessee's historically underserved student groups remained pervasive. In postsecondary, more Tennesseans need degrees and credentials to access careers in Tennessee's modern workforce and more work needs to be done to align student opportunities to careers that enable economic independence.

Tennessee is one of the few states currently exceeding pre-pandemic English language arts (ELA) proficiency levels, with proficiency rates for all students in grades 3-8 almost 3 percentage points higher than the 2019 rate.

Tennessee students made progress in ELA and math in 2023, showing large gains on state assessments in both areas in the two years since the 2021 achievement lows. ELA proficiency rates for all students in grades 3-8 is almost 3 percentage points higher than the 2019 pre-COVID rate.

Tennessee Has Seen Large Gains Across Subjects Since 2021, Nearly Catching Up To Or Surpassing Pre-pandemic Results



Grades 3-8 ELA TCAP proficiency rates for ELA and math, 2018-2023

Data Note: Due to school closures and assessment waivers, data are not available for 2020.

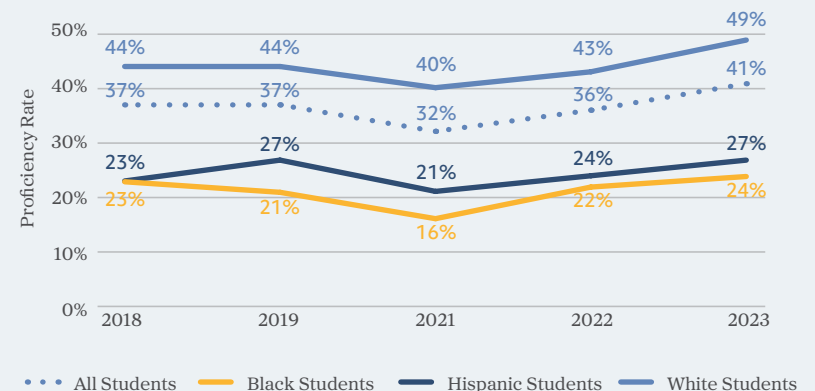
Source: TDOE state-level assessment data downloads, 2023

The math proficiency rate for students in grades 3-8 is still shy of the pre-pandemic high but did improve by almost 10 percentage points between 2021 and 2023.

Third-grade ELA proficiency, which research shows is connected to long-term academic outcomes, reached record highs for all students in 2023.

Grade 3 ELA performance has increased from 35.7 percent of students scoring proficient in 2022 to 40.5 percent in 2023 – nearly 4 percentage points above the pre-pandemic proficiency rate in 2019.

Third-Grade ELA Proficiency Rates Reached Record Highs in 2023



TCAP grade 3 ELA proficiency rates by student group, 2018-2023

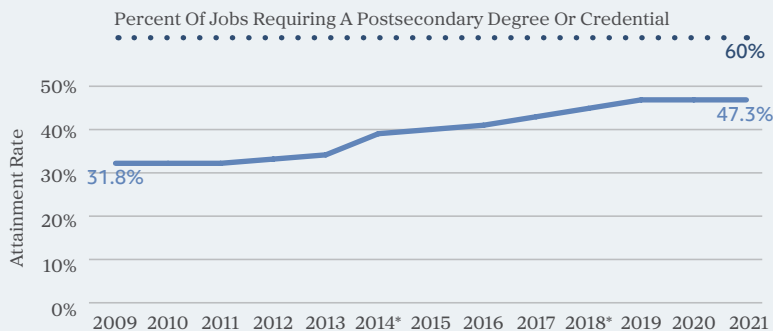
Data Note: Due to school closures and assessment waivers, data are not available for 2020.

Source: TDOE state-level assessment data downloads, 2023

Tennessee’s postsecondary outcomes also improved in 2023. The state’s college-going rate rebounded from a pandemic low with a 1.5 percentage point increase since 2021. In addition, the postsecondary attainment rate was critically important for understanding how many students were prepared for success in the workforce. Today, around 60 percent of the state’s jobs require some kind of postsecondary education. Though not at the 60 percent mark, the state’s postsecondary attainment rate continued to trend upward and reached 47.9 percent in 2023. However, it remains unknown how well these degrees or credentials are preparing Tennessee students to access high-wage, high-demand careers in Tennessee’s current and future workforce.

The state’s postsecondary attainment rate continues to trend upward.

Tennessee's Attainment Rate Continues To Increase But Remains Short Of Meeting Workforce Needs



Percentage of Tennesseans ages 25-64 holding a degree or credential, 2009-2021

Data Note: In 2014, workforce-relevant certificates were included in calculations. In 2018, industry-recognized certifications were included in calculations.

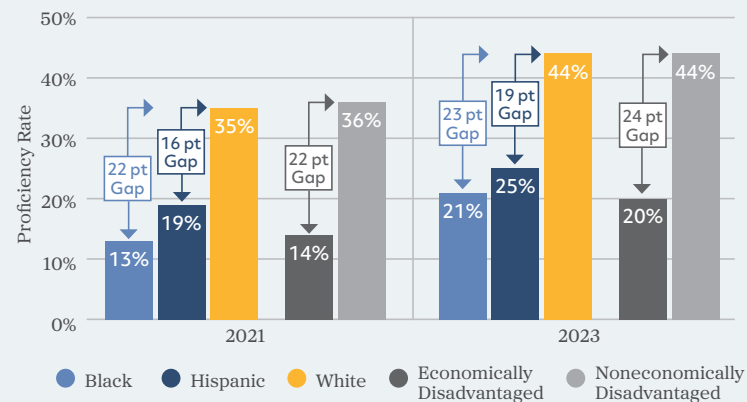
Source: Lumina Foundation Stronger Nation Report, 2022

In addition to looking at overall proficiency, it is critical to also analyze how Tennessee is closing achievement gaps across these grades and subjects for students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds. White and non-economically disadvantaged (non-ED) students were larger drivers of the overall grade 3-8 student growth in the past two years, reflecting widening opportunity gaps for students of color and economically disadvantaged (ED) students in K-12 and college.

Widening opportunity gaps illustrate that Tennessee needs to devote additional supports to students with the greatest needs.

In 2023, the White-Black and White-Hispanic ELA proficiency gaps grew to 23 percentage points and 19 percentage points, respectively. The ELA proficiency gap between non-ED and ED students reached 24 percentage points in 2023. This trend is the same for math.

ELA Proficiency Rates Differ By Race And Income, And Those Gaps Continue To Widen



Grades 3-8 ELA equity gaps by student group, 2023

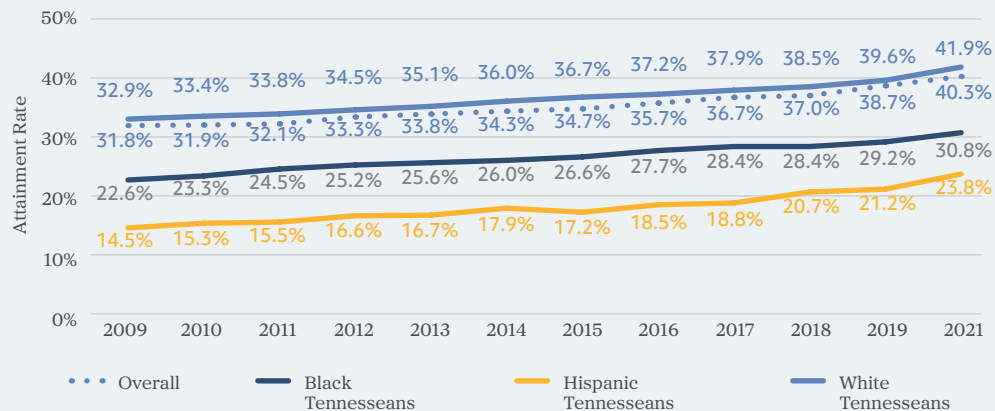
Source: TDOE state-level assessment data downloads, 2023

Opportunity gaps for students also persisted into postsecondary education. Despite steady progress across groups, Black and Hispanic Tennesseans were far less likely to hold a postsecondary degree than White Tennesseans. Only 30.8 percent of Black students and 23.8 percent of Hispanic students who started high school in 2012 went on to enroll in college and earn a postsecondary degree or credential by the summer of 2022 compared to 41.9 percent of White students.

To ensure every Tennessean is prepared for a career that enables economic independence, the state needs to better support students of color.



To Meet Workforce Needs, Tennessee Must Better Support Historically Underserved Populations



Percentage of Tennesseans ages 25-64 holding a degree by race/ethnicity, 2009-2021

Data Note: Degrees include graduate or professional degrees, bachelor's degrees, and associate degrees

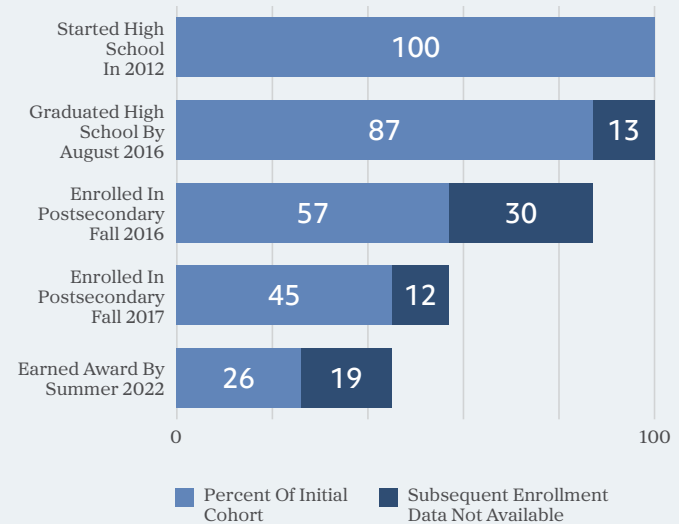
Source: Lumina Foundation Stronger Nation Report, 2022

Tennessee has the opportunity to strengthen the pipeline connecting K-12, postsecondary education, and the workforce.

The pipeline from K-12 through postsecondary education – and ultimately to the job market – is losing too many Tennesseans of all backgrounds along the way. With just over 47 percent of Tennessee adults holding a postsecondary degree or credential, there remains a gap between the demand for a skilled workforce and what the Tennessee education system is producing. In addition, there is little data relating to whether Tennesseans with a degree or credential have the training needed for high-wage, high-demand careers that enable economic independence. Tennesseans need access to high-quality educational opportunities that prepare them for success in a career.



Only One-Quarter Of High School Students Successfully Navigate The Postsecondary Pipeline



Longitudinal trajectory for students starting ninth grade in 2012 through the postsecondary education pipeline

Data Note: High school graduates were identified using TDOE Accountability protocol: those who received a regular or alternate diploma before the end of Summer 2016. Postsecondary enrollment and completion rates calculated using THEC, TICUA, and NSC data; awards data do not include out-of-state NSC data, industry-recognized credentials, nondegree credentials, or military enlistments, so the true metric is likely higher than that shown by available data.

Source: P20 Connect aggregate data request, 2023. Data have been reviewed by THEC, TICUA, and TDOE.

At the close of 2023, SCORE released its annual *State Of Education In Tennessee report* to outline policy and practice recommendations for Tennessee K-12, postsecondary education, and education-to-work pathways in the year ahead. In partnership with diverse collaborators across the education ecosystem, SCORE elevated these recommendations as a comprehensive student-focused agenda to advance outcomes for Tennessee students from K-12 to career.



Read SCORE's 2024 *State Of Education In Tennessee* report.



2024 State Of Education In Tennessee Report Recommendations

Expand Student Opportunity By Strengthening Foundational Policies

- Prioritize the use of longitudinal data to drive student outcomes.
- Enhance the Tennessee Promise scholarship and community college student experience.
- Revise the postsecondary outcomes-based funding formula to prioritize long-term student success.

Build Effective Pathways Between Education And Careers

- Give Tennesseans clear information on which degrees and credentials lead to careers.
- Identify and incentivize quality early postsecondary and career experiences for students.
- Develop strong partnerships across education and industry to increase alignment.

Ensure K-12 Supports Meet Student Needs

- Support teachers at each stage of their career to further student access to excellent educators.
- Adopt a plan for instructional coherence to maximize learning for the state's lowest-performing students.
- Solve Tennessee's charter school facilities challenge.



2023 In Review



Since its founding 15 years ago, SCORE has championed bold policies and innovative practices that put students' progress at the heart of Tennessee's success. In 2023, SCORE defined its post-secondary strategy after expansion into the postsecondary space in 2019 and continued its work to ensure a statewide student-focused education reform agenda was supporting students from kindergarten to career. This included SCORE convening diverse stakeholders, building coalitions, driving policy change through advocacy, supporting best practice policy implementation, launching innovative practices, and investing in mission-aligned work so that all Tennessee students can achieve success.

Connecting Education To Work

Throughout 2023, SCORE was a leader in research, data, stakeholder engagement, and strategic incubation. This work was needed to ensure education and business leaders are positioned to work together to lead and expand innovative student-centered education-to-work initiatives that use data to support students. Our goal: Students have the opportunity to achieve high-wage, high-demand careers in Tennessee.

Convening Key Stakeholders

SCORE prioritized engaging with stakeholders and sharing the latest innovations to support students through strategically linking education to career. In summer 2023, SCORE hosted a five-part SCORE Institute series to elevate leading innovations from across the country that are working to ensure students are prepared

with the skills and training needed to meet current and future workforce needs. This series brought together policymakers and leaders from education, business, and the community for monthly 90-minute institutes to explore topics that support education-to-work pathways. Topics included: Today's Workforce Skills, High School Models That Lead To Jobs, Rural Pathways To Workforce Readiness, Strengthening Education-To-Workforce Data, and Accelerating Black Male Success.

Watch the five-part SCORE Institute series on preparing Tennessee students for the future of work.



The culminating session of our SCORE Institute Summer Series took place in September when SCORE hosted the Future Forward Summit. The summit brought together 200 business, industry, and education leaders to collaborate on developing and expanding education-to-work pathways in Tennessee. The event included national and state speakers with expertise in education-employer partnerships, discussions on using statewide longitudinal data to strengthen the education-to-work pipeline, and insights on how to further align what students learn in the classroom to what employers need today. Ultimately, the summit helped elevate the importance of education and industry collaborating so that Tennessee students are prepared to seize high-wage, high-demand career opportunities in the state's changing workforce.

SCORE also convened philanthropic and institution leaders from across Tennessee to shine a light on innovative practices across the country supporting the education-to-work pipeline. SCORE convened the Tennessee Learning Circle (TLC) at Valencia College in Orlando, Florida, which is known for its exemplary community college model. The TLC – consisting of Tennessee education, philanthropic, community, state, and community college leaders – heard insights from Valencia College leaders on successful initiatives and reflected on adapting these innovations in Tennessee. Later, SCORE reconvened the TLC to explore high-quality apprenticeships with national experts. Additionally, SCORE organized a learning trip for Tennessee community college leaders and partners to visit the One Million Degrees model in Chicago to inspire Tennessee leaders to implement interventions that propel student economic mobility through attainment of credentials of value.



SCORE hosted the Future Forward Summit for business and industry leaders across Tennessee to elevate opportunities to build a stronger education-to-work pipeline for Tennessee students.



View our SCORE Institute on High School Models That Lead To Jobs to learn how the Rhode Island Nurses Middle College is putting students on an accelerated path to careers in nursing.



Data And Research

In Chattanooga, SCORE led a workforce analytics project with business and community leaders to help them understand how education experiences lead to employee success. In partnership with three Chattanooga-area employers and community partners including Chattanooga 2.0, SCORE leveraged employer human resource data and labor market data to surface insights that can drive collaboration to build regional pathways from education to work. SCORE also used the labor market data to test the value of a labor data dashboard tool for identifying and piloting education-to-work pathways that meet regional labor needs.



Additionally, SCORE partnered with Chattanooga 2.0 to support the development of their viable pathways initiative by creating a forward-looking labor market analysis for the greater Chattanooga region. Finally, SCORE laid the groundwork to expand the workforce analytics project to other Tennessee communities, enabling SCORE to continue this work long term and make an impact on other business leaders and communities poised to use data to drive education-to-work pathways.

Policy Advocacy

SCORE championed the policy reforms and funding needed for Tennessee students to access programming and support that prepares them for college and career. During the 2023 legislative session, SCORE successfully advocated to protect the 2022's direct allocation for career and technical education through the Tennessee Investment In Student Achievement (TISA), a \$1 billion investment in building new Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT) and renovating existing TCATS, and the purchase of specialized instructional equipment at the future Blue Oval City TCAT. Additionally, SCORE advocated for the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) to include college and career readiness in the state's calculation for K-12 school letter grades.



Activating Philanthropy

SCORE provided subgrant funding, data analytics, and strategy support to Chattanooga 2.0 to use education and labor data to elevate high-demand, high-wage opportunities to build at least 10 viable education-to-work pathways in the Chattanooga area. **This effort has allowed SCORE to create a new suite of data analytics tools to support students to access the education and training they need to identify and succeed in careers that enable economic independence.**

Understanding And Building A Stronger Educator Pipeline

In 2023, SCORE focused on understanding the challenges in the educator labor market and championed building a stronger educator pipeline – including teachers and school leaders – through policy advocacy, and a network focused on supporting educators in training.

Data And Research

Understanding the educator labor market at the local level was the first step in fostering a stronger educator pipeline in Tennessee. In partnership with the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA), **SCORE brought together district leaders from 15 districts to participate in an analysis of their Educator Labor Market (ELM).** This convening provided district-specific data insights on educator pipeline, retention, and quality. During the convening, districts also received

comparison data to empower leaders to reflect on their educator investments and identify potential opportunities to address educator workforce challenges in their communities. Leaders considered best practices and discussed how the Tennessee Investment In Student Achievement (TISA) and the impending end of Elementary And Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds are impacting their short- and long-term strategies to ensure students have access to a reliable, effective, and diverse educator workforce. This convening with districts and a series of SCORE-produced ELM reports offered insights and helped SCORE build an understanding of the current opportunities and challenges in the educator labor market.

Convenings

Bringing together educators was an integral strategy for SCORE to understand and bolster the educator labor market in 2023. **SCORE organized a reunion event for alumni of the Tennessee Educator Fellowship (TEF), which brought together 30 education leaders spanning all nine fellowship cohorts.** The gathering in Nashville included insightful feedback sessions addressing topics like early literacy, college and career readiness, and education-to-workforce alignment. This engagement not only helped rebuild connections but also provided a platform for these distinguished educators and student-focused advocates to inform SCORE's ongoing initiatives. Additionally, SCORE resumed its series of community calls with TEF alumni. These calls serve as crucial forums for SCORE to share updates on its current work and seek valuable feedback on emerging priorities from educators.

Policy Advocacy

Recognizing the critical need to address barriers hindering prospective teachers from pursuing careers in education, **SCORE championed the Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship Act.** Across Tennessee and the nation, schools faced historic teacher shortages. SCORE's efforts to promote this legislation underscored a commitment to enhancing the number and quality of educators in Tennessee. The Tennessee Future Teacher Scholarship Act, a \$4.5 million investment by the state, was designed to alleviate financial burdens by offering full tuition and fees coverage for juniors and seniors enrolled in approved Tennessee educator preparation programs (EPPs). This initiative was particularly significant considering that a 2023 affordability study revealed student loan debt was a major concern for prospective teachers.

Generating Proof Points

Identifying a need to support early educators, SCORE focused strategic practice efforts on preparing future educators to meet student needs from day one in the classroom. To meet this need, **SCORE focused on preparing future teachers to teach high-quality early literacy curriculum grounded in the science of reading by creating the Lead In Literacy Network.** The partnership includes faculty from four EPPs in Tennessee that collectively account for nearly one-fifth of Tennessee's most recent three-year cohort of completers and job-embedded candidates. Additionally, the network included partner K-12 school districts that account for nearly one-sixth of the K-12 students in Tennessee. SCORE's Lead In Literacy Network piloted a common set of tools and knowledge to enhance candidate training in early literacy, ultimately



contributing to a more skilled teaching workforce prepared to meet student needs with research-backed practices from their first day on the job.

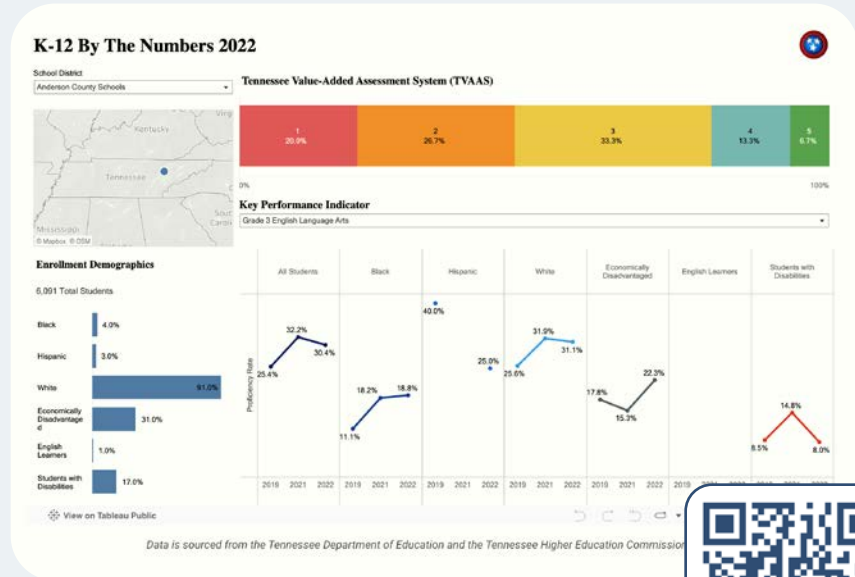
Advancing High-Quality Instruction

In 2023, SCORE supported districts and schools to advance high-quality instruction with data, innovative practices, implementation support, and investments as they addressed post-pandemic challenges in early literacy instruction and strategic budgeting.



Data And Research

Elevating student outcomes data and research relating to the impact of instructional strategies was a key way SCORE supported data-driven decision-making by districts as they worked to advance high-quality instruction. SCORE released a custom K-12 By The Numbers data tool in 2023, which analyzed K-12 data from public school districts across Tennessee and compiled a snapshot of key indicators of student success. SCORE briefed close partners, including district leaders and community leaders, on the metrics behind the tool and how to use the data to inform decisions. SCORE also used the data tool to generate personalized reports for every new Tennessee General Assembly member and education committee member that highlighted their local education data. Since the tool's release, 29 education partners attended the webinar to learn more about it, eight district leaders asked SCORE for a personalized report from the tool, and the online tool has been accessed 497 unique times by the public.



SCORE's K-12 By The Numbers tool helps education stakeholders better understand student success across Tennessee.



Learn how schools can improve summer learning to better support student recovery.



Next, **SCORE** partnered with the **Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA)** to evaluate a group of 10 districts on the effectiveness of their third year of implementing summer learning programs. SCORE and TERA published a brief to shared updated findings from the evaluation highlighting enrollment, attendance, and staff perspectives on summer learning. The research helped districts use learnings from the past two years

to refine strategies for the upcoming year’s summer learning camps. SCORE has advocated for summer learning programs to help accelerate student learning since 2021 and published initial best practices in summer learning in 2022.

High-dosage tutoring, another student intervention SCORE has advocated for to help overcome pandemic learning loss, was a key strategy championed by SCORE in 2023. **Informed by the findings of SCORE’s Accelerate Tutoring Network, SCORE released *Early Grades Literacy Success For All Students: A Coherent Path Forward*.** The report focuses on instructional coherence and the need for aligning assessments and content in high-dosage tutoring and intervention groups with high-quality instructional materials from core literacy instruction. This ensures students have access to more consistent learning experiences and grade-level expectations no matter the setting. This report found instructionally

coherent high-dosage tutoring was a promising path forward for Tennessee to more effectively support students who are furthest behind academically and do to so within existing structures while leveraging existing resources. SCORE also released an **Instructional Coherence Toolkit** and a set of Tennessee District Case Studies to support Tennessee practitioners with implementing key instructional shifts highlighted in the report and facilitated a webinar for practitioners in September that was attended by more than 110 participants.



Read SCORE’s report, *Early Grades Literacy Success For All: A Coherent Path Forward*, and download the practitioner toolkit.

Generating Proof Points

SCORE supported innovative practices in K-12 education through strategic practice networks and investments to generate proof points that, if promising, could be taken to scale. In 2023, SCORE supported traditional districts and public charter schools with implementation strategy and guidance to optimize new Tennessee Investment In Student Achievement (TISA) flexibility and dollars to meet student needs. First, **SCORE supported six traditional districts within the TISA Implementation Professional Learning Community.** This network helped districts develop their first TISA-era budgets, focusing on using budgeting as a tool to enhance student outcomes through a systematic approach for evaluating return on investment in key district initiatives and establishing indicators for continuous academic improvement. Similarly for Tennessee's public charter schools, **SCORE and several partners supported charter school leaders across the state and connected them with technical assistance to plan for the transition to TISA.**

SCORE's TISA implementation support impacted districts and charter schools that educate about students 225,000, which is over one-fifth of Tennessee's public school population.

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"The resources and research provided by SCORE have elevated our success as a district, and our students are direct beneficiaries of better outcomes for their futures."

- Tennessee superintendent

SCORE supported two professional learning communities (PLC) for district partners in the Tennessee Rural Acceleration and Innovation Network (TRAIN). In the first PLC, SCORE supported district partners through a three-part series on accessing their National Student Clearinghouse data and strengthening support for students transitioning to postsecondary education. In the second PLC, SCORE engaged in a two-part series with several district partners to continue work on instructional coherence. These supports allowed districts to continue collaborating and problem-solving with other TRAIN districts on topics of interest between formal convenings.

In addition, SCORE hosted the final convening of the school year for the Accelerate Tutoring Network. Attendees from Bristol City Schools, Hamilton County Schools, Knox County Schools, Trousdale County Schools, and Washington County Schools reflected on the academic growth resulting from early literacy tutoring efforts for grades 1-3 and shared promising practices from pilots related to SCORE's support for using high-dosage tutoring to advance instructional coherence. The network ended with districts planning for how to sustain and scale their network-supported pilots during the 2024-25 school year to more elementary schools within their districts.

Strategic Investments

SCORE's strategic investments in mission-aligned organizations helped provide resources for innovation and best practices in high-quality instruction to flourish across the state. In northeast Tennessee, **SCORE supported the Niswonger Foundation in their partnership with national nonprofit the New Teacher Center (NTC) to provide research-driven instructional coaching to rural northeast Tennessee districts.** SCORE made an investment to the Niswonger Foundation in 2023 to help create a plan to sustain the instructional coaching after federal funding for the program sunsets in 2024. This included plans to transfer best practices from NTC's instructional coaching program to an existing Niswonger Foundation program, Comprehensive Education Resources, that supports 16 rural districts.

SCORE has continued to support the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) with an investment to MTR's Memphis Literacy Institute, which provides Memphis educators with annual, no-cost professional development based on the science of reading, as well as scholarships for Memphis charter school educators pursuing MTR's Reading Specialist Certification. Memphis-Shelby County Schools (MSCS) district educators received a scholarship through a district-funded initiative. To support charter educators interested in the same program, SCORE made a subgrant investment in MTR's reading specialist certification program, which supported 18 charter school educator seats in their 2023-24 cohort at no cost to them or their schools. In Nashville, **In Nashville, SCORE made a renewed investment in the Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) to support leader development, college and career counseling, and teacher development in the science of learning.**



Supporting A High-Quality Public Charter School Sector

In 2023, SCORE served as a statewide leader for policy advocacy, data and research support Tennessee's high-quality charter school sector. Seeing high-quality charter schools as a key lever for advancing student achievement in Tennessee, especially for low-income and students of color, SCORE played a pivotal role in key geographies to support each region's charter sector needs. Across the state, supported the development of a robust charter advocacy ecosystem, and researched and promoted the success of the sector, all while ensuring that statewide policy allowed high-quality charter schools to thrive.



Policy Advocacy

SCORE regularly convened a broad group of key stakeholders to align charter policy priorities and ensure an advocacy strategy that promotes success for public charter schools in Tennessee. Due to the advocacy efforts of SCORE and key partners, an important bill successfully passed that clarified the charter enrollment lottery process to permit charter schools to prioritize enrolling students from economically disadvantaged, homeless, foster, runaway, or migrant backgrounds, or those who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. This was a key step to ensuring that Tennessee's charter schools can serve the highest-need students. In addition, **SCORE successfully advocated for a one-time \$3 million dollar investment to support charter schools with innovative instructional models, which ensure charters have the resources they need to serve their students.** Importantly, SCORE defended against attempts to reduce or remove the charter direct allocation within the new funding formula, the Tennessee Investment In Student Achievement (TISA), which passed in 2022. The TISA formula served as a national model in funding support for charter schools in that it provided funding based on unique student need and created direct allocations for high-need student groups, including economically disadvantaged students and students attending charter schools. SCORE championed TISA in 2022 and ensured in 2023 that no changes were made to the formula that would have a detrimental impact on charter students.



Learn more about Tennessee's public charter schools by visiting SCORE's charter school webpage.



Research And Data

SCORE elevated data and fact-based information and commissioned academic research about Tennessee's public charter schools in 2023. **SCORE expanded its role as a leader in charter data analysis by publishing a charter school webpage to elevate Tennessee public charter school facts, data, and best practices.** To support public charters across the state in strategic planning for their first TISA-funded budget, SCORE's team provided expertise and capacity through regular convenings of charter finance leaders in Memphis and Nashville. **In October, SCORE and the Tennessee Charter School Center hosted an event to highlight the results of the National Charter School Study by Stanford University's Center For Research On Education Outcomes (CREDO).** The event highlighted the strong results of Tennessee's public charter school sector, including that Tennessee's public charter schools demonstrated some of the highest growth rates across the country and served a disproportionate number of Tennessee's highest-need students.

Understanding And Promoting The Value Of Postsecondary Education

In 2023, SCORE researched and elevated the value of postsecondary education and supported partners, districts, and institutions with localized data-driven interventions and investments for students who needed the most support to go to college, persist through college, and earn a degree.

Data And Research

Demonstrating a dedication to advancing postsecondary opportunities, SCORE championed data-driven strategies through research partnerships, statewide surveys, virtual webinars, blog publications, and initiatives addressing gaps in postsecondary opportunities for Tennessee students. First, SCORE commissioned research and engaged experts to better understand barriers in postsecondary attainment and economic opportunities after high school and college. In late 2022, SCORE commissioned the University of Tennessee's Boyd Center For Business And Economic Research (CBER) to understand the economic value of postsecondary education in Tennessee. Relatedly, SCORE commissioned a statewide public opinion survey of Tennessee voters – with an oversampling of 18- to 24-year-olds – to better understand public perceptions of the value of postsecondary education. The research study found the post-pandemic labor market was very competitive and continued to favor college-educated workers in terms of current wages, employment outcomes, and ability to withstand unemployment during a recession. In early 2023, SCORE hosted a webinar and shared these findings with an audience of 150 Tennessee stakeholders. In addition, the virtual event included a discus-

sion with Tennessee K-12, higher education, and workforce leaders about the need to better support Tennessee students across the kindergarten-to-career continuum.

With a focus on using data to drive student supports at the high school and college levels, SCORE published recommendations and supported practitioners to better prepare students to earn a degree and to transition into a career after completing their education. In a series of blog posts focused on the role of postsecondary governing boards, SCORE highlighted the importance and best practices of using student data to assess the effectiveness of programs to prepare students for future employment or future education. For K-12 practitioners focused on preparing students for college and career, SCORE published *Building A Vision For Early Postsecondary Opportunities*, a report highlighting the gaps in access to and success in these important courses and exams. Following the report, SCORE supported districts interested in improving their offerings of early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) with a project to support four Tennessee districts to collect and use data strategically to improve their dual enrollment (one type of EPSO) programming.

Watch SCORE's webinar to learn about the research and public perceptions of the value of a postsecondary degree in Tennessee.



Read SCORE's *Building A Vision For Early Postsecondary Opportunities* report.



Convenings

SCORE convened the eighth cohort of the Complete Tennessee Leadership Institute (CTLI), a leadership cohort program representing postsecondary practitioners and community leaders from across the state, with a new focus this year on increasing regional postsecondary attainment through small, inter-cohort regional teams. In partnership with The Hunt Institute, CTLI participants convened multiple times across the state to learn about the history, opportunities, and barriers in their own region's college-going, persistence, and attainment, with a focus on innovations and collaboration to help advance student outcomes at both the local and state levels.

SCORE continued to convene the Memphis Area Presidents' Council (MAPC) to drive greater collaboration among college and university presidents in Memphis and drive deeper coordination with cross-sector education stakeholders. Leaders from the University of Memphis, Southwest Tennessee Community College, LeMoyne-Owen College, TCAT-Memphis, Rhodes College, and Christian Brothers University met throughout 2023 and supported regional efforts focused on college access, FAFSA completion, and combatting summer melt through data-driven interventions and programming.

Finally, **SCORE convened partners from across the state for a SCORE Institute focused on one key student group in need of more support to succeed in postsecondary education and realize high-wage, high-demand careers.** At the SCORE Institute on

Accelerating Black Male Success, SCORE highlighted One Million Degrees, a Chicago-based organization that accelerates community college students' progress on career pathways to economic mobility by providing wraparound supports such as tutors and coaches, financial assistance, and professional development. The event included a panel of Tennessee education leaders who are prioritizing Black male success in their communities.

Watch the SCORE Institute focused on accelerating the success of Black male students in Tennessee.



Generating Proof Points

By focusing on high-quality implementation support, sharing best practices, and elevating proof points, SCORE made an impact through several college-going and postsecondary working groups. **To strengthen the bridge to postsecondary education, SCORE continued to help districts through the Momentum Metrics Practice Network by building understanding and use of Momentum Metrics, predictive data that helps educators target students who need the most support in high school to find success in college.** The final year of this network engaged district leaders and practitioners across Tennessee through a learning series addressing crucial topics such as the state's Innovative School Models grants, early postsecondary opportunities, and changes to the FAFSA.

Similarly, **SCORE continued to support Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools and area postsecondary institutions with Greater Together**, an innovative program focused on using data sharing between high school and college to support students' transitions to college with data-driven interventions.

Strategic Investments

SCORE deepened its commitment to data-driven postsecondary success strategies by investing in initiatives that support college access and persistence, particularly for students of color

and economically disadvantaged students. SCORE expanded its investment in Persist Nashville, focusing on coaching and assistance tailored for students in Nashville attending Tennessee Board Of Regents institutions. Additionally, SCORE continued its support for Southwest Tennessee Community College's Project MOST, a persistence initiative that supports men of color from low-income backgrounds. Through FAFSA Innovation Grants, 37 high schools with historically low FAFSA completion rates received support from SCORE with microgrants. Next, SCORE invested in a new program at Motlow State Community College, BUCKS, which provides evidence-based peer mentorship and leadership support for Black and Latino male students.

Supporting FAFSA Innovation

Across Tennessee, SCORE supported 37 high schools with chronically low FAFSA completion rates through FAFSA Innovation Grants. On-time FAFSA completion is required to receive the Tennessee Promise Scholarship and receive federal financial aid for college. Though these grants were just a few thousand dollars for each high school, they made a big impact on FAFSA completion. For example, FAFSA completion rates for Hamilton County's Brainerd High School and Rutherford County's Holloway High School increased by nearly 21 percent after using the grants to support students with on-time FAFSA completion.



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