



Accelerating TN Tour 2021: *Bright Spots Guide*

Highlighting Districts & Schools Across Tennessee



Acknowledgements

- To Governor Bill Lee**
for his steadfast commitment to Tennessee students, families, and communities.

To superintendents and district staff
for their unwavering leadership and commitment to students.

To the Tennessee General Assembly
for their swift legislative action and prioritization of essential education issues.

To educators
who grow and celebrate our students each and every day.
- To parents**
who serve as strong partners in the work and trust us with their own.

To stakeholders
who stay in the arena and champion what is good and right for kids.

To TDOE team members
who remain focused on strong implementation and the best for our students.

And to Tennessee’s children
who represent the very best of all of us.

“COVID-19 has severely disrupted education in Tennessee. Our decisive action to intervene on behalf of Tennessee students will equip them for success, educating our kids better in the future than before the pandemic. I thank the General Assembly for their swift passage of legislation that will benefit our students.

- Tennessee Governor Bill Lee

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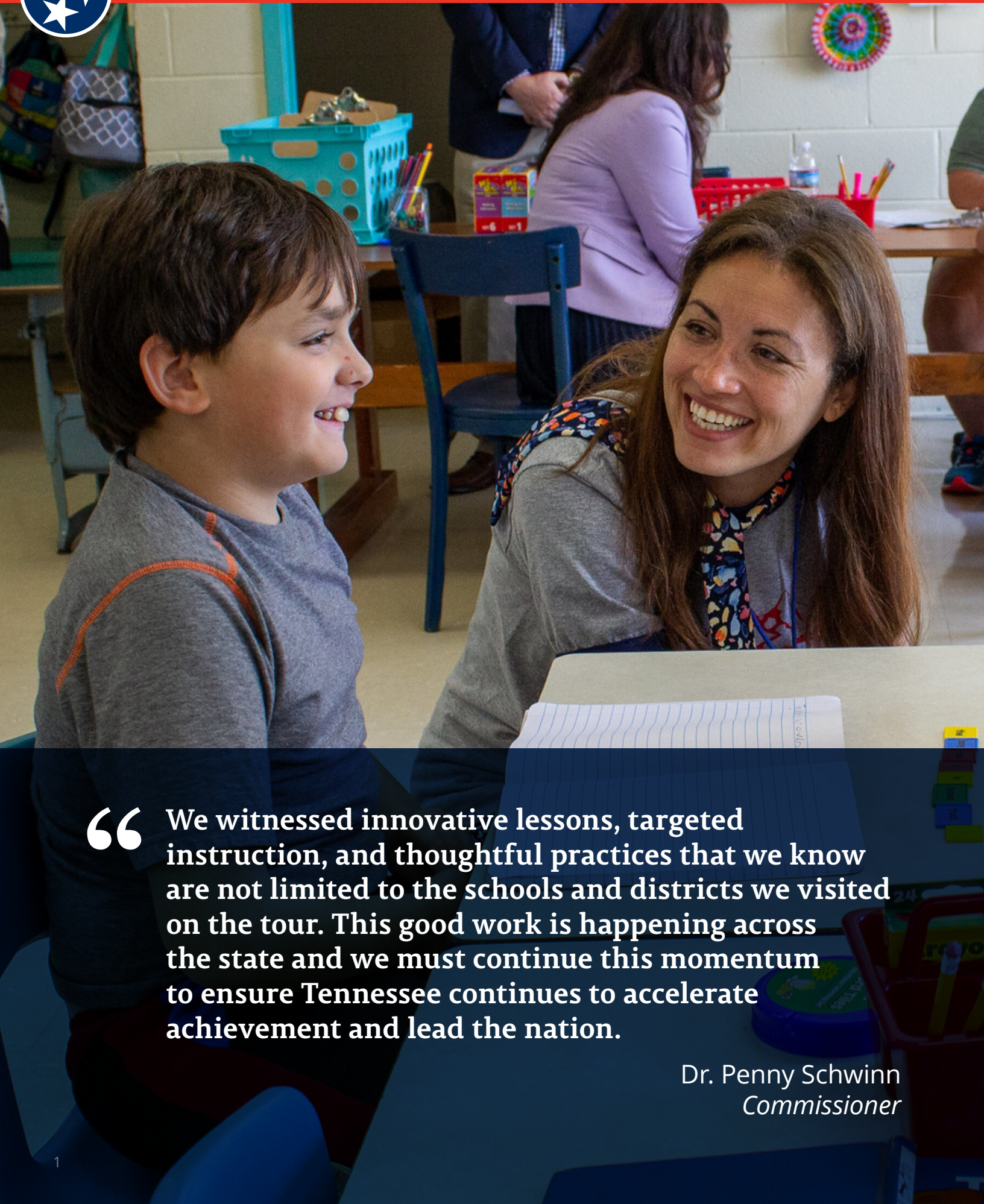
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“ We witnessed innovative lessons, targeted instruction, and thoughtful practices that we know are not limited to the schools and districts we visited on the tour. This good work is happening across the state and we must continue this momentum to ensure Tennessee continues to accelerate achievement and lead the nation.

Dr. Penny Schwinn
Commissioner

From the Desk of the Commissioner

Tennessee has so much to be proud of.

Our state led the nation in supporting school systems throughout the pandemic, prioritizing education policy and programs to ensure our students are set up for success. This past summer, all of our school districts launched summer programs following the passage of the *Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act*. As a result, our excellent educators welcomed students into buildings for meaningful, robust learning opportunities statewide.

It was a true professional and personal privilege to witness this important work over the course of three weeks, highlighting school systems' efforts throughout our **Accelerating TN 2021 Bus Tour**. In visiting 50 districts, I can't tell you the number of times we heard folks say how valuable and impactful summer camps were for their children. With financial investment, department guidance, and community support, districts ran exceptional programming, generating countless bright spots of teaching and learning.

Summer programs were creatively designed to leverage local partners and student needs to offer engaging learning experiences for students. Teachers carried that personalization into classrooms, helping students return to warm and welcoming environments that prioritized small class sizes, academics, and engagement opportunities for those children who needed it most.

In those safe environments, the sense of possibility, imagination, and potential were boundless. We solved complex math problems, sounded out tricky and sticky words, read short stories, baked solar s'mores, visited mobile libraries, flew airplanes, constructed boats, cracked codes, exploded apple volcanos, designed dinosaur prosthetics, hatched baby chicks, released butterflies, raced robots, learned sign language, planted seedlings, jumped across lava, practiced sonnets in one-acts, sang campfire songs, and dosey-doe. Hallways were lined with balloon arches, doors were decorated in camp themes,

and competitions across classes and grade bands fueled great energy and excitement. The strong engagement and academic acceleration built greater momentum for students and staff heading into the new school year.

The strong engagement and academic acceleration built greater momentum for students and staff heading into the new school year.

Our students experienced essential, small group instruction specific to their needs. Our youngest learners focused on critical areas like early literacy to ensure all of our students read on grade level by third grade. Our older students articulated the importance of extra classroom time, framing their growth not simply as “catch-up” but instead on readiness and preparedness.

There's no way to capture and adequately know all the bright spots shining across the state this summer. **But what we do know is that Tennessee students, families, and communities were far better off for the work and heart districts poured into their summer programs, ensuring our students were best set up for success heading into the 2021-22 school year.** As a mom, educator, and commissioner, I couldn't be more proud.

In gratitude and partnership,

Dr. Penny Schwinn
Commissioner of Education



Introduction

Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act

Across Tennessee, students experienced disrupted instructional environments in the spring of 2020 from COVID-19, and challenges persisted the following school year with various learning opportunities and modalities. Prioritizing both the urgency and importance of key legislation, Governor Bill Lee called a Special Legislative Session in January of 2021 to address pressing education issues.

Tennessee led the nation to enact early legislation, providing the department and districts a longer runway to design, build, and implement meaningful summer opportunities to accelerate student learning.

Summer Learning Camps Overview

With support from elected officials, community partners, and families, district leaders and educators supported robust, in-person learning experiences across the state. Following extensive planning with department support, every district offered summer opportunities and programming. Students gained additional academic hours fueled by targeted instruction, small group work, and engaging activities, which mitigated further learning loss and prepared students for reentry to classrooms come fall. For many students, summer school was the first time in over a year to physically return to a school building following virtual learning.

and high-quality instructional materials generated meaningful gains in both students' academic achievement and their readiness to return to classrooms this fall.

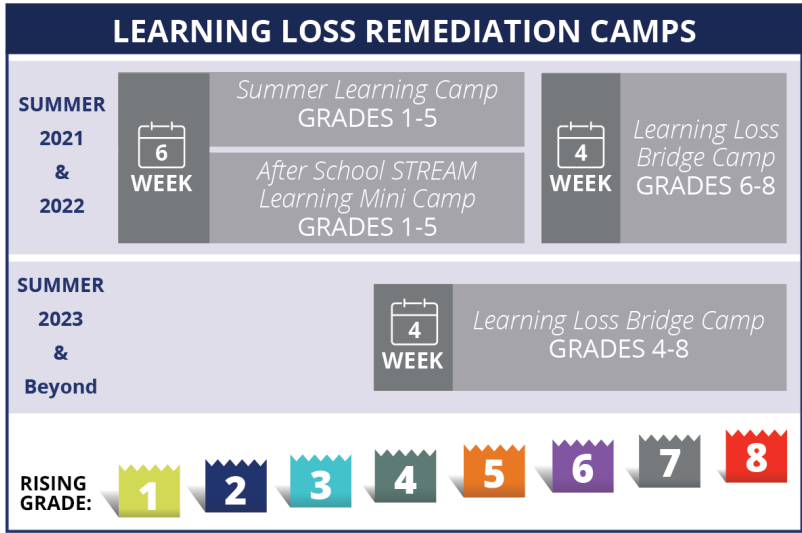
Strong enrollment and sustained attendance was made possible with the transportation funding districts received from the Tennessee General Assembly. Many systems statewide recognized their ability to increase enrollment was only possible with this transportation funding. Further, several districts shared they were able to double the numbers served, capturing those most in need of extra instruction and a safe classroom environment. The targeted outreach and specialized focus moved students further and faster than before.

With early projections having forecasted the most concern in early literacy and math across all grade bands, summer camps focused on rigorous academic content in ELA and mathematics, supported by high-quality intervention and enrichment experiences. Small group settings, strategic staffing patterns,

On Friday, January 22, 2021, the historic special legislative session concluded, including legislation on:



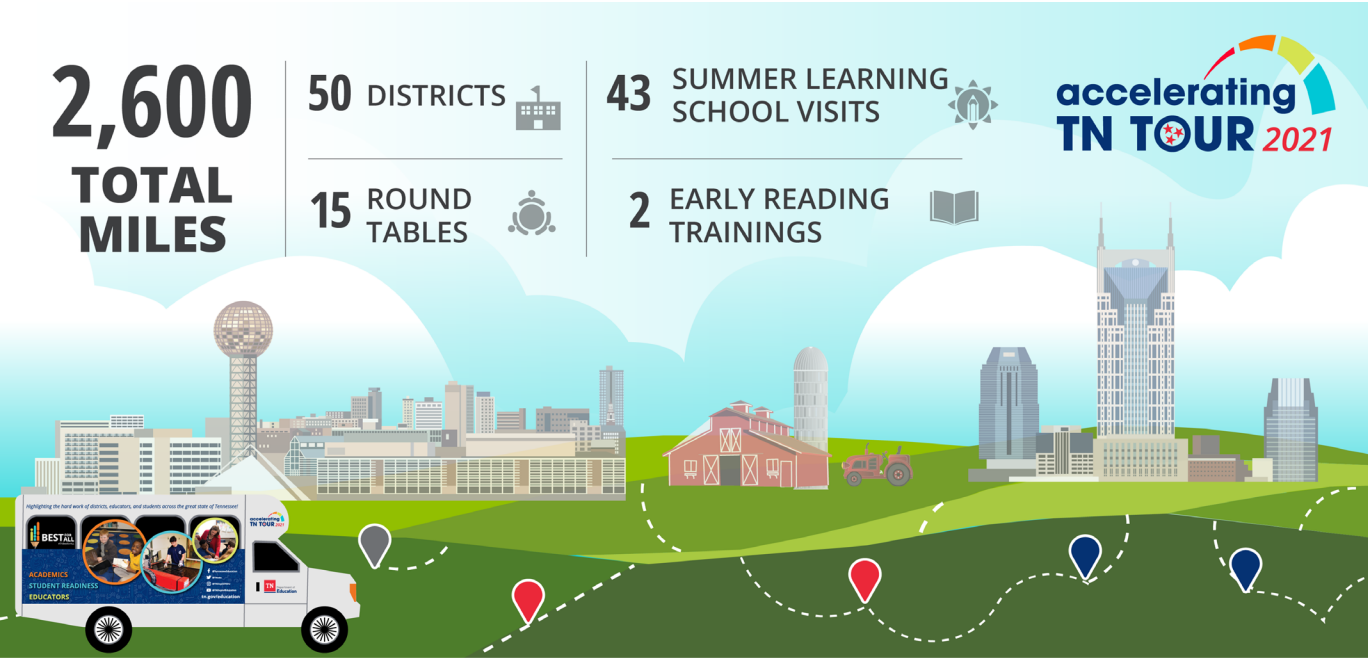
Specifically, the *Tennessee Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act* established learning loss remediation camps over the course of two summers to serve students entering grades 1-8 to begin in the summer of 2021.



Programming was designed for a full school day of instruction, including a focus on ELA and mathematics, with devoted time for STREAM (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Math) support, physical education, and response to intervention (RTI). Tennessee led the nation to enact early legislation, providing the department and districts a longer runway to design, build, and implement meaningful summer opportunities to accelerate student learning.

Accelerating TN Summer Bus Tour

In June, the department announced plans for the Accelerating TN 2021 Tour, a statewide tour spanning 50 school districts over the course of three weeks to highlight summer learning opportunities. Department members, elected officials, and education partners joined various engagements to connect directly with students, educators, and stakeholders while learning more about how schools were accelerating achievement. At each stop, the visits informed best practices for future guidance, implementation, and support. Additionally, department staff had the opportunity to glean critical feedback and engage in strategic conversations with district leadership regarding their ongoing planning and upcoming investments with historic federal funding available.



#AcceleratingTN2021

Purpose of the Bright Spot Guide

Tennessee led the nation to support students throughout the pandemic, prioritizing education policy and programs to ensure our students are set up for success. In turn, the department created this Bright Spots Guide to highlight the exceptional summer learning experiences that shone brightest across the state to inform future learning and planning. The guide is organized by our **Best for All** strategic plan's three priorities: **Academics**, **Student Readiness** and **Educators**.

Included are various snapshots and features of districts who led in these respective fields, intentionally prioritizing student achievement and quality programming to serve the Best for All. Collectively, this report stands to serve as a district guide, future resource, and documented reflection on what was leveraged, learned, and celebrated in classrooms across Tennessee this summer.



PRIORITY I: ACADEMICS

Grounded in the belief that all Tennessee students will have access to a high-quality education, no matter where they live, statewide summer camps provided key opportunities for students to gain additional academic instruction and targeted intervention. Using the **TDOE Summer Programming Guidance Planning Toolkit** as a springboard, districts developed customized programs to best fit their localized context and specifically address their enrolled students. Summer programs offered key opportunities to lengthen the school year for students so they could spend more time in small groups with personalized attention and support.

Districts focused on accelerating learning through a deep focus on early literacy training and strong application in instruction, grounding lessons in high-quality materials, ensuring students engaged in grade level lessons, and creatively engaging their classes with STREAM activities and themes. Key highlights for demonstrated accelerated achievement included **using high-quality instructional materials, enrolling teachers in the Reading 360 training and prioritizing early literacy work, and engaging students through enriching hands-on STREAM activities.**

- 1

HIGH-QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND STUDENT WORK
- 2

READING 360 AND EARLY LITERACY
- 3

STREAM SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, READING, ENGINEERING, ART, MATH

PRIORITY I: ACADEMICS

1 • High-Quality Instructional Materials and Student Work

Strong instruction begins with strong instructional materials. Many of our summer programs used their adopted ELA and math materials to extend learning experiences within their grade level materials. These materials allowed teachers to design coherent instruction that allowed students more time and more support with rigorous learning expectations.

If districts needed additional materials, the department provided four weeks of high-quality lessons for grades 1 through 8 ELA and mathematics. In instances when staff were teaching outside their typical grade band or subject, department offered materials provided grade level content and complete lesson plans for instructors to work from.



LAUDERDALE COUNTY SCHOOLS Ripley Elementary



In Lauderdale County Schools at Ripley Elementary, each classroom honed in on intentional, targeted small group instruction in both Math and ELA lessons. Students had multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery and proficiency. Working on white boards sitting on the floor with teachers or sitting at kidney tables with manipulatives, groups no more than 3-4 students had valuable, personalized learning time with their teachers.

In an upper elementary ELA RTI class, the instructor worked with the students on grade-level vocabulary while still maintaining a phonics-first approach. In an upper elementary math class, students solved equations with various approaches. Each time one option was used by a peer, students had to use evidence to support an alternative way to solve the problem. ELA teachers shared strong lessons grounded in their adopted literacy materials that engaged students in rich conversations around stories and the concepts that were included in the materials.

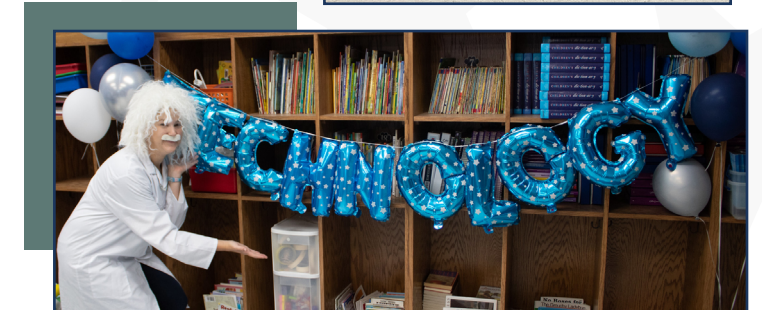
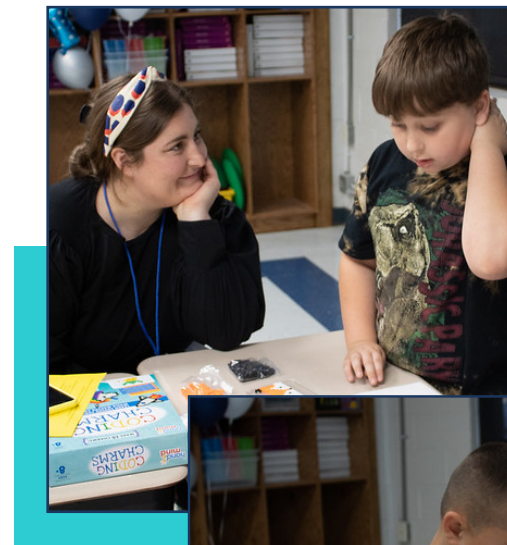


BRADLEY COUNTY SCHOOLS Hopewell Elementary



In Bradley County Schools at Hopewell Elementary, dubbed "THE Best Summer Camp Ever," the daily activities included an hour of reading instruction with 30 minutes of hands-on activities related to the ELA lesson. Earliest learners had access to strong, phonics-first literacy instruction incorporating movement and positivity. In upper grades, students reading short stories on Greek Mythology had built clay figurines from storylines and drafted creative writing pieces reimagining the tales' endings. Each student took home the items they'd used in their STREAM lessons (coding sets, puzzles, and various activity kits). One teacher

dressed up in elaborate costumes each day to match the daily STREAM activity's theme (Coco the Camp Counselor, Luau Lucy, Coding Carl). Physical activity was split with 30 minutes of PE incorporating challenges and puzzles from earlier content, followed by 30 minutes of recess. Their designated daily fun included camp cheers, group songs and games to start each morning, special decorations to fit the camp theme, camper of the day awards, and student dress-up days to match their learning units. Additionally, partners at the YMCA provided after-care as a convenience for working parents.



PRIORITY I: ACADEMICS

1 • High-Quality Instructional Materials and Student Work



WILSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Rutland Elementary



In Wilson County Schools at Rutland Elementary in an upper elementary math class, students competed in a group assembly line, building race cars with specific instructions on patterns and pairings. Collectively, they had to establish a group strategy, collaborating on roles and responsibilities to be most effective with their time. After teams raced to complete their assembly line, they worked on data analysis of winning times alongside team strategies, charting bar graphs and looking at trendlines from other participating classes.



ONEIDA SSD

Oneida Elementary



In Oneida SSD at Onedia Elementary, students were deeply engaged in their respective academic activities, even during their afterschool period. In one math classroom, students were working through stations, Luau Edition. To get through the ten challenges, students had to jump, climb, and hula over desks and chairs to avoid the “lava” on the floor. Surprise obstacles and trick problems had students excitedly engaged in the activity while repetitively practicing problems and missed standards they needed reinforcement on.

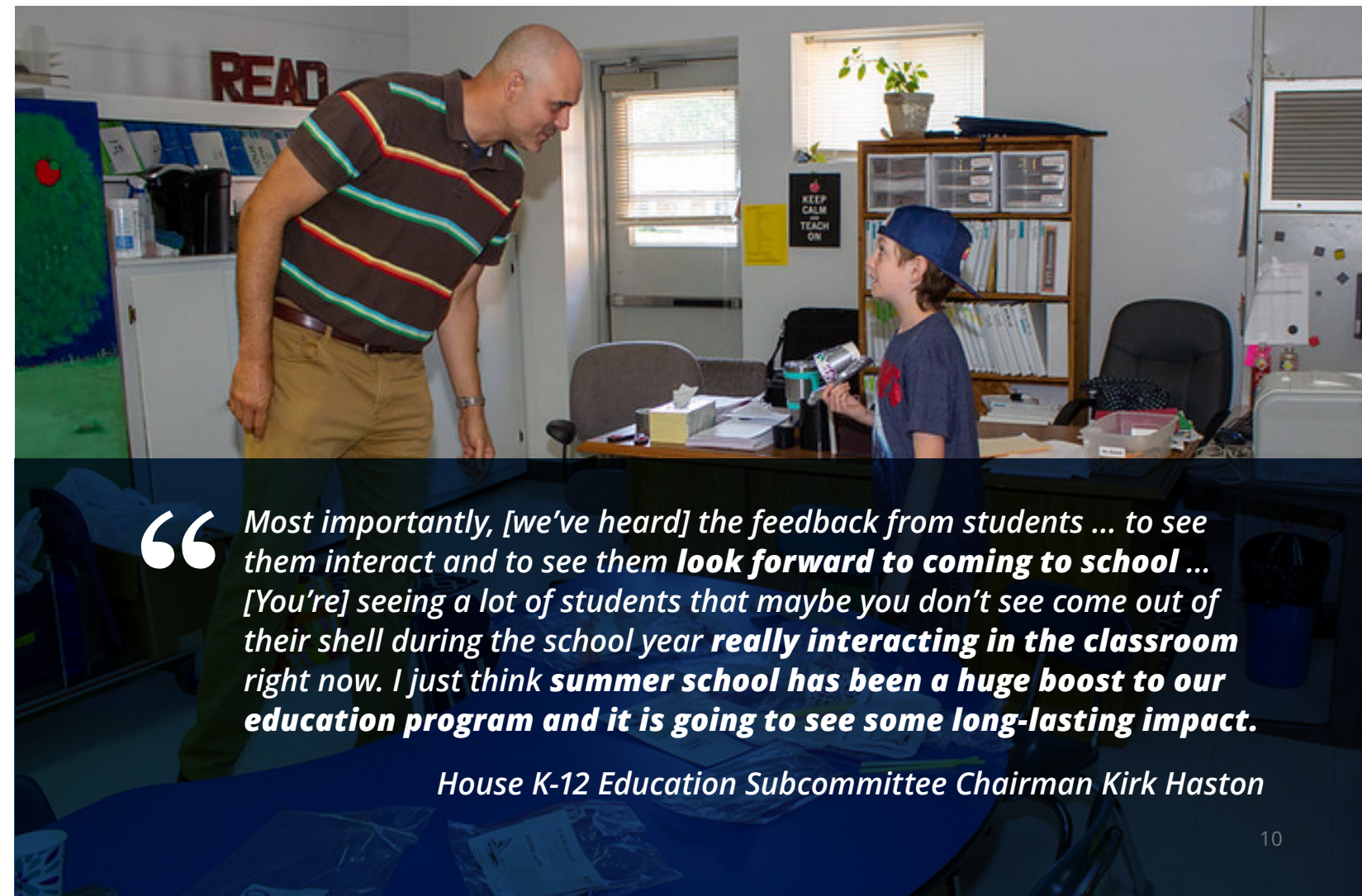


DECATUR COUNTY SCHOOLS

Parsons Elementary



In Decatur County Schools at Parsons Elementary, teachers used the TDOE-provided lesson plans in both ELA and math. During one lesson on Peter Rabbit, the teacher scaffolded and modified to support the full inclusion class. Her students were evaluating text-based evidence to support claims on Peter’s personality. They challenged each other in their word-choices, elevating vocabulary with suggestions like “unique” and “interesting” instead of “weird,” and “unintelligent” rather than “dumb.”



“Most importantly, [we’ve heard] the feedback from students ... to see them interact and to see them **look forward to coming to school** ... [You’re] seeing a lot of students that maybe you don’t see come out of their shell during the school year **really interacting in the classroom** right now. I just think **summer school has been a huge boost to our education program** and it is going to see some long-lasting impact.

House K-12 Education Subcommittee Chairman Kirk Haston

PRIORITY I: ACADEMICS

2 • Reading 360 and Early Literacy

Tennessee is determined for more students to develop strong phonics-based reading skills and for more educators to have the skills to support them. We know reading proficiently by third grade matters as a key indicator of future academic, socioeconomic, and health outcomes, and several districts shone brightly this summer for their leadership in this work. The launch of Reading 360 Early Literacy Training allowed teachers to deepen their

understanding of science-based foundational skills instruction and to apply that learning immediately in their summer camps. Teachers learned how important intentional sounds first instruction was and saw first-hand how to use these strategies effectively in summer programming. 10,000 teachers participated in summer training, learning key foundational skills to leverage phonics-first approaches in their classrooms.

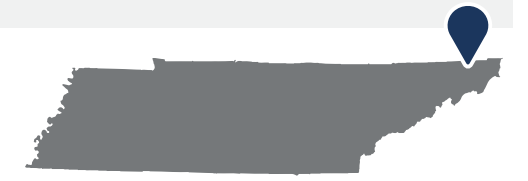


MILAN SSD Reading 360 Training

In Milan SSD, teachers were reflecting on their learning at the end of the day's training. With arms in the air, educators were confidently sharing about the difference of systematic versus explicit instruction and practice versus assessment. One educator remarked that it would make a great deal of difference for her students who were formerly relying on context clues to determine meaning, even though they might not have any context for the pictures and visuals. Another remarked how eager she was to share these strategies with parents during their back-to-school night for when they were reading at home with their children.



BRISTOL CITY SCHOOLS Fairmount Elementary



Bristol City Schools had their entire staff of elementary school teachers, interventionists, and specialists sign up for Reading 360 Early Literacy training. The team was thrilled by the impact they'd have across the board, all moving in the same direction together.



DECATUR COUNTY SCHOOLS Parsons Elementary



One Decatur County Schools principal smiled and shared:

*"I've learned so much about
how kids learn to read!"*



"When our students succeed our entire state prospers, and we know that reading on grade level is foundational to the success of every student, both in and out of the classroom."

- Tennessee Governor Bill Lee

PRIORITY I: ACADEMICS

2 • Reading 360 and Early Literacy



SCOTT COUNTY

Reading 360 Training



In Scott County, in the basement of a school board building, 50+ teachers sat at folding tables knee to knee parsing out the difference of different spellings and students' likely misconceptions. "There's a new sound in town!" the instructor proclaimed, as educators excitedly paired up to practice their own teaching and modeling to one another. One veteran teacher shared that in her 20+ years in the classroom, she had never received such important and immediately useful training for her students. Another table reflected their appreciation for a well-paced, practical, and immediately implementable training.



BRADFORD SSD

District Roundtable



In Bradford SSD, their district leadership team shared excitement the teachers and staff all had for the Reading 360 Early Literacy Training. Their Reading Specialist (and member of the TDOE Dyslexia Advisory Council) remarked:

"I finally feel like we are all on the same page, [and] I feel really great about the direction the state is heading in."



“

It is imperative, that we, as a state, focus our educational efforts on a comprehensive vision for literacy. With the strong emphasis on literacy laid out in the Reading 360 Program, I am confident that we will see significant advancement in children's reading, which is the most critical component for assuring post-secondary success.

- Robert Eby, Vice Chairman, State Board of Education



PRIORITY I: ACADEMICS

3 • STREAM

This summer, district programs included an hour of STREAM time (Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Math) embedded in the day. The intentional, collaborative approach empowered learners to engage in fun, real-world experiences through the alignment of standards, processes, and practices with purposeful incorporation of reading and foundational literacy skills. Regardless of age or grade band, student interest was elevated as they experienced

holistic, engaging activities that empowered them both immediately in the classroom and for lifelong problem-solving. Further, districts thoughtfully used the STREAM hour to maintain student engagement and excitement. For some, kicking off the day with hands-on activities built momentum. For others, students wanted to stay inside at recess to keep working on their experiments, or were still excited for the last hour of the day to finish their projects.

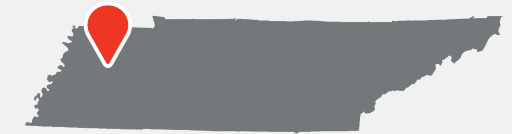


SEVIER COUNTY SCHOOLS Northview Primary

In Sevier County Schools at Northview Primary, a TDOE STEM-designated school, staff engaged families early on by sending home the book “Claymation” with a container of Play-doh as an invitation to participate in summer programming. The book and storyline guided initial classroom activities, embedding the literacy component in the exploratory, STREAM-based Play-doh lessons. In another classroom, young learners coded robots to move along a floor-based map to reflect the plotline of the story, marrying the reading comprehension piece to the technology-based element.



TRENTON SSD Trenton Middle School

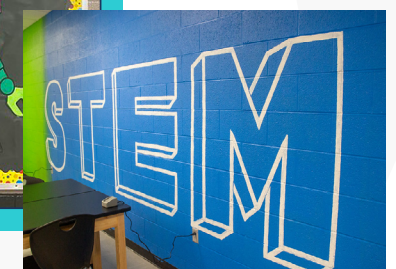
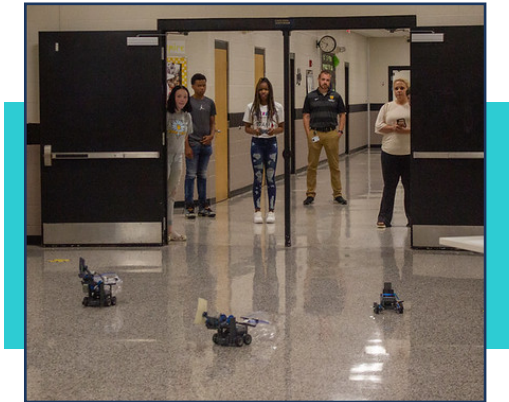


In Trenton SSD at Trenton Middle School, students designed, built, and programmed robots to tackle an environmental concern. From picking up trash to testing water and air quality, each bot was connected to earlier reading on environmentalism and conservation.

Their Supervisor of Teaching and Learning remarked:

“We’ve not had an issue attracting or retaining students given the strong emphasis on activities and preparedness our program has reinforced.”

Trenton SSD has grown their STEM emphasis from an original single makerspace – that started as a few newspaper clippings on a bulletin board - to a school (and hopefully soon full district) designation given their team’s commitment and partnership with TSIN.



PRIORITY I: ACADEMICS

3 • STREAM



POLK COUNTY SCHOOLS

Benton Elementary



In Polk County Schools at Benton Elementary, earliest learners read about photosynthesis and the life cycle of a plant. Subsequently, they planted flowers in mulch beds at the front of the school building, reinforcing their understanding of soil, sunlight, water, and nutrition.



CLEVELAND CITY SCHOOLS

Cleveland Middle



At Cleveland Middle in Cleveland City Schools, the summer camp offered upper grades a “STEM Lab” in their blacked-out theatre for students to experiment hands-on with glow-stick activities. With balloon arches, music playing, and disco lights flashing, students partnered up through various stations combining elements of physics, chemistry, engineering, experimentation, and collaboration.



PRIORITY II: STUDENT READINESS

While Tennessee understands the academic needs of a student are first and foremost, Tennessee schools must be equipped to serve both the academic and non-academic needs of a child for their life and career pathways. Considering the full range of a child’s physical, social, and emotional needs following an unprecedented school year, district and school leaders led summer learning programs

cognizant of the time they had to transition students back to classrooms. Educators worked in collaboration with parents and community partners to offer activities that bolstered students’ wellbeing, provided them with a smooth transition back into in-person learning, and prepared all children to make lifelong contributions to our state through early college and career exploration.

1

STUDENT
CONFIDENCE
& ENGAGEMENT

2

COLLEGE, CAREER &
TECHNICAL EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITIES

3

SERVING ALL
STUDENTS - SPECIAL
POPULATIONS

4

TRANSITION BACK
TO SAFE LEARNING
ENVIRONMENTS

PRIORITY II: STUDENT READINESS

1 • Student Confidence and Engagement

Across grade-bands, students built confidence following a year of disrupted learning during summer programming. Accessing grade-level material, students' ability to question, productively struggle, and engage was made easier by small groups and class sizes. More often than not, students enrolled in summer programming, teachers explained, were not

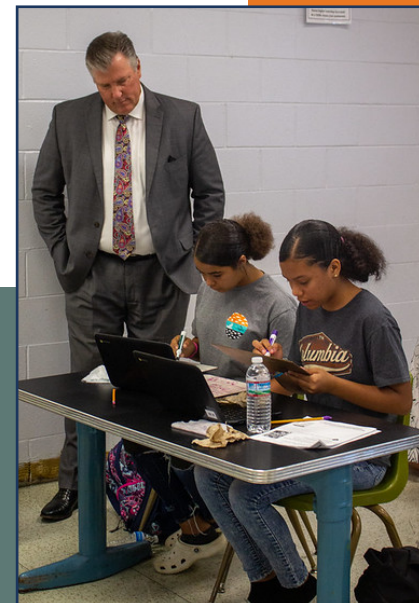
those typically leading class discussions or raising their hand first to volunteer the right answer during the traditional school year. However, this summer, lower performers were the ones shining, demonstrating their thinking and engaging in hands-on activities that encouraged experimentation and iteration.



MAURY COUNTY SCHOOLS Whitthorne Middle



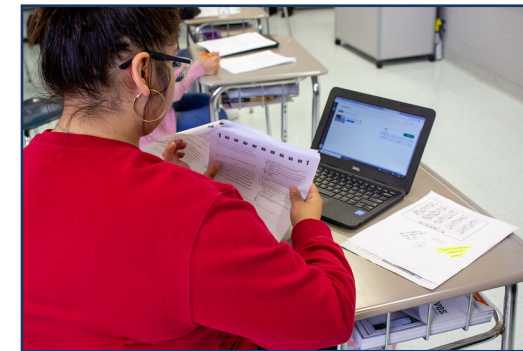
In Maury County, middle school students in math class recognized that following numerous quarantines, they'd missed key instruction throughout the year. The program staff had intentionally framed student participation as readiness and preparedness rather than catch-up. Further, students had self-assuredness to explicitly name and reference particular standards and skills they were struggling with, eager to improve and grow.



RUTHERFORD COUNTY SCHOOLS Blackman High School



In Rutherford County at Blackman High School, students working through ACT workshops had the option of signing up for individualized tutoring. Intentionally referring to it as "coaching," the teacher remarked that students had no issues self-registering for sessions during the week with other peers. Students built the confidence to ask for help, and peers willingly signed up to coach and support one another through Zoom on questions and key skills.



PRIORITY II: STUDENT READINESS

2 • College, Career and Technical Education Opportunities

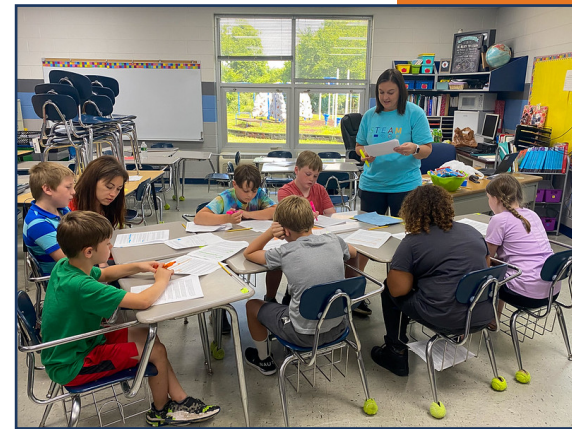
Tennessee recognizes the importance of earlier exposure for our elementary and middle school students to realize the wealth of opportunities available within the realm of CCTE. This summer, in large part through the

designated STREAM time, students benefited from real-world, hands-on experiences with crafts, trades, and professions they might not otherwise have accessed.



JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOLS Jackson County Middle

In Jackson County Schools at Jackson County Middle, several students were engineering prosthetics for dinosaur toys. After undergoing “surgery,” each dinosaur needed a new arm, tail, or other limb. Students worked to engineer replacement limbs, experimenting with the mobility of prosthetics they’d generated from a 3D printer. Other summer projects included engraving awards and trophies. Teachers and staff recognized that the STREAM and CCTE based activities engaged students from start to finish of the program, motivating high-participation, sustained curiosity, and in some instances, the desire to stay inside from recess to keep working.



CLEVELAND CITY SCHOOLS Cleveland Middle



Cleveland City Schools’ Four C’s Program (College, Career, Community, and Citizenship) offered personalized instruction in both ELA and math, alongside STREAM activities, incorporating the 4C components to promote healthy, well-rounded students. The program offered field trips and guest speakers to educate and equip students with key connections between academics, career, community and citizenship responsibilities, all reflected in core academic time as well.



PRIORITY II: STUDENT READINESS

3 • Serving All Students - Special Populations

All Tennessee students, regardless of ability or need, are deserving of exceptional educational services and programs. This summer, several district programs had clear, intentional

supports on display, fostering inclusive environments that offered students the space to learn, demonstrate growth, and access high-quality, evidence-based instruction.



BRISTOL CITY SCHOOLS Fairmount Elementary

In Bristol City Schools, their team designated intentional energy and effort to enroll a significant number of their SPED students. They continued to offer speech and language services with additional staff for inclusion, consultation and push-in support. The district's Special Education Coordinator was on site all summer to support the coordination for their resource teachers, language pathologists, assistants, CDC teacher, and transportation.



CLEVELAND CITY SCHOOLS Cleveland Middle



In Cleveland City Schools at Cleveland Middle, English Learners (EL) had access to a personalized class. Through partner work and small groups, 6-8th grade students worked on building vocabulary and editing essays on celebrity culture, parsing out the difference of words like "arrogant" versus "vain." The teacher maintained grade-level expectations while scaffolding for students who needed specific support strategies. The trust and collaboration in the classroom was evident as the teacher had spent time cultivating a supportive and encouraging classroom culture that included students in multiple grades.



MILAN SSD Bull Dog Café



In Milan SSD, the district shines in their work with the "Bull Dog Café," a mobile-coffee shop that travels around the county offering specialty drinks and snacks. As an early work opportunity for their exceptional education students, they proudly "pour joy and happiness one cup at a time."

PRIORITY II: STUDENT READINESS

4 • Transition Back to Safe Learning Environments

Following a disrupted year of learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic with sustained instances of virtual, hybrid, or quarantined settings, the transition back to physical buildings was key for many students. District staff noted that these summer weeks would abbreviate the transition time required for some students during their typical August return. Most importantly, summer programming provided countless students a safe, welcoming environment when they might not have had ample alternative options this summer. For many districts, the summer programs offered the opportunity to promote belonging and acceptance for students who needed positive socialization, relationship-building, and adult support back in school.

MENTIONED

JOHNSON COUNTY SCHOOLS
Mountain City Elementary



In Johnson County, staff recognized that for many of their students, there was not an alternative summer camp option. Instead, students were more likely to be home, looking after their siblings or neighbors. Teachers shared one story of a student who showed up on the first day crying as he got off the bus. However, once he was greeted by his teachers and recognized one of his friends, he immediately smiled, cheered up, and jumped right into the day. The following morning, staff said he couldn't wait to get off the bus and get in the building to start his day.

MENTIONED

CLEVELAND CITY SCHOOLS
Cleveland Middle



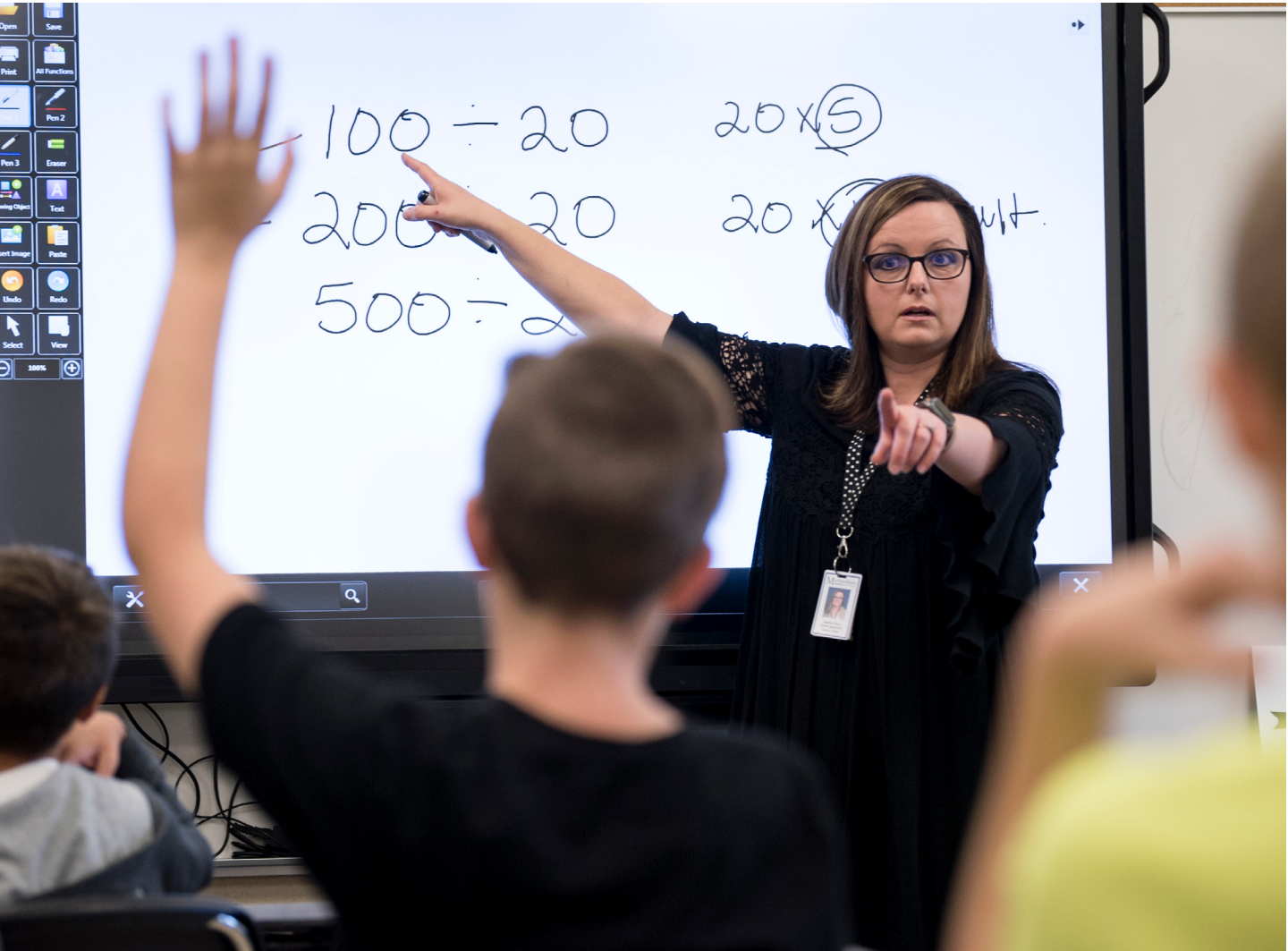
At Cleveland City Middle School, elementary and middle school students combined into one building so that younger students could build familiarity with the school they would soon transition into. Recognizing the hallways, lockers, lunchroom, peers, and faculty would build that early confidence and help many students in their return to classrooms and transition to a new grade this fall.

MENTIONED

POLK COUNTY SCHOOLS
Benton Elementary



In Polk County Schools at Benton Elementary, one educator smiled when she explained what summer programming had meant for kids in her community: "We are in the business of caring for children. And if that means we are the safe place where they can get a meal and have a hug and get some love, then by all means, we want them here at school in the summer." The district was proud of the educational and enrichment opportunities they had offered students beyond the traditional school year, and looked forward to future programming.



PRIORITY III: EDUCATORS

The state's commitment to ensure all students have access to a high-quality education is made possible by a highly effective teacher in every classroom. To that end, the summer stipend established through the Learning Loss and Remediation and Student Acceleration Act was critical to recruit and retain top talent this summer. Districts that demonstrated best practice, and in turn greatest growth, had strongly staffed programs with dedicated educators eager to accelerate student achievement following a year of disrupted learning. **Key highlights of best practice statewide included: intentional recruitment strategies, flexible staffing patterns, and strong support from district leadership.**

- 1

RECRUITMENT OF TOP TALENT
- 2

FLEXIBLE STAFFING PATTERNS
- 3

STRONG DISTRICT LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS

PRIORITY III: EDUCATORS

1 • Recruitment of Top Talent

In March of 2021, many questioned if teachers would even return to teach for summer school. Yet, Tennessee had confidence in the commitment of our educators, the fair level of compensation, and the meaningfulness of programs they were stepping into.

Selecting educators to teach in summer programming was one of the most important decisions districts made in their planning and program design, and we witnessed great examples across the state.



BRADLEY COUNTY SCHOOLS Hopewell Elementary

Bradley County Schools had an intentional strategy to invite teachers to participate. After sharing district wide communication explaining their program, dates, and purpose, principals and district leadership reached out directly to teachers they knew would have a meaningful impact on student gains and growth over the summer. Further, their instructors had a proven record of teacher effectiveness with experience planning and delivering the district's high-quality instructional materials in ELA and math. They supported one another's planning and implementation with strong district backing.



LAUDERDALE COUNTY SCHOOLS Ripley Elementary



In Lauderdale County Schools, selected teachers had proved effective at scaffolding instruction to provide students with the needed support to meet high expectations of grade level instruction. Further, those teachers understood the importance of analyzing student work and data to inform their next best instructional steps.



DICKSON COUNTY SCHOOLS Burns Middle



In Dickson County Schools, summer school staff created a "get to know you" handout for each student that teachers worked with this summer. The handout provided space for the summer teachers to share highlights, suggestions, and recommendations following the intentional, targeted instruction with that student over the course of the summer. Then, Dickson County Schools organized the materials to share with the student's new homeroom teacher at the start of fall. The readout operated like a progress report and provided key insights from a summer of growth heading into the new year. This forward thinking and district planning will strongly serve students, teachers, and families.



PRIORITY III: EDUCATORS

2 • Flexible Staffing Patterns

It was incredibly important that districts had flexibility to determine which staffing patterns would best support the needs of their students during programming while also recognizing their available teacher roster. Statewide,

summer programs offered different schedules given local context, and flexible staffing patterns meant the strongest professionals could be strategically staffed to support student growth.



JOHNSON COUNTY SCHOOLS Mountain City Elementary



In Johnson County Schools, one teacher remarked:

“The name of the game next year will be differentiated instruction.”

Based on an interest survey the district sent out during their spring planning, they frontloaded certain subjects based on teachers' availability and interest. The director explained they had several high school teachers working with elementary students which was an unexpected silver lining. With state provided materials, lesson planning and prep was not a barrier.

Further, the older grade band teacher remarked that the materials provided combined with the small class sizes rebuilt their confidence to design and facilitate more small group activities for their high schoolers in the upcoming year.



MAURY COUNTY SCHOOLS Whitthorne Middle



In Maury County Schools at Whitthorne Middle, the summer program allowed their interim principal to have the additional time in her transition to principal. Running the program, supporting her teachers, and interacting with students each day offered a unique and added opportunity to continue to get to know the Whitthorne community she was transitioning to lead full time this fall.

Additionally, she staffed her building with several high school teachers so that when students transitioned from 8th grade, they would have familiarity with teachers they'd already built a relationship with over the summer.



BENTON COUNTY SCHOOLS Briarwood Elementary



In Benton County Schools at Briarwood Elementary, given the demonstrated interest and availability of key instructors, the district front-loaded ELA instruction for the first two weeks of their program and pivoted to math instruction on the backend. It allowed for those key teachers who had limited availability but still wanted to participate lead classrooms for an abbreviated time to still support student growth.

PRIORITY III: EDUCATORS

3 • Strong District Leadership and School Support for Educators

Throughout summer visits, teachers remarked what a difference strong district leadership, planning, and support meant for their instruction and classrooms. With high-quality instructional materials in hand, teachers spent less time planning lessons and more time

focusing on students while refining their craft and trade. Experimenting with instructional strategies, leveraging small group work, and diving deeper into units, skills, and lessons, educators recognized that their teaching was elevated and their impact magnified.



DICKSON COUNTY SCHOOLS Burns Middle



In Dickson County Schools, district leadership began planning for programming with considerable input from principals, educators, and support staff. Further, when discussing the needs of their students this summer, they were intentional to weave in conversations connected to future strategic ESSER investments.

District staff provided all instructional materials for teachers to use, allowing them to focus their attention on the strongest delivery and customization. Additionally, they connected with local partners to support enriching experiences and opportunities for both staff and students to have a positive, joyful summer.



SULLIVAN COUNTY SCHOOLS Miller Perry Elementary



In Sullivan County Schools at Miller Perry Elementary, one teacher admitted:

“With the chance to incorporate so many activities and dive deeper into content, I’ve liked it more than regular school this past year.”

She emphasized that with strong district and school leadership providing quality materials, guidance, and coaching support:

“I feel like I can then bring the ideas, activities, and excitement into my practice now and during the upcoming year.”



PRIORITY III: EDUCATORS

3 • Strong District Leadership and School Support for Educators



JOHNSON COUNTY SCHOOLS Mountain City Elementary



In Johnson County Schools, district leadership recognized that high school instructors brought into middle and elementary grades were reminded of the importance of small group instruction. Enjoying the stations, group-work, and collaboration, they were keen to return to the fall with solid strategies to reincorporate into their high school classrooms.



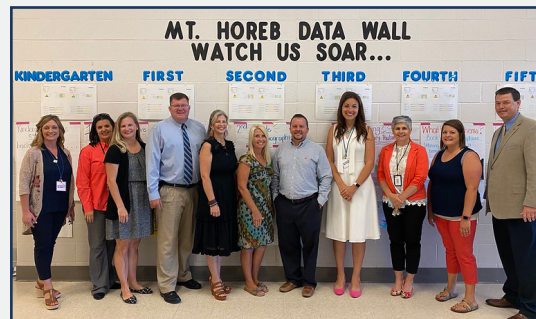
JEFFERSON COUNTY Mt. Horeb Elementary



In Jefferson County, leadership remarked that:

“Teaching is an art and a calling.”

With small class sizes, ample staff, and tailored lessons, their team recognized teachers’ ability to return to focused instruction after a disrupted year of teaching and learning was essential.



“High-quality reading programs and teacher preparation are essential to ensuring a pipeline of learners who stay in school and achieve educational success. I look forward to seeing great student progress moving forward as a result of these efforts.”

– Senate Education Committee Chairman Brian Kelsey



FOUNDATIONS

There were additional elements of summer programming work that further strengthened the positive impact staff and systems had on Tennessee students’ growth and lives.

The reach of any one program was made stronger by nutrition services, transportation, and community partnerships.

1

NUTRITION

2

TRANSPORTATION

3

**COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS**

1 • Nutrition



While countless districts provided nutrition services for their students, both **Grainger County** and **Claiborne County** systems went above and beyond, packaging additional meals for students and families to access during non-school hours and days. With some areas dealing with supply chain shortages in groceries and markets, both systems were more than willing to serve their own with extra fruit, snacks, and extra supplies to send home.

2 • Transportation

Across the state in every system, school leadership reflected that the funding for transportation was essential to the success of their program. Recognizing family limitations and work schedules, many parents would not have had the opportunity to drive their children to school even if they wanted them there. Further, many districts specifically noted that the students they were most eager to serve and see this summer were those who most benefitted from built-in transportation opportunities. Thanks to the Tennessee General Assembly’s planning and provision, all districts benefited from this key investment for summer program success and students’ academic growth.



3 • Community Partnerships

Countless Tennessee districts leveraged local partnerships to meet their student needs and enrich their offerings this summer. A few of many are mentioned below:

- **Decatur County** partnered with PBS to offer meaningful STREAM activities each day.
- **Hamilton County** leveraged local community business partners to offer early middle school exposure for possible career and post-secondary opportunities.
- **Trenton SSD** worked closely with TSIN to further enhance their collective emphasis on daily STREAM.
- **Clinton City Schools** partnered with the local Boys and Girls Club to support additional care hours and staffing patterns.
- **Clarksville-Montgomery** partnered with their local Parks and Recreation Office to support outdoor activities and recess time for students.
- **Murfreesboro City Schools** partnered with local mental health organizations to have coordinators available if parents chose for their child to receive additional services.



“We were excited to welcome Commissioner Schwinn and the TN Department of Education staff to Dickson and Cheatham Counties. I am grateful for the hard work the Department, General Assembly, and Governor Lee have put into helping out children, teachers, and staff recover from the challenges of the pandemic. We are excited for the 2021-2022 school year and to get our children back on track.”

- State Rep. Mary Littleton

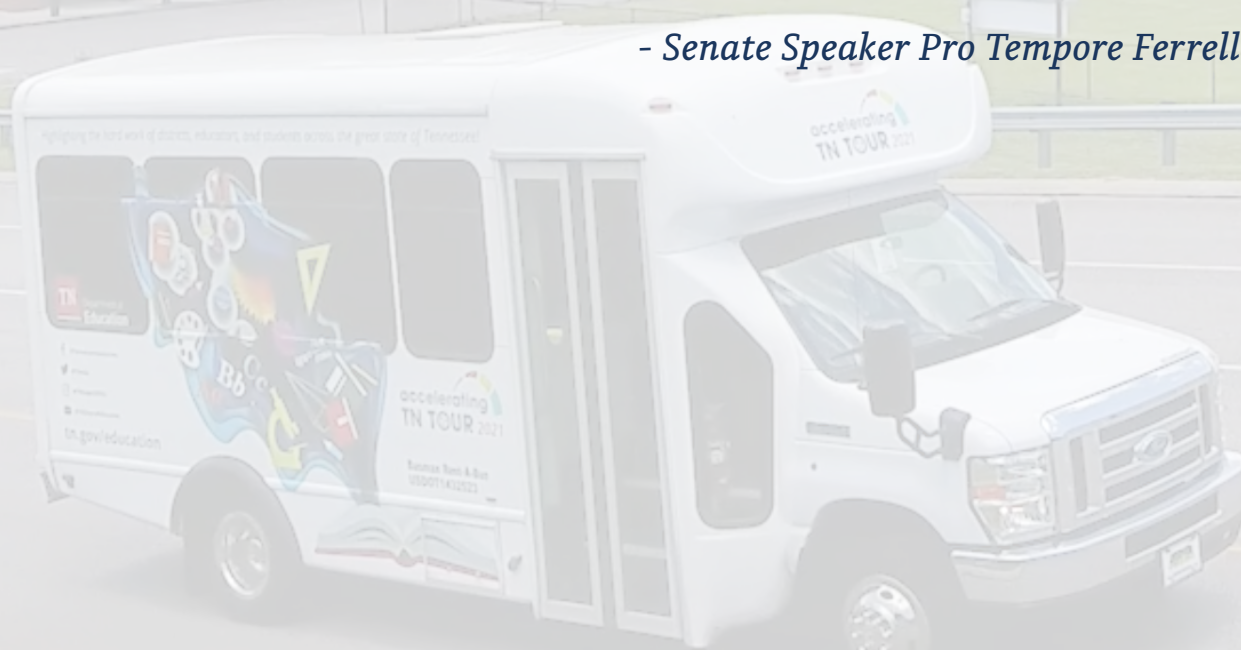
“I was pleased to join the Tennessee Department of Education on this statewide tour to see firsthand how these summer camps have been helping students accelerate learning. It was a joy to observe students excited and having fun while learning from teachers who dedicated their summer to working with these students.

Speaking with school directors, principals, educators, families, and students provided an opportunity to witness the incredibly hard work and commitment it took to make the camps successful, and I was honored to be there to celebrate their accomplishments.”

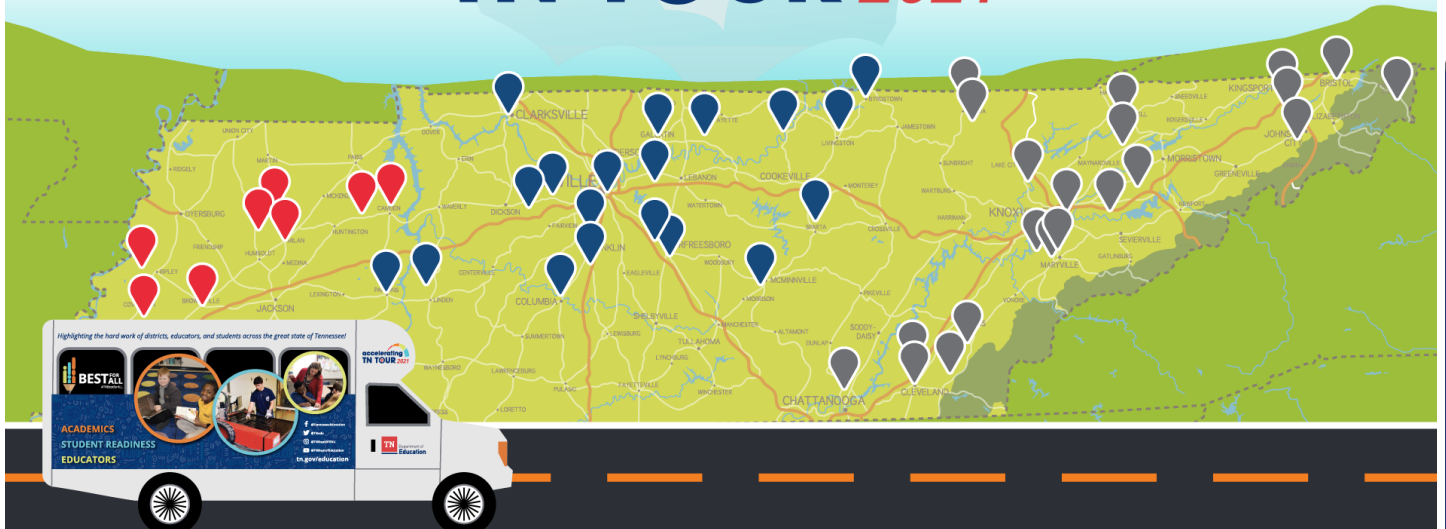
- Lillian Hartgrove, Chairman of the State Board of Education

“I appreciate Commissioner Schwinn coming to Trousdale County to see firsthand the work being done to benefit students here. I was very pleased that this tour spotlighted the success taking place in our summer programs under the leadership of Superintendent Clint Satterfield.”

- Senate Speaker Pro Tempore Ferrell Haile



accelerating **TN TOUR** 2021



To all Tennessee school districts and summer programs, thank you!

Though we couldn't make it to all systems and schools during our visits, know that your hard work did not go unnoticed or unappreciated. Students, families, and communities were better off for the heart and commitment you poured into students this summer. We look forward to continuing our support for this important work ahead and sharing the stories of the positive impact you make every day.