

Personalized Learning Task Force

Member Contact List

PERSONALIZED LEARNING TASK FORCE MEMBERS			
Name	Title	Organization	Email
Sam Brooks	Personal Learning Coordinator	Putnam County Schools	brookss4@pcsstn.com
Kim Clemmons	Instructional Technology Supervisor	Wilson County Schools	clemmonsk@wcschools.com
Brenda Dean	Assistant Professor	Carson Newman University	brenda_dean@hcboe.net
Chad Fletcher	Principal, Westwood Middle	Manchester City Schools	cfletcher@k12mcs.net
Gary Lilly	Director of Schools	Bristol City Schools	lillyg@bcts.org
Beverly Miller	Assistant Director of Schools / Chief Technology Officer	Greeneville City Schools	millerb@gcschools.net
Theresa Nixon	Director of Instructional Technology	Knox County Schools	theresa.nixon@knoxschools.org
Robert Sharpe	Assistant Superintendent	Hamilton County Department of Education	sharpe_r@HCDE.org
Chris Smallen	Chief Technology Officer	Lenoir City Schools	csmallen@lenoircityschools.com
David Timbs	Supervisor of Instructional Technology	Johnson City Schools	timbsd@jcschools.org
James Witty	Executive Principal, MNPS Virtual School	Metro Nashville Public Schools	james.witty@mnps.org
Cleon Franklin	Director of Virtual Schools & Online Learning	Shelby County Schools	franklincl@scsk12.org
Alfred Hall	Director, West TN STEM Hub	University of Memphis	alhall1@memphis.edu
Nina Morel	Dean, College of Professional Studies	Lipscomb University	nina.morel@lipscomb.edu
Hope Nordstrom	Director of M.Ed/Ed.S. Programs	Lipscomb University	hope.nordstrom@lipscomb.edu
Sally Pardue	Director, Oakley STEM Center	Tennessee Technological University	spardue@tntech.edu
John Fischer	Senior Program Officer	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	john.fischer@gatesfoundation.org
Wes Hall	Director	Tennessee STEM Innovation Network	hallj@battelle.org
Rachael Milligan	Managing Director	Ayers Institute	rachael.milligan@lipscomb.edu
Kecia Ray	Executive Director	Center for Digital Education	kray@centerdigitaled.com
John Ross	Technical Advisor	Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center	jr.va@verizon.net
Keilani Goggins	Director, Tennessee State Teacher Fellows Program	Hope Street Group	keilani@hopestreetgroup.org
Joe Wood	State Coordinator	Battelle for Kids	jwood@BattelleforKids.org
Kathleen Airhart	Deputy Commissioner, Chief Operating Officer	Tennessee Department of Education	kathleen.airhart@tn.gov

Task Force Member Bios

District Members



Sam Brooks

Personal Learning Coordinator, Putnam County Schools

Sam Brooks has been very honored to work for the Putnam County VITAL (Virtual Instruction to Accentuate Learning) program for the past 7 years. Brooks' first assignment was Onsite Facilitator for Online Learning at Upperman High School. He then moved into a leadership role as Personal Learning Coordinator for Putnam County Schools in Cookeville, TN. The VITAL program in Putnam County has grown to include credit advancement/credit recovery, dual enrollment, IVC (live) distance learning, K-12 blended learning, as well as providing professional development for the 21 schools within his district. VITAL implemented a district homeschool (VITAL HomeConnect), as well as an early college dual enrollment program (VITAL Collegiate High School) beginning in the fall of 2014. VITAL has hosted over 50 site visits the past three years from districts interested in the operation of our personal learning program.



Kim Clemmons

Instructional Technology Supervisor, Wilson County School System

As the Instructional Technology Supervisor for Wilson County Schools, Kim Clemmons is a leader in innovative change. She has served locally and nationally with key thought leaders in: TETC, USDLA, ASCD, Learning Forward, VSS and ISTE. Prior to becoming a district administrator, Kim was a classroom teacher who worked with the TNDOE to develop the 21st Century Classroom teacher training curriculum. She is responsible for the successful implementation of a state approved virtual school using synchronous, asynchronous, blended and online learning environments to broaden student learning opportunities. Her creative and forward thinking approach has assisted Wilson County Schools with implementing 1:1 initiatives using chrome management for personalized student learning environments. Ms. Clemmons and her team are responsible for the very successful instructional technology professional development program in Wilson County.



Brenda Dean

***Assistant Professor, Carson Newman University
2020 Project Promise, Hamblen County Schools***

Dr. Brenda Dean is part of the faculty of Carson Newman University in the Department of Education's graduate program and is assisting Hamblen County Schools in its digital transformation. Her professional experience includes work as a Biology and Chemistry teacher, a building level administrator, and an assistant director of schools for curriculum and instruction for Hamblen County Schools. Dr. Dean is a master trainer for SREB on Using Root Cause Analysis to Reduce Student Failure.



Chad Fletcher

Principal, Westwood Middle School, Manchester City Schools

Chad J. Fletcher is the Principal of Westwood Middle School in the Manchester City School System. Chad earned his BA, M.Ed., and Ed.S. Degrees from MTSU and began his career as a classroom teacher at Hunters Lane and Antioch High Schools in the Metro-Nashville/Davidson County Schools. Since 2001, he has served as a school administrator in Murfreesboro City, Knox County, and now Manchester City Schools. Chad was twice named Murfreesboro Education Association's distinguished administrator, was a finalist on multiple occasions for favorite principal in the Daily News Journal's Ruthie Awards, and has led Westwood's digital learning initiative for the past three years.



Gary Lilly

Director of Schools, Bristol City Schools

Gary Lilly began his career with Bristol Tennessee City Schools in 1994 as a teacher. He has held a variety of roles with the system, including parent involvement coordinator, curriculum specialist, technology coordinator, principal, and attendance and transportation director. For the past seven years, he has served as the district's Director of Schools. During his tenure as Director, the district has implemented a 1:1 Digital Conversion in grades 4-12. The district has also been recognized as one of six #GoOpen Ambassador Districts by the United States Department of Education for their work with Open Educational Resources. As a result of these and other initiatives, Dr. Lilly was recently named as one of the Top 30 Technologists, Transformers, and Trailblazers by the Center for Digital Education, a recognition he appreciates but attributes to the hard work of the teachers and administrators within the district.



Beverly W. Miller

Assistant Director of Schools / Chief Technology Officer, Greeneville City Schools

After spending the first ten years of her career working in IT for MECO Corporation (an international manufacturing firm), Miller joined the Greeneville City School District as the first Technology Coordinator in October 1995. She recognized in her early days working in public education that her skillset was unique and could be best utilized when combined with that of a highly-qualified, skilled, certified educator. Miller established a strategy to align herself with those who had chosen a teaching career, learn as much from them as was possible, and then combine her talents and skills with theirs to impact education in a positive manner. Having just recently completed her 20th year with Greeneville City Schools, Miller notes that she is more passionate than ever that, while technology is never the entire solution or the complete answer, it most certainly is nearly always a critical piece of the puzzle. She firmly believes that, when used correctly and when placed into the hands of a great teacher, instructional technology can transform the teaching and learning process. After serving as the Chief Technology Officer until 2012, Miller was promoted to Assistant Director of Schools for Administration. She continues to serve in both roles and enjoy her work immensely. Miller holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree from Tusculum College. She has also been the recipient of the TETA CTO of the Year Award as well as the ISTE Making Happen Award.



Theresa Nixon

Director of Instructional Technology, Knox County Schools

Theresa Nixon began her career as a Biology & Chemistry teacher at West High School in Knoxville, TN. She taught there for fifteen years. Ms. Nixon then served the Knox County Schools district in the science department as an instructional coach, specialist, and supervisor. Currently, as the Director of Educational Technology and Library Services, she has the opportunity to work with all educators in Knox County to imagine the possibilities that can impact teaching and learning, create those opportunities, and share the celebrations and challenges to provide every student the opportunity to excel. Ms. Nixon has served as a Professional Development School Teaching Professor with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She has also served the Tennessee Department of Education as a representative to the Next Generation Science Standards State Leadership Council, the Common Core Leadership Council, and the Personalized Learning Advisory Council. Ms. Nixon has a bachelor's degree from the University of the South, Seawee, a master's degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and certification as an Urban Specialist and National Board Professional.



Robert Sharpe

Assistant Superintendent, Hamilton County Department of Education

Dr. Robert Sharpe is the Assistant Superintendent of Education and Leadership Support for the Hamilton County Department of Education, a school district with over 43,000 students. Dr. Sharpe began his career in public education as a para-professional. After earning a master's degree in Special Education, he began his teaching career in DeKalb County, Georgia. In addition to his experience as a classroom teacher, Dr. Sharpe has served as an assistant principal, principal, and director of middle schools. In his current role, Dr. Sharpe leads a district level team responsible for the supervision of school administrators in the district's 78 schools while also facilitating the planning and implementation of all district instructional programs and initiatives.



Chris Smallen

Chief Technology Officer, Lenoir City Schools

Dr. Chris Smallen is currently the Chief Technology Officer and Director of Federal Programs for the Lenoir City School System. Throughout his career he has served as a classroom teacher, technology coach and an assistant principal. He also serves as an adjunct professor for the College of Interdisciplinary Studies at Tennessee Tech University and the College of Education at King University.



David Timbs

Supervisor of Instructional Technology, Johnson City Schools

Prior to joining Johnson City Schools in July, 2015, Dr. Timbs served as the Executive Director of Instructional Leadership Support for the Tennessee Department of Education. He has also served as the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning for Sullivan County Schools, as well as in teaching and administrative roles in Johnson County. Dr. Timbs has served the First Tennessee Regional as a Regional Value-Added Specialist, has chaired the First Tennessee Supervisors' Study Council, and has served as a peer leadership coach for high school educators across the First Tennessee region. Dr. Timbs earned his B.A. in English from King College. He received his M.Ed. in Secondary Education from Milligan College and his Ed. D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from East Tennessee State University. He was selected as the "Tennessee Supervisor of the Year" in 2008, has served as an adjunct instructor at both East Tennessee State University and Milligan College, and co-authored a portion of a book on data analysis published by Corwin Press in 2009.



James Witty

Executive Principal, MNPS Virtual School

Dr. James Witty has a vast experience in nontraditional education working with students, teachers, and families as a teacher, district administrator, and state coordinator. Dr. Witty previously served as the Vice President of the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) and as Vice President of the Tennessee Alternative Education Association (TAEA). As Executive Principal of MNPS Virtual School, Dr. Witty is noted for adopting and implementing the continuous improvement model aimed at increasing student achievement amidst exponential growth. The school is credited with numerous innovations and achievements such as: adopting new board policies for virtual learning, establishing a foundation for virtual teaching and learning, creating extensive teacher and student support mechanisms, opening the *Thomas W. Hatfield Student Success Center*, launching *The Virtual Academy of Business & Marketing*, establishing the virtual Summer Success Program, and earning the AdvancED accreditation. Witty earned his Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Business Education degree from Middle Tennessee State University. He also holds a Doctor of Education degree in Learning and Leadership from the University of Tennessee and a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from Nashville School of Law. In addition to authoring publications, Witty serves as an adjunct professor at Carson-Newman University, and will begin developing courses for Trevecca Nazarene University's new Instructional Design program this spring.



Cleon Franklin

Director of Virtual Schools & Online Learning, Shelby County Schools

As Director of Virtual Schools & Online Learning for Shelby County Schools, Cleon L. Franklin, is directly responsible designing, implementing, and monitoring Shelby County School's plan for blended learning, personalized learning, distance learning, instructional design and virtual schools. This includes choosing instructionally appropriate hardware and software solutions to provide quality professional learning opportunities on digital content for traditional classroom teachers, virtual school teachers, media specialists, school leaders, and district administrators.

He aggressively seeks to advance instruction by embracing a digital conversion model that allows students in 23 schools to engage in personalized learning experiences through by extended the school day through the use of blended learning classrooms, distance learning platforms and 1 to 1 environments. His team's current projects include a blended learning pilot that includes 18 schools and a mixed-modal virtual school implementation.

Higher Education Members



Alfred Hall

Director, West Tennessee STEM Hub, University of Memphis

Dr. Alfred Hall is an assistant professor of science education at The University of Memphis, where he also serves as Director of the West Tennessee STEM Hub. Prior to this position, Dr. Hall served as Chief of Staff for the former Memphis City Schools system in Memphis, TN from 2008 - 2011. He has also served in other roles in the district, including Chief Academic Officer, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, and Director of Mathematics and Science. Beginning his career as a high school biology and physics teacher, Dr. Hall has also served as an Instructor of Biology, a Program Director for an undergraduate STEM program at Delta State University in Cleveland, MS, and an education specialist for the Eisenhower Mathematics and Science Consortium at AEL which provides technical assistance to SEAs. He was selected to serve as the Project Director of the Delta Rural Systemic Initiatives funded by the National Science Foundation in 1999, and he directed the Memphis Urban Systemic Program in 2001, providing leadership and support to educators in Memphis City Schools. He has served on the Integrated STEM Education committee with the National Research Council and National Academy of Engineering, as well as a member of the National Science Advisory Board for Macmillian/McGraw Hill Publishing Company and the National Taskforce for Recruiting, Retaining, and Supporting Teachers of Mathematics for the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Dr. Hall received his Ph.D. in Science Education from George Mason University in Fairfax, VA.



Nina Jones Morel

Dean of the College of Professional Studies, Lipscomb University

Nina Jones Morel, Ed.D., is associate professor of education and Dean of the College of Professional Studies at Lipscomb University, where she is leading a unique competency based program that behaviorally assesses student transferrable and durable competencies and then develops personalized learning plans, combined with cognitive and performance coaching, to help students succeed in academics, the workplace, and life. Before coming to Lipscomb, Morel served on the faculty of Tennessee State University and Middle Tennessee State University. Morel has held previous positions as a Tennessee state legislature lobbyist and Title 3 school improvement consultant. She has taught at the middle, high school, and university levels. She has been a school district administrator for federal programs, English Language Learning (ELL) and district-wide coaching for one of the largest school districts in Tennessee, where she co-led a team to create and implement an instructional coaching program. In addition to authoring publications, Morel was the 2005 winner of the Milken Foundation National Educator Award

for excellent. Morel holds a B.A. from Lipscomb University and a M.Ed. and Ed.D. in Administration and Supervision from Tennessee State University, where she researched implementation of technology initiatives and teacher professional learning in K-12 settings.



Hope Nordstrom

Assistant Professor of Education, Lipscomb University

Dr. Hope Nordstrom is the Director of Advanced M.Ed./Ed.S. Programs and Assistant Professor of Education at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee. She is the lead faculty for the Technology Integration M.Ed./Ed.S. program and organizer of Lipscomb's Ignite: Technology UNconference. Before joining the College of Education faculty, Dr. Nordstrom taught middle school for ten years. Dr. Nordstrom has her bachelor's and master's degrees from Tennessee Technological University and her Ed.D. from Trevecca Nazarene University. She has earned an Advanced Online Teaching Certificate from the Online Learning Consortium (OLC). Dr. Nordstrom's primary research and teaching interests are effective technology integration strategies, online learning, visual literacy, and visible thinking.



Sally Pardue

Director, Oakley STEM Center, Tennessee Tech University

Dr. Sally J. Pardue is a tenured Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Tennessee Technological University, and Director of the TTU Oakley STEM Center, a member organization of the TN STEM Innovation Network via the Upper Cumberland Rural STEM Initiative Hub Project. Her engineering research has focused on nondestructive evaluation and structural characterization using random vibrations for machinery diagnostics, bridge diagnostics, and composite materials. Her educational research includes integrated STEM project-based learning, longitudinal progression and transfer of learning, and research training. Pardue is a member of the Society of Women Engineers, American Society of Engineering Educators, American Society of Mechanical Engineers, and American Educational Research Association.

Non-Profit/Business Members



John Fischer

Senior Program Officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

John joined the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in May 2015 as Senior Program Officer on the US Policy, Advocacy and Communications team. His work is focused on personalized learning and high quality assessments at the national level as well as the Foundation's College Ready strategies in Florida and Tennessee. Prior to moving to Washington DC, John held positions in the state

education agency in Vermont and higher education in New Hampshire. As Deputy Secretary at the VT Agency of Education, John led the State school improvement and innovation and transformation strategies. He led the State's personalized/proficiency based learning initiatives, college/career readiness, standards & assessment and CTE initiatives. He designed the priority pathways project for the State's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) plan. As the VT Federal Liaison, John advocated for rigorous high school and CTE programming and worked with the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education and the Senate HELP committee on the Perkins and ESEA reauthorization efforts over the past few years.



Wes Hall

Director, Tennessee STEM Innovation Network

Wes Hall serves as the director of the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network (TSIN), overseeing operations for Battelle Memorial Institute and working to connect stakeholders across the Volunteer State. TSIN is committed to promoting and expanding the teaching and learning of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in public schools across the state. Prior to joining Battelle, he managed the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's STEM Race to the Top initiatives, focusing on replication of the UTeach teacher preparation model and the administration of STEM professional development grants delivered by the state's higher education faculty to in-service K-12 teachers. Wes previously worked in Knox County, TN government and earned his Bachelor's degree and Master's in Public Administration from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Wes currently serves on the state's STEM Leadership Council, the advisory board for Tennessee Scholars, and the University of Tennessee's Young Alumni Council.



Rachael Milligan

Managing Director, Ayers Institute

Rachael Milligan joined the Ayers Institute for Teacher Learning and Innovation in 2013 and became Managing Director in 2015. Her responsibilities at the Ayers Institute range from coaching teachers and school leadership teams, to organizing training events that bring K-12 and higher education faculty together, to collaborating with educator teams to create online resources and courses for use in teacher and leader preparatory and professional learning programs. Prior to joining the Ayers Institute, Rachael served as an assistant principal in Williamson County, Tennessee. She taught history, geography, and government courses at the middle and high school levels for nine years. Rachael has been Director of 21st Century Community Learning Centers and a house parent at the Tennessee Children's Home. She has her administrative endorsement from Trevecca Nazarene University, her M.Ed. from Peabody College of

Vanderbilt University, and her B.A. from Harding University. Rachael is currently pursuing her doctorate in Learning Organizations and Strategic Change as a candidate in Lipscomb University's Ed.D. program.



Kecia Ray

Executive Director, Center for Digital Education

Kecia Ray is the executive director of the Center for Digital Education and is on the graduate faculty of the Johns Hopkins University and Bethel University. She previously worked at Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, where she served as the district's first executive director of learning technology. She has conducted research in the area of technology integration across the United States, Canada, and South Africa and is the author of three books and several papers focused on designing instruction and distance technologies.



John Ross

Technical Advisor, Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center

John Ross has spent much of the past 15 years helping educators understand how technology integration enhances school improvement efforts. Formerly the director of the Institute for the Advancement of Emerging Technologies in Education and the director of technology for the Appalachia Regional Comprehensive Center (ARCC), he works as an educational consultant. He spearheaded the launch of regional online professional development environment in 2004 and has since designed and delivered online professional development to many thousands of educators in multiple states. His best-selling book, *Online Professional Development: Design, Deliver, Succeed!* (Corwin) was selected as book-of-the-month for Learning Forward in 2011, and he continues to publish on related topics, including his chapter "Online Courses" in the third edition of the popular *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*. The high school online astronomy course he developed for *Virtual Virginia* with his colleague Anita Deck was selected as one of the "Best of 2014 High School Courses" by iTunes U. He created and taught an online graduate class based on the textbook he co-authored with Dr. Katherine Cennamo from Virginia Tech and Dr. Peg Ertmer from Purdue, *Technology Integration for Meaningful Classroom Use: A Standards-Based Approach* (Cengage), which addresses the National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers by ISTE. Over the past three years, he has served as evaluator for numerous projects, such as the Virginia Department of Education's e-Learning Backpack Initiative and Kids' Tech University at Virginia Tech. Dr. Ross holds a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction and instructional technology from Virginia Tech, and was a classroom teacher for 10 years.



Keilani Goggins

Director – Tennessee State Teacher Fellows Program, Hope Street Group

Keilani Goggins has many years of experience working closely with multiple stakeholders to launch and actively manage large-scale projects. As Director of Youth at the YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, she spearheaded the launch of Girls Incorporated in the Middle Tennessee area. She was also Assistant Director at Vanderbilt University's Center for Student Professional Development, where she worked closely with student teachers. As current Director of the

Tennessee State Teacher Program with Hope Street Group, Keilani works with 29 teacher leaders across the state to engage teachers and gather their input on various education topics. The program launched its first data collection in Fall 2015 surrounding the topics of professional learning and teacher leadership.

Born and raised in Tennessee, Keilani is a product of Tennessee's public schools. She is committed to empowering teachers, building partnerships, and strengthening public education in the state. Keilani is a graduate of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and received her graduate degree from Tennessee State University.



Joe Wood

State Coordinator, Battelle for Kids

Joe Wood has been in K-12 public education since 1987 in various roles. These roles include teacher, coach, building administrator and from 2001-2011 served as Director of Schools in Lexington City. He has been involved in multiple educational organizations such as TOSS, TSBA, SCORE, AIMS, AASA, etc., and has also served on many state and regional committees such as P-16. Since 2011,

Joe has led the Tennessee work for Battelle for Kids with much of the work being with First to the Top and TDOE until July 2015. He presently works with regional cooperatives, TOSS, higher education and LEAs.

State Lead



Kathleen Airhart

***Deputy Commissioner – Chief Operating Officer, Tennessee
Department of Education***

Dr. Kathleen Airhart was appointed as Deputy Commissioner for the Tennessee Department of Education in January 2012. Previously she has served in roles for the Putnam County School System including teacher, Special Education Supervisor, and Director of Schools. She holds a Doctorate from Tennessee State University in Curriculum and Instruction and a Bachelors, Masters, and Ed.D. from Tennessee Tech University. She was named Superintendent of the Year by the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents for 2011-2012. During the course of her career, Dr. Airhart has actively engaged and led education reform efforts to improve PK-12 educational results for all children in Tennessee.