

February 2018

Increasing Access to Early Postsecondary Opportunities

Teacher Leaders: Taking Action in High School
and the Bridge to Postsecondary



Introduction

Tennessee students have an unprecedented opportunity to seamlessly transition from high school to college and careers. Capitalizing on that opportunity is only possible when district leaders, principals, teachers, students, parents, and the community come together and commit resources to support students and families in this transition.

In 2015, the Tennessee Department of Education released a strategic plan titled *Tennessee Succeeds*, which outlined five priority areas and articulated a unifying vision for the future: Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark upon their chosen path in life.

One of the department’s priority areas is called High School and Bridge to Postsecondary. Through this priority area, the department committed to preparing significantly more students for postsecondary completion—at Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs), community colleges, and four-year institutions. This work is vital to the future of our state because if current trends were to continue, only about one out of every five Tennessee high school graduates would earn a certificate, diploma, or degree within six years of graduation. Our students must be better prepared to seamlessly transition from high school, persist in postsecondary, and be successful in college and career.

Since teachers are the most important in-school factor for student success, teacher leadership is essential to ensure Tennessee students seamlessly transition from high school to college and career. Teacher leaders also play a vital role in ensuring students take advantage of early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs). This brief was developed by the department in partnership with teacher leaders across the state. The purpose is to:

- **highlight what is currently happening around postsecondary preparation in Tennessee**
- **discuss the role of districts in expanding postsecondary opportunities; and**
- **articulate five action steps for educators to foster a college-going culture**

Each action step includes suggestions from Tennessee teachers based on his or her experiences in the classroom.

See page 6 for details on our five action steps.

OUR 2020 GOALS

Our two main goals related to the High School and Bridge to Postsecondary priority area include:



GOAL #1

The average ACT score will be 21 by 2020.



GOAL #2

The majority of high school graduates from the class of 2020 will earn a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

Tennessee's Commitment to Preparing Students for the Future

In 2013, Governor Haslam launched the Drive to 55 to increase the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or certificate to 55 percent by 2025. By that time, the majority of jobs in Tennessee will require postsecondary education, which means our students need to be prepared



for the workforce and postsecondary. Increasing the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or credential is critical to our state's economic development. To support this effort, the department of education set forth four ambitious goals within [Tennessee Succeeds](#). Two of the four goals are focused on the High School and Bridge to Postsecondary priority area.

Ensuring that students are prepared to enroll in and complete postsecondary education is increasingly important, and the good news is that we are making progress toward these goals. The 2017

average ACT score is 20.1—up from 19 in 2013. Additionally, the most recent data available for postsecondary attainment demonstrate that 29 percent of the high school class of 2011 has earned a postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree.

The class of 2017 saw the highest graduation rate in history with 89.1 percent of students graduating. While high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates are higher than ever before, one-third of graduates do not enroll in a postsecondary institution. But encouragingly, Tennessee has reduced the need for remediation once students begin postsecondary. As more students are graduating from high school, Tennessee has reduced the need for remediation from 77 percent in 2011 to 62 percent in 2016.

The state has continued to be a nationwide leader in removing barriers to postsecondary. [Tennessee Promise](#) is both a scholarship and mentoring program focused on increasing the number of students who attend college in Tennessee by addressing the financial burdens of postsecondary. Recent data show that Tennessee Promise students have higher retention rates at community colleges and TCATs when compared to non-Tennessee Promise students¹.

Students in Tennessee who enter the workforce directly after graduating from high school earn an average salary of \$10,880 during their first year of work, placing them far below the federal poverty line.

¹<https://www.tn.gov/thec/news/2017/2/2/tennessee-promise-sees-increased-enrollment-strong-retention-rates-in-year.html>

District Support and Accountability

In order to ensure all students are prepared for their chosen path after high school, Tennessee has included the new Ready Graduate indicator in district and school accountability. One specific way districts can support schools in ensuring more students are deemed Ready Graduates—and ultimately prepare more students for success after high school—is by increasing student participation in EPSOs. Students who participate in early postsecondary courses are more likely to enroll and persist in college.

Ready Graduate Indicator

High school students in Tennessee are considered “ready” for the next step after graduation by meeting one of four checks for readiness. The Ready Graduate indicator looks to see whether a student meets at least one of the four checks as evidence that a graduate has demonstrated readiness for postsecondary and the workforce.

WHAT MAKES A READY GRADUATE?

The Ready Graduate indicator demonstrates how many students are prepared for choice after high school.

READY GRADUATE CRITERIA

MUST MEET ONE OF FOUR “CHECKS” FOR READINESS

- Score 21 or higher on ACT**
- Complete 4 EPSOs**
- Complete 2 EPSOs + earn industry certification (on a CTE pathway leading to a credential)**
- Complete 2 EPSOs + designated score on military readiness exam**

Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs)

Early postsecondary opportunities are courses (or exams) students can take while in high school that provide the ability to earn postsecondary credit and increase academic preparedness. Since students who participate in EPSOs are more likely to be successful in postsecondary, EPSOs are a critical component of the Ready Graduate indicator.

The most common EPSOs in Tennessee are Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment. Students are able to take these courses in high school. If they successfully complete them or earn a certain score on a culminating exam, students can earn credit toward a college degree when they advance to a postsecondary institution after graduation.

In examining the available data on early postsecondary course enrollment and testing outcomes for the graduating class of 2015 we have identified several important trends. Despite nearly universal access with 92 percent of high schools offering at least one EPSO, only 41 percent of the cohort enrolled in an early postsecondary opportunity. During the 2014-15 school year, approximately 36,000 students earned postsecondary credit and 2,793 students earned an industry credential.²

In order to close achievement and college completion gaps, we must ensure all students have access to various EPSO options. Districts and high schools can do this by building a portfolio with a variety of EPSOs.



²Seamless Pathways: Bridging Tennessee's Gap Between High School and Postsecondary.

How EPSOs Help Students

Early postsecondary opportunities allow students to:



EARN POSTSECONDARY CREDITS IN HIGH SCHOOL



BECOME FAMILIAR WITH POSTSECONDARY LEARNING EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS



DEVELOP CONFIDENCE & STUDY SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS IN POSTSECONDARY COURSEWORK



MAKE MORE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT POSTSECONDARY PLANS AND CAREER GOALS



DECREASE THE TIME & COST OF COMPLETING A CERTIFICATE/DEGREE

EPSOs by the Numbers

The Tennessee Department of Education's findings based on the 2016 Graduating Cohort.

EPSO Access Gap for 2016 Graduating Cohort

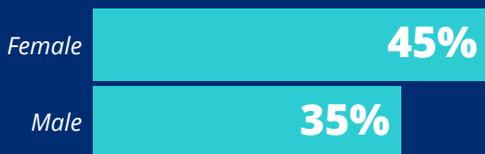
In order to close achievement and college completion gaps, we must close the access gap for early postsecondary opportunities. For example, there is a 28 percentage point gap in EPSO access between economically disadvantaged (ED) students and non-economically disadvantaged students. This means students who are not economically disadvantaged are twice as likely to have the chance to earn EPSOs as their ED peers.

The graphs below depict the access gaps between student groups in enrollment in EPSOs.

Economically Disadvantaged Access Gap = 27 percentage points



Gender Access Gap = 10 percentage points



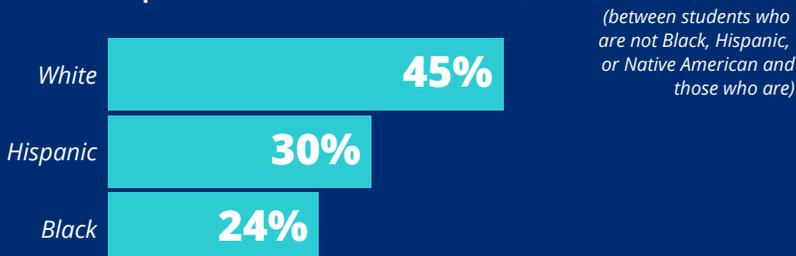
Students with Disabilities Access Gap = 31 percentage points



English Learners Access Gap = 23 percentage points



Student Groups Access Gap = 21 percentage points



Why EPSOs Matter for the Graduating Class of 2016

40%

of graduates attempted at least one EPSO (Dual Enrollment, Advanced Placement, or Statewide Dual Credit).

84%

of all graduates who took an EPSO enrolled in a postsecondary institution, compared to only 63% of all graduates enrolling.

74%

of economically disadvantaged students who took EPSOs enrolled in a postsecondary institution, compared to only 50% of all economically disadvantaged graduates enrolling.

Additional Resources

Recently, the department released several resources to support this work:

- ▶ [Drive to 55 Report](#)
- ▶ [EPSO Strategic Growth Plan](#)
- ▶ [EPSO Implementation Guide](#)

Teacher Leaders Taking Action

Educators across Tennessee are taking action by expanding access to and improving student outcomes in early postsecondary opportunities. Students need support in seamlessly transitioning from high school to college and careers.

Five Action Steps

The action steps and examples below come from teacher leaders across the state to highlight how other teachers can support student EPSO access and outcomes.



ACTION 1:
Partner with administrators to expand EPSO course offerings.



ACTION 2:
Support equitable course offerings, recruit non-typical students, and increase access for all students into EPSO courses.



ACTION 3:
Collaborate with other EPSO teachers and connect with higher education institutions.



ACTION 4:
Develop student skills for how to study and prepare for college-level coursework.



ACTION 5:
Inform parents about EPSOs and the importance of rigorous coursework.

CONTRIBUTING TEACHER LEADERS

Dr. Cerrone Foster,
*Assistant Professor,
Biological Sciences,
East Tennessee State University*

Kris Krautkremer,
*AP Biology Teacher
Kingsport, Tennessee*

Terry L. Nickels,
*Criminal Justice Teacher
Greene Technology Center*

Tammy Wolfe,
*AP Coordinator and
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Kingsport, Tennessee*

See Page 13 for teacher profiles.



ACTION 1: **Partner with administrators to expand EPSO course offerings**

Teachers and school leaders must collaborate on how to increase offerings and improve access to EPSOs. In order for schools to create more early postsecondary opportunities for students, teacher leaders should work with school and district leaders to promote this expansion.

Kris Krautkremer has firsthand experience with expanding offerings and access for her students at Dobyns-Bennett High School in Kingsport. In four years, enrollment in AP Biology at her school has increased 686 percent, from 14 students to 110 students. “When I took over the AP Biology classes five years ago, I had a sincere conversation with my principal about our vision for increasing the number of students who are in AP and succeeding,” Krautkremer says. “Our district has the goal of increasing enrollment in EPSOs, but I needed to have a nitty-gritty discussion, one where we talked about our concerns and the challenges ahead. There were tough questions.”

Krautkremer’s school had already begun this work when she took charge of the advanced science courses. But after she and her principal talked about the situation, the principal was prepared to open the door even wider for students to enter AP Biology classes. Krautkremer adds, “My principal let students enroll past the course drop deadline, and we changed policy to make this a reality.” At Dobyns-Bennett, there were new course sections opened to make room for students who added AP Biology after the deadline. The school policy was that no one could drop AP Biology. Local funds were used to pay for AP exams for students who couldn’t afford them. As Krautkremer says, “Change can start with one teacher, but it is so much easier when we pull together.”

“Our district has the goal of increasing enrollment in EPSOs, but I needed to have a nitty-gritty discussion, one where we talked about our concerns and the challenges ahead. There were tough questions.”

- Kris Krautkremer, AP Biology Teacher

QUESTIONS TO ASK



Teacher leaders can take action by communicating with school administrators to review EPSO recruitment policies and offerings. Asking the appropriate questions ensures high and explicit expectations for the work.

These important discussions should occur early and often. While every school is unique and dialogues will vary, one constant should remain present across the state: *Keep the best interests of students at the center of the conversation.*

Questions to Ask

- ✓ Do we have a process to identify students who should consider taking this course?
- ✓ How will we respond if EPSO exam scores drop with more students enrolled?
- ✓ How will we measure success?
- ✓ Are we prepared for rapid growth?
- ✓ What will we do if students want to drop the EPSO course?
- ✓ How do we ensure all students take the related exam?
- ✓ How can we include parents and ensure they understand the benefits of EPSOs?
- ✓ What needs to be communicated to other teachers in the school?



ACTION 2:

Support equitable course offerings, recruit non-typical students, and increase access for all students into EPSO courses

Kingsport City Schools has fostered strong partnerships with local businesses to expand EPSOs for more students. Dobyns-Bennett High School Principal Chris Hampton states, “Over the next five years DBHS will have a significant focus on expanding CTE options for students. Computer science, cyber-security/networking, artificial intelligence, and manufacturing will anchor the CTE options.” These programs were identified based on local industry as well as student interest. The healthcare industry is the number one employer in the region, and there is already a robust health sciences program with five current CTE teachers and multiple programs of study. The manufacturing industry is the number two employer in the region, and companies have high-skill positions available. Additionally, the focus on information technology and computer science is directed toward universal skills—depth of thinking and technology integration—and opportunities for students that are transferrable across all career paths. These expansions in CTE will better prepare, engage, and develop all students.

By expanding offerings based on student interest and market needs, more students will be engaged and successful in high school and beyond. Tammy Wolfe, the AP Coordinator and Counselor at Dobyns-Bennett, finds that “students who challenge themselves with more rigorous coursework improve their time management skills, study skills, and tend to improve their ACT and SAT scores.” When students apply for colleges, EPSOs strengthen their college applications and scholarship opportunities. Strength of a student’s schedule and their grades in rigorous coursework weigh heavily in admission and scholarship awards, as noted by Dr. Cerrone Foster, Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences at ETSU. Once in college, professors and students agree that students who participate in EPSOs are more prepared for college coursework and tend to manage a full-time course load better than peers who were not exposed to the rigors and demands of college-level work in high school. Additionally, we know that students can save thousands of dollars by successfully completing EPSOs and there are opportunities for fee assistance to cover exams and courses.

When speaking at the Teacher Leader Summit in July 2017, Krautkremer asked, “What students are AP (EPSO) students? EVERY student is an AP student.” She added that “any student who is prepared to attempt the work should be given the chance to succeed in AP and college-level

“I believe this is because of two reasons: Our culture is one where all students are encouraged by teachers, counselors, and peers to push themselves and attempt higher level courses, and students are being identified and counseled to move to the next level.”

- Kris Krautkremer, AP Biology Teacher

work. The focus must be on growth and not scores.” At the summit, she emphatically declared, “What’s the worst thing that can happen when students are exposed to the rigors of college-level work? Nothing!” With the proper supports, students can grow, improve, and be successful in high-level coursework. She provides examples below of how she supports all students in her AP Biology course (see page 13 for additional information):

- Student surveys
- Interactive science notebooks
- Accountable Talk®
- Retesting in groups

Teachers can and should differentiate and scaffold lessons in high school to better prepare students for EPSOs, especially for students who may initially have no intention of pursuing EPSOs. Dobyns-Bennett educators have observed that after students recognize they are capable of doing the work and their teacher advocates for them, they are more inclined to attempt additional EPSOs. As Principal Hampton shares, “Students tend to enroll in more than one EPSO in their high school career at Dobyns-Bennett. Once a student is at that next level, it is utterly impossible to take a lower class because administrators, counselors, and parents all have to give permission to take a less rigorous class.”

Another critical component to successful expansion of EPSOs is the involvement of school counselors. School counselors must work alongside teachers in determining

eligibility for EPSOs. Tammy Wolfe says, “We use our state testing projections, but we also base decisions on teacher feedback and other testing measures.” Many districts across Tennessee use assessments in middle school that provide college readiness indicators that should be considered when making recommendations for student course placement. Wolf suggests “districts offer the PSAT, since College Board provides AP Potential scores to help identify students for Advanced Placement Courses. School counselors should take recommendations from teachers and discuss options with all students. These conversations about moving into

college-level courses should occur well before course registration. Parents should also be notified of their student’s recommendation in [written form](#).” During course registration, students and parents can determine which advanced courses will best fit the student’s needs within the EPSO offerings.

Leaders at all levels must work together to ensure demographic diversity in EPSOs and to support students in both access and success.

SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS FOR RECRUITING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN EPSOS

1

Promote EPSOs within middle schools and high schools.

- ✓ Participate in EPSO week and utilize TDOE [toolkit](#).
- ✓ Host parent night events to highlight EPSOs.
- ✓ Host student expos to highlight and provide information about EPSOs.
- ✓ Bring in business partners to inform students of the career value of EPSOs.

Example of Business Partnership: Dobyms-Bennett High School has partnered with Eastman Chemical on a program called GEM4STEAM. Through this program, Eastman employees serve as guest lecturers, assist with labs, and serve as tutors for students after school. Employees are provided 40 hours of paid leave per year to work in local schools.

2

Identify students who should be considered for EPSOs.

- ✓ TVAAS
- ✓ Student interest
- ✓ PLAN, EXPLORE, ASPIRE, PSAT
- ✓ Teacher recommendations and data

3

Mail individual letters to parents/students notifying them of the EPSO opportunity and recommendation.

4

Meet with students individually to discuss options, make recommendations, and create a “student success” plan to help with decisions about courses, like EPSOs.

Example of a Student Success Plan: A four-year plan designed in conjunction with the student, parents, and counselor. This process begins in middle school with the student and their counselor evaluating high school courses to develop the initial four-year plan. This plan serves as a living document that is revisited and adjusted each year to accomplish graduation requirements, meet student needs, and identify opportunities for advanced coursework, industry certifications, and pathways for postsecondary.

5

Involve school counselors to assist students with enrollment in EPSOs.

6

Provide support for learning outside the classroom.

- ✓ Online resources
- ✓ Study groups
- ✓ Practice assessments and materials
- ✓ Tutoring opportunities

7

Guide students through fee assistance options based on federal, state, and local funding sources.

³ <https://appotential.collegeboard.org/app/welcome.do>



ACTION 3:

Collaborate with other EPSO teachers and connect with higher education institutions

One way to promote college and career readiness in the K-12 environment is through teacher councils and committees that connect educators across content and grades. Districts can form EPSO committees, which give teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders the opportunity to

plan how best to bolster EPSO portfolios. Teams can gather best practices for EPSOs and reassess identification of students, recruitment, curriculum, resources, and teaching strategies often to continually better serve students.

The connection between K-12 and higher education is stronger than ever. We must continue to foster that connection and seek out opportunities to learn from other educators.

WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1 Start with your school and district

When seeking to collaborate with higher education institutions as a teacher leader, start within your school and district. If interested in collaborating with local colleges or universities, speak with your principal. There may already be programs in place from which to build.

2 Collaborate with other educators

Talk with your peers in your school and district to learn more about what is working well and opportunities for partnership in supporting students in their next steps.

Example: Terry Nickels, of the Greene Technology Center (GTC), speaks to the importance of partnership and opportunity. The GTC has partnered with the local Tennessee College of Applied Technology to become a satellite campus. Students at GTC can come to the center to enroll in high school CTE programs and can simultaneously enroll in TCAT courses, such as machine tool, cosmetology, and welding. Students attending classes at GTC are able to enroll in high school and TCAT classes.

The Greene Technology Center is unique in the state of Tennessee. Currently, it is the only center that serves students in two districts within a county. GTC professors and staff members can guide students into postsecondary, help them find jobs in the industries in the community, and provide opportunities that otherwise may not be available. These opportunities include internships with local industries and have resulted in employment opportunities after graduation. GTC is demonstrating that students benefit when provided the right environment and enhanced learning opportunities.

3 Connect with department chairs

Contact the department chairs of your subject in local TCATs, community colleges, and universities. The department chairs are a great place to start to learn more about their areas of expertise.

4 Reach out to professors teaching introductory courses

Directly contact local professors teaching introductory (freshman level) courses and express your desire to help bridge the gap between high school and college for students. As a teacher, be specific about ways in which you want to partner. Be open to suggestions for ways to strengthen your preparation of students based on the feedback from professors.

5 Learn from local resources

Connect with the regional CORE office, which has established relationships within the area and may be able to provide you with contacts or established programs. Contact the regional STEM Hub, the district office, or other local organizations and resource centers. These offices often work directly with local K-12 educators to partner with higher education educators.

WAYS TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

ETSU Assistant Professor Dr. Foster identifies three ways high school teachers can build best practices and support student success:



Partner with postsecondary institutions for exchange of best practices.



Ask local professors to be a guest lecturer in K-12 classes.



Follow up with institutions and/or students to get feedback on rigor and preparation.



ACTION 4:

Develop student skills for how to study and prepare for college-level coursework

Dr. Foster notes that students are tasked with more than just passing assessments and gaining knowledge during their postsecondary journey; they must develop strong study skills, organizational skills, and time management skills to truly be successful. The following are several ways to support students' preparation for college and career:



MITIGATE STUDENT TRANSITION CHALLENGES

The transition to college and retention of students during the first year extends beyond academic preparedness. High schools can assist students by strengthening life skills such as the importance of attendance, timely submission of work, and being proactive in seeking help early. Teachers can empower students to own and strengthen these skills by prioritizing and incentivizing these areas within their courses.

At Dobyns-Bennett High School, there is a whole school focus on attendance and tardiness. Students face real consequences for being tardy; they can lose the privilege of going to prom and walking at graduation. Teachers set hard deadlines for work, especially online submissions. They use Canvas as their learning management system, just like many universities, and use a gradual release process to teach students how to prepare and meet hard deadlines. Additionally, Dobyns-Bennett has a time during lunch called Tribe Time where students can meet with teachers and receive help within the school day. During Tribe Time, teachers host mini-lessons to recap instruction, tutor one-on-one, and/or provide a chance for students to make up exams. Students also use the time to study on their own or in small groups.



PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH EXPERIENTIAL AND ONLINE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

For most college courses, up to one-third of the student's grade is based on online participation and homework discussion. A student who takes weeks adjusting to the online classroom environment can be hindered from being successful in his or her courses. Additionally, it is important for teachers to increase experiential learning opportunities. Student coursework in high school must model authentic tasks and experiences students will encounter in the real world.

Kingsport is a 1:1 district—meaning, they provide every student with a device—and strong emphasis is placed

“Learning isn’t a linear process. Students need to give themselves permission to attempt and fail, and then continue attempting in more rigorous courses, like EPSOs. The most common problem I face is fear—fear of failure, fear of feeling less than. Teaching isn’t about picking up students when they fall; it’s about standing with them for as long as it takes while they figure out how to get back up and continue on.”

- Kris Krautkremer, AP Biology Teacher

in the middle and high schools for teachers to create a blended learning environment. Most exams are taken online in Canvas or Google Classroom. With these programs, teachers can score exams quickly and provide written, verbal (audio), and video feedback. Students can receive multiple attempts for mastery, and many assessments can be scored automatically and uploaded to the grade book after every new attempt. Assessments, and even entire courses, are created collaboratively, and teachers meet every two weeks after school to discuss the robust data generated by these common online assessments.



IMPROVE STUDENT WRITING SKILLS

Regardless of which postsecondary institution or employer a student chooses, he or she must have strong written communication skills. Rigorous coursework with writing standards in K-12 is the best preparation for students to be ready for postsecondary-level writing. Being able to read, comprehend, and write about complex texts is critically important to success on the ACT and SAT, and in postsecondary coursework.

In AP Biology classes at Dobyns-Bennett, students write daily in collaborative pairs. The prompts are rigorous and require students to analyze data, apply prior knowledge to new information, and cite evidence. In this work, students pull apart the prompts, plan and organize their responses, then write. Students use resources like the textbook or interactive notebooks along with Accountable Talk® practices as they write. The key is that they write in a discipline-specific context every day.

Teachers must be life-long learners and innovators. Tennessee classrooms must facilitate learning and preparation for all students.



ACTION 5:

Inform parents about EPSOs and the importance of rigorous coursework

More rigorous academic standards in Tennessee and initiatives like Tennessee Promise have made college a viable choice for many students who previously might not have considered postsecondary. Now, more students are both ready and able to attend college. When teachers are recruiting students into more rigorous courses, like EPSOs, parents must also be part of the conversation. Parents and students need more information about the benefits and challenges of these courses, and parents need information about how best to support their student.

Krautkremer sends out weekly [parent newsletters](#) by email. In the newsletters, parents learn about the daily work in her classroom, see examples of exam questions and scoring rubrics, and receive specific suggestions for supporting their student at home. After every exam, parents are provided detailed exam data and student reflections from one-on-one student data conferences. Based on parent surveys, Krautkremer finds the newsletter provides parents insight into the discipline-specific work of science and allows parents to engage in meaningful conversations with their student. “I use a marketing email service, so I know over 88 percent of parents read and engage with the newsletter every week,” she says. “Students who are new to college-level work have parents who are new to college-level work, so I find my parents greatly appreciate feeling included and having information they can use to support their student.”

The key is to invite parents to school often and include them in the work process, so they feel invested and empowered to better support their student.

“Change can start with one teacher, but it is so much easier when we pull together.”

- Kris Krautkremer, AP Biology Teacher

PARENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES



- ✓ Send a virtual or printed parent newsletter.
- ✓ Invite parents to the classroom to experience rigorous coursework firsthand and/or serve as a volunteer.
- ✓ Invite parents to present a topic in class (e.g., share with the class about their profession or a unique hobby).
- ✓ Host a Parent-Student Day where students and parents engage in classwork together, and students facilitate learning for the parent.
- ✓ Host an EPSO Night where parents can attend short sessions by teachers highlighting EPSOs and the benefits of completing these courses.
- ✓ Utilize an interactive, online grade book program, or parent communication tool such as Remind 101, which makes it quick and easy to update parents on their student's progress.

Contributing Teacher Leaders



Dr. Cerrone Foster,

Assistant Professor, Biological Sciences, East Tennessee State University

Dr. Cerrone Foster is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at East Tennessee State University. Dr. Foster has taught Introductory Biology for Majors and Biochemistry laboratory for the past six years. She has been awarded several grants for course redesign, assessment, and strategies to improve student motivation and academic success in first-year students. Additional research interests include examining molecular signaling pathways and cardiac remodeling in response to myocardial injury.



Kris Krautkremer,

AP Biology Teacher in Kingsport, Tennessee

Kris Krautkremer teaches AP Biology at Dobyns-Bennett High School in Kingsport, Tennessee. She is a strong advocate for all students taking rigorous courses and being exposed to college-level work in high school. She has a B.S. in Zoology from the University of Oklahoma, an M.S. in Microbiology from Texas A&M, and an M.P.A. from Texas A&M. Mrs. Krautkremer, who has taught 28 years, was a 2016-17 SCORE Tennessee Educator Fellow, the 2016 Teacher of the Year for Kingsport City Schools, and a 2017 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching state finalist.



Terry L. Nickels,

Criminal Justice Teacher at Greene Technology Center

Terry L. Nickels has a B.S. in History with a concentration in secondary education from East Tennessee State University. He is a former police officer and has been teaching Criminal Justice at the Greene Technology Center and the Greeneville City Schools since 1998. He is a 2016-2017 SCORE Tennessee Educator Fellow.



Tammy Wolfe,

AP Coordinator and School Counselor in Kingsport, Tennessee

Tammy Wolfe has served as Career Counselor and AP Coordinator for five years at Dobyns-Bennett High School in Kingsport, Tennessee. She has worked in industry and higher education and was a business teacher for seven years in Virginia. She is dedicated to serving young students by helping them achieve their long-term goals through college and technical career opportunities. Mrs. Wolfe has a Master of Education in Administration & Leadership from Lincoln Memorial University and a Bachelor of Administration from Concord University.