



Promising Practice Capture Sheet

School: Metro Nashville Davidson County

Rural Suburban Urban

District: Metro Nashville Public Schools

Region: Mid-Cumberland

Practice: Professional Development: Teacher Externships

Point of Contact: Donna Gilley CTE Director donna.gilley@mnps.org/615.259.8716

Name Title Email / Phone

Connection to Strategic Plan:

Goals:	Top Half of States on NAEP - 4th and 8th Grade Math and ELA	State Average of 21 Composite ACT	55% of the class of 2020 obtains postsecondary credential
How best practice addresses:			As part of the Externship Program, teachers create Project-Based Learning (PBL) units for students to complete. This interdisciplinary student work not only broadens student awareness of careers, but it also allows for students to practice hands-on industry skills. Teachers also learn about the educational requirements for positions within that industry. For example, engineering teachers have done related externships where companies discuss the need for Autodesk certifications. Teachers then create PBL unit plans around designing buildings/spaces using Autodesk.

Priority Areas:	Early Foundations	Empower Districts	Support Educators	High School Bridge to Postsecondary	All Means All
How best practice applies:			The Externship Program provides high-quality professional development to teachers. Externships are unique in a world where professional development usually takes the form of a PowerPoint in a classroom. These externships have also assisted in teacher retention.	As students participate in authentic projects aligned with local companies, they have a better understanding of postsecondary requirements and are encouraged to continue their education. Externships have also led to industry requesting industry certifications.	

Practices:

- Culture
- Accountability
- Funding
- Instructional
- Programmatic
- Other:
- Training/PD
- Policy Change

Project Specific Indicators:

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Results:

- Increased student achievement results
 - ACT
 - TNReady/EOC/TVAAS
 - NIC
 - EPS
- Decreased remediation and/or subgroup gaps
- Increased student readiness results (non-academic)
- Increased partnerships / alignment
- Increased participation / program growth

The Challenge:

When we started the Academies of Nashville model, we wanted our students doing interdisciplinary projects that were aligned with real-world work experiences. While CTE teachers generally have a great understanding of expectations of certain careers, general education teachers did not have that experience.

Additionally, the academy model requires general education teachers teach their content through the lens of the academy theme. The Externship project was the perfect vehicle to provide the knowledge of how “English and Engineering” or “Science and Broadcasting” are connected.

The Vision:

The Teacher Team Externship is an opportunity for teachers to have a real-world business experience at a host company in order to develop project-based curriculum that will provide students with industry exposure and applied learning. Through this program, teachers learn to work together to create interdisciplinary projects that reinforce the theme of their academy across subjects areas. A team of three-five teachers (CTE and general education teachers) representing a high school academy will spend three days working with the company, learning about the industry, and assisting in the business’s daily work. The final day of the externship takes place at the school district and involves the creation of an interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum that will be implemented in the team’s academy. Company Hosts will spend the last hour this day hearing the curriculum presentations and providing feedback. Once the project is presented to the company for feedback, it will be edited for change, and submitted electronically to the offices of the director of curriculum and instruction and Academies of Nashville director.

The projects are then implemented by teachers in the classroom. Students collaborate to demonstrate their skills to create an authentic product and present their work to a public audience.

Summary of To-Do's:

- Work with local chamber of commerce or advisory boards to identify host businesses.
- Set dates for externship
- Align host businesses with career clusters, schools, academy teams
- Train host companies
- Teachers must be trained in project based learning—how to create an interdisciplinary unit
- Teachers and host companies must be trained—what will an externship look like? Feel like? What are the deliverables?

Lessons Learned: *Include advice on start-up and sustainability*

We have been doing externships for about six years and our biggest lesson learned involved the make-up of the externship team and the training for the businesses.

The best results have come from teams of three-five teachers—one CTE with general education teachers. In the early days, we included up to eight team members and it was too many. Additionally, helping teachers understand that all teachers do not have to be involved in the same project. For example, if you have a team of five teachers, one CTE, one English, math, science and social studies, based on the experiences of the externship, two smaller teams might discover projects to create, opposed to forcing all five to be involved in the same project.

Communications:

Communication is key and must start early. Business host meetings are essential (especially if you are starting or if a new company is coming on board).

Stakeholder Management:

The Nashville Chamber of Commerce and Pencil Foundation both work with local businesses that want to engage with education. These organizations connect local businesses with our district to participate in the externship program.

Metrics & Measurements:

Baseline Data	Progress to Date	Goals
<p>We began the externship program in 2009. This program has been a key piece in the Academy of Nashville model, providing essential PD for teachers. It is the cornerstone of authentic projects for students. Additionally, this collaboration has served us in CTE teacher retention, particularly for new CTE teachers—they come into the academies and are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 124 Externships over six years • 618 Teachers involved • 138 Business Hosts • 130 PBL projects created and implemented 	<p>Continue to offer this experience to our academy teams.</p>

immediately part of a team. This externship project allows for a hands-on experience for new CTE teachers to better understand interdisciplinary teaching/learning and the academy model.		
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Resources:

- Gibson County Special School District
- Hamblen County Schools
- Local chambers of commerce

Note: In addition to websites, materials, and tools, Include other LEAs or schools who are also strong in this practice, if known.