Charter School Fall Convening

Tennessee Department of Education

September 2025

TN Department of **Education**

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Agenda

Time	Session
8:30-8:45	Welcome
8:45-9:00	Department Updates and Resources
9:00-9:30	TCAP Testing Basics
9:30-9:45	Local Finance - December 1 and Year End Experience Reports
9:45-10:00	Break
10:00-10:30	Teacher Effectiveness – TNCompass Support
10:30-11:00	Early Literacy Resources and Supports
11:00-12:15	Lunch On Your Own
12:15-12:30	Best Practices to Impact Student Achievement
12:30-1:30	Charter School Funding
1:30-1:45	Licensure Overview
1:45-2:00	Break
2:00-2:30	Special Education and Student Supports
2:30-2:50	Legislative Updates and Waivers
2:50-3:20	School Safety
3:20-3:30	Wrap-Up

Purpose

To provide an opportunity for charter operators and charter authorizers to come together with the TDOE to hear important updates, learn about available resources, ask questions, and make connections with department staff.

1. Participants will understand the role of the charter program team in supporting operators and authorizers.
2. Participants will learn about the various divisions across the department and the information requested from operators and authorizers.
3. Participants will receive multiple resources to assist them with meeting state and federal requirements.

Welcome

Charter State Agencies

In Tennessee, there are three state agencies that work with charter sponsors, operators, and authorizers. Each agency serves a different function but work collaboratively to provide support and oversight.
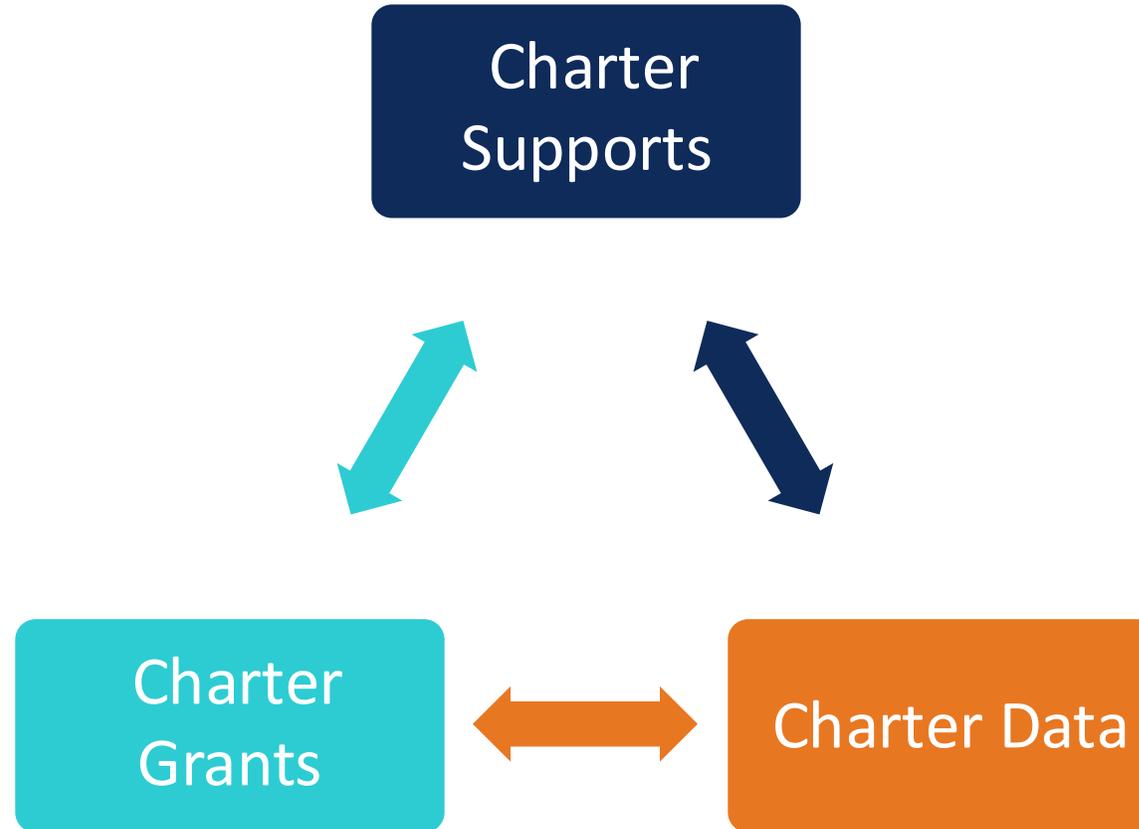
	TN Department of Education	TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	TENNESSEE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION
Charter School Rules and Policies	Supports charter schools and charter authorizers in the implementation of rules and policies	Sets rules and policies for K-12 public education, including charter schools and charter authorizers	Sets rules and policies for the charter school appeals processes
Charter School Applications *(New Start, Amendment, Renewal)*	Maintains record of charter authorizer decisions for charter school applications	Develops and publishes charter school applications	Appellate body responsible for hearing appeals of charter authorizer decisions on charter school applications; may also receive applications directly in specific instances outlined in law
Charter School Authorizing	Does not authorize charter schools	Does not authorize charter schools	Can authorize charter schools upon appeal and in specific instances outlined in law
Charter Oversight and Accountability	Monitors state reporting requirements for charter schools	Ensures the effective operation of charter authorizers and evaluates authorizer quality	Oversees and evaluates the charter schools it authorizes

Charter Program Team

- **Crystal McCarver**, Senior Director of Charter and Virtual School Programs

- **Tom McGrath**, Manager of Charter Grants

- **Christie Williams**, Manager of Charter Supports

- **Matt Bowser**, Manager of Virtual Schools and Charter Data

Charter Program Team Workstreams

Charter Supports

- Charter Update
- Data Analysis
- Guidance Documents
- Professional Development
- Stakeholder Feedback
- Department Liaison

Supports

Charter Data

Charter Grants

Charter School Contact Information

- The Charter School Team maintains contact information that is utilized by various offices and divisions across the department to send out vital information.
- The contact information for principals/school leaders is captured by TNSD, and changes to information should be submitted following its process.
- All other contact information is maintained by the Charter School Team. This includes the following contacts:
  - Authorizer Charter Office Contact
  - CMO Leader Contact
  - CMO Finance Contact
  - School Primary Finance Contact
  - School Primary Data Contact
  - School Primary Assessment Contact

Scan to access change request form.

Charter School Contact Information

- The department will keep contact information for **two district-level contacts for each authorizer** and **one contact per contact type for each charter school and charter management organization.**

- Changes submitted through the [Charter Contact Change Request Form](#) will overwrite the existing contact(s) associated with the specified contact type and organization(s).

- It is strongly recommended that you establish an email distribution group/list with an assigned generic email address (i.e., Charter.Schools@yourdomain.org, Charter.Finance@yourdomina.edu).

- This will ensure that communications from the department are routed to multiple people within your organization based on your organization's IT rules and needs.

TNShare

- TNShare is an app that integrates with Microsoft SharePoint, which is a storage application that allows secure sharing of documents and information between districts and the TDOE.
- Access to TNShare will be provided for the following contact types:
  - ☐ CMO Leader Contact
  - ☐ CMO Finance Contact
  - ☐ School Principal/Head of School Contact
  - ☐ School Primary Finance Contact
  - ☐ School Primary Data Contact

TNShare

- TNShare is used to share charter school data and information relevant to the TISA calculations of funding.
- The data should be reviewed for accuracy to ensure that allocations are calculated correctly.
- Errors should be corrected in the student management system so that the next upload is accurate.
- Questions related to TISA funding should be directed to tnedu.funding@tn.gov
- Questions related to TNShare access should be directed to dt.support@tn.gov

What is TNSD?

The [Tennessee School Directory](#) (TNSD) is a data repository for district and school identifying information. It is used for the department's education information system (i.e., TEDS/EIS), applications (e.g., Accountability, ePlan, TNCompass, etc.), and reporting (i.e., accountability designations, attendance funding, state report card, EdFacts). It is critical that TNSD maintains accurate and up-to-date information regarding Tennessee schools and districts.

Who Can Submit Changes?:

Using the online submission [form](#), all change requests must be submitted by either the authorized **district TNSD contact** or the **Director of Schools**.

Overview of Change Types and Deadlines

Type of Change	Needs Departmental Authorization	Submission Deadline
School name changes	✔	**February 2 - June 1, 2026 5 p.m. CT**
School or instructional type changes	✔	
School grade changes	✔	
School openings	✔	
School closings	✔	
District and school contact changes • District/school leader name • Email address • Website • Physical address/mailing address • Phone number		**July 1, 2025 - June 15, 2026**

2026 School Directory Change Timeline

July 1, 2025 — The submission window opened for all 2026-27 directory updates that **do not** require department authorization.

February 2, 2026 — The submission window opens for all 2026-27 directory updates **requiring department authorization.**

June 1, 2026 — The submission window closes for 2026-27 school changes **requiring department authorization** at 5 p.m. CT.

June 15, 2026 — The submission window closes for all 2026-27 directory updates that **do not** require department authorization at 5 p.m. CT.

July 1, 2026 — The department will **activate all pending status** schools to open for the 2026-27 school year with a July 1, 2026, effective date.

Questions & Support

Ruth Christopher, School Directory Coordinator
School.Directory@tn.gov

School Directory Resources can be found here.

School Nutrition

- School Nutrition Website

- SNP On Demand

The SNP on Demand is a new LMS platform we created this year that allows for online training.

- Please review the updated Economically Disadvantaged Guidance for the 2025-26 school year. The "J" code has been retired and replaced with more specific codes to reflect direct certification through SNAP and TANF programs. These changes are intended to improve data accuracy and alignment with reporting requirements. For questions, please contact tnedu.funding@tn.gov.
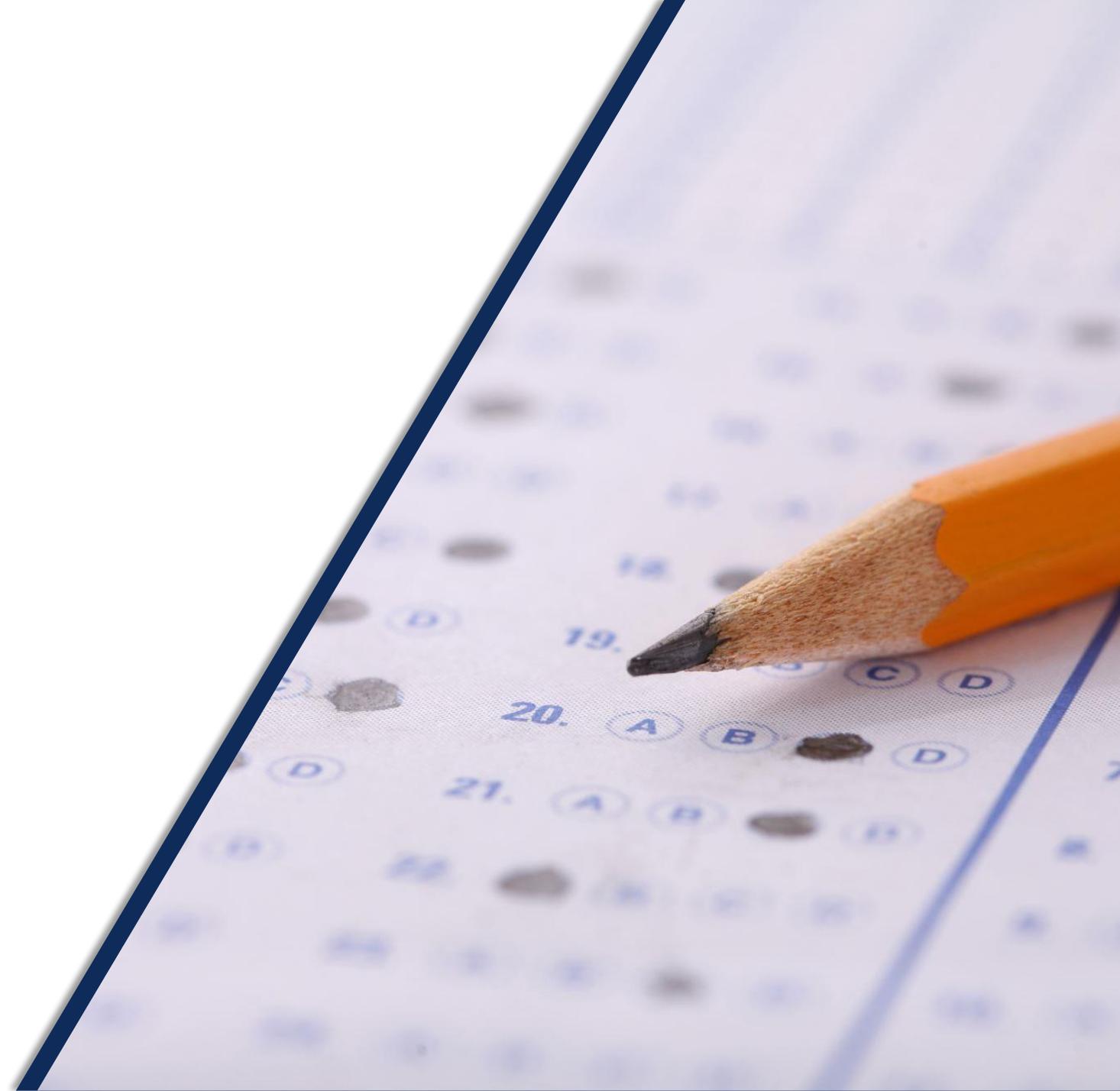
TCAP Testing Basics

Mark Jackson, Manager of TCAP Customer Experience

TN Department of Education

Mark Jackson

Manager of TCAP Customer Experience

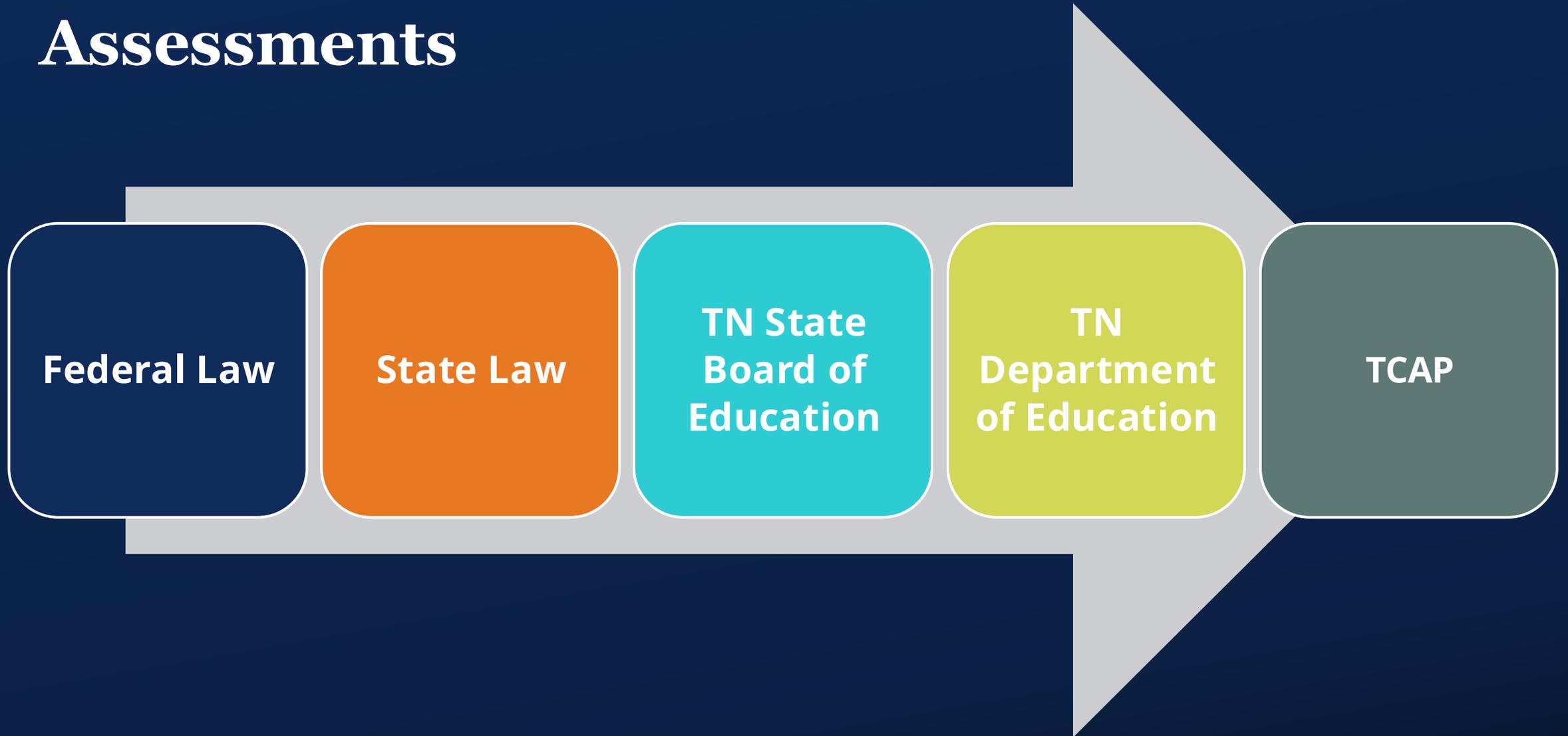**Mark Jackson**
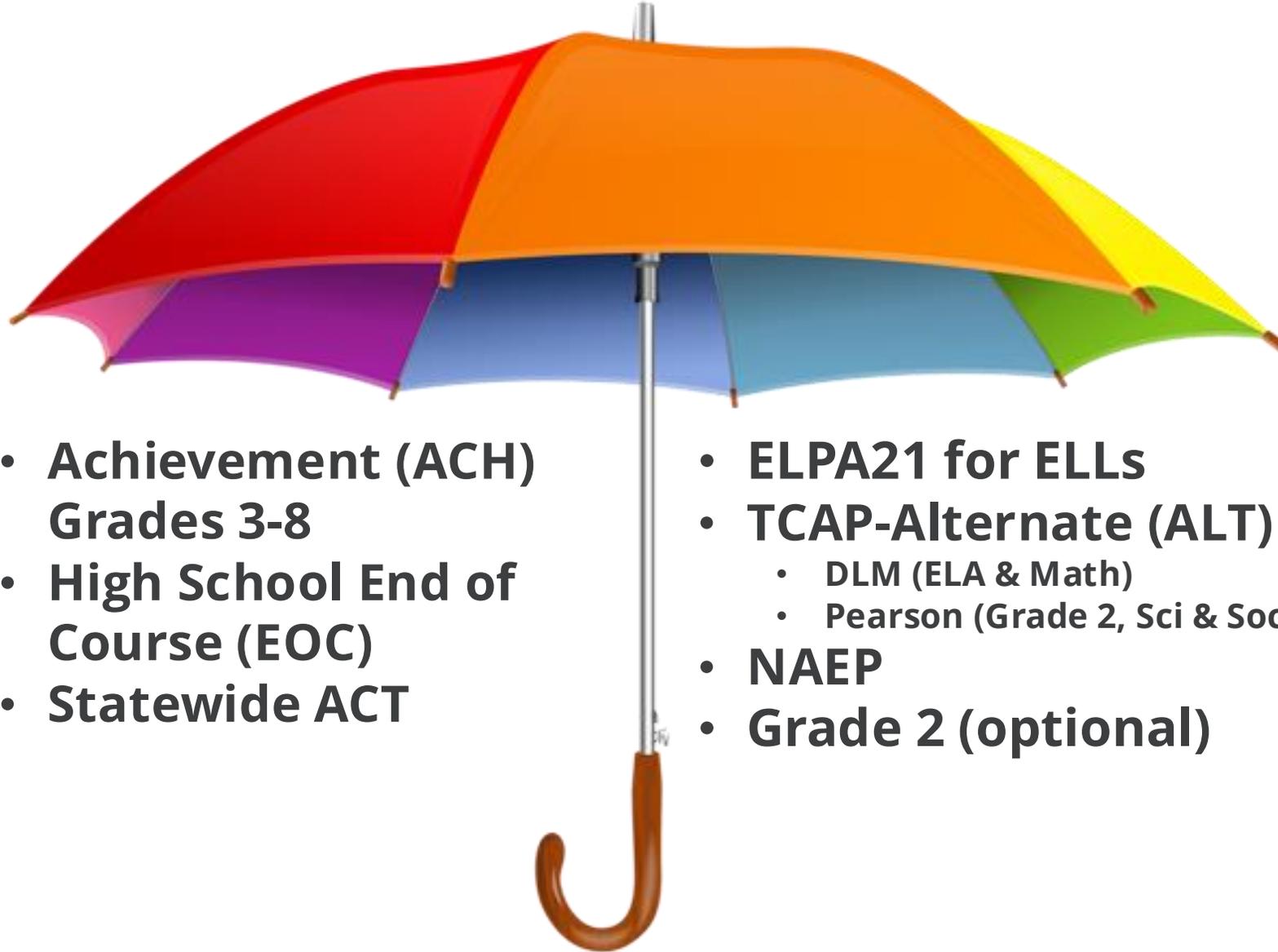
Manager of TCAP Customer Experience
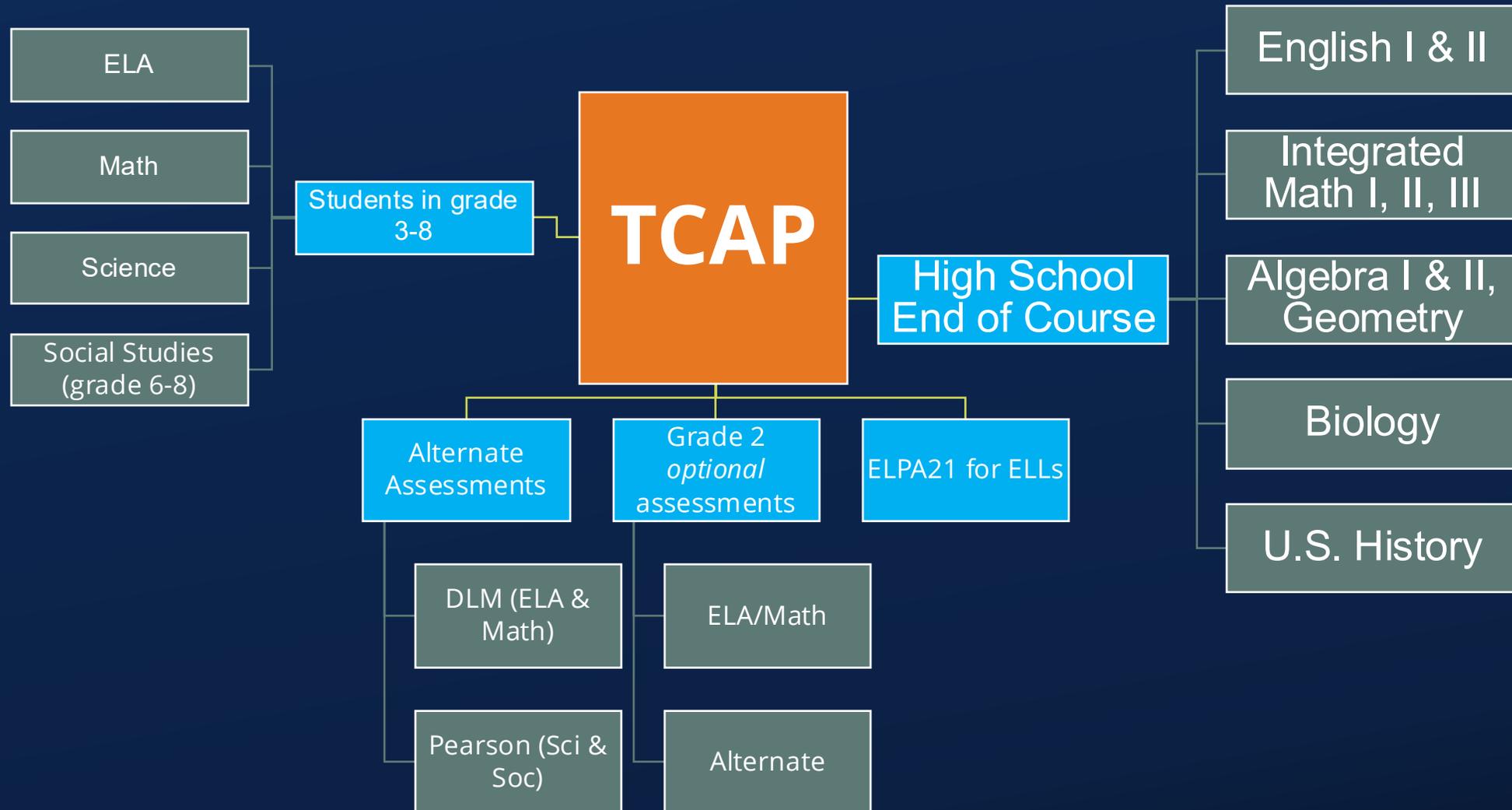
TCAP Basics

Tests Included in TCAP

- **Achievement (ACH) Grades 3-8**
- **High School End of Course (EOC)**
- **Statewide ACT**

- **ELPA21 for ELLs**
- **TCAP-Alternate (ALT)**
  - **DLM (ELA & Math)**
  - **Pearson (Grade 2, Sci & Soc)**
- **NAEP**
- **Grade 2 (optional)**

Subjects Included in TCAP

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TCAP Modes for 2025-26

- **End of Course (EOC) and Grade 6-8**
  - Computer-based testing (CBT) via TestNav

- **Grades 3-5 and Grade 2 (optional)**
  - All paper-based testing (PBT) with paper/pencil
  - Grade 2 (ELA/Math) and Grade 3 (ELA/Math/Science) in consumable test books
  - Grade 3-5 Social Studies remains paused

Key Assessment Ideas

Key Assessment Policies

- **Every student** tests, including:
  - English learners
  - Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (alternate assessment)
  - Homebound
  - Independent home school students
    - grades 5, 7, & 9

- There is **no** opt-out state board policy or law in Tennessee.

Key Assessment Policies

- Not all high school classes take End-of-Course exams.
  - Advanced Placement, dual credit/enrollment, credit recovery, etc.

- The BTC Guide & Test Administration Manual (TAM) are the baseline for assessment policy.
  - Your district can choose to add policy at the district level.

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Best Practices

Best Practices: Training

- Provide training <u>and</u> resources.

- Training is not a one-time event.

  - It's a process

  - Reminders, emails, resources, visits, webpage, etc.

Things to Consider for Scheduling

- Test administrator/proctor requirements
- Adequate breaks
- Time for accommodated testing
- Leaving time for make-ups
- Structure of the school day
- Technology requirements (for CBT)

Best Practices: Operations

- You are now, at some level, a warehouse manager.

- Keep detailed records or have someone who keeps them for you.

- Packing lists, UPS labels, and other key materials that you would potentially need after testing.

Best Practices: Communication

- You will want to develop a communications plan.

- Let your test administrators know who to contact when something happens.
  - Test security issues
  - Technology issues
  - Other issues (test interruption, student questions)
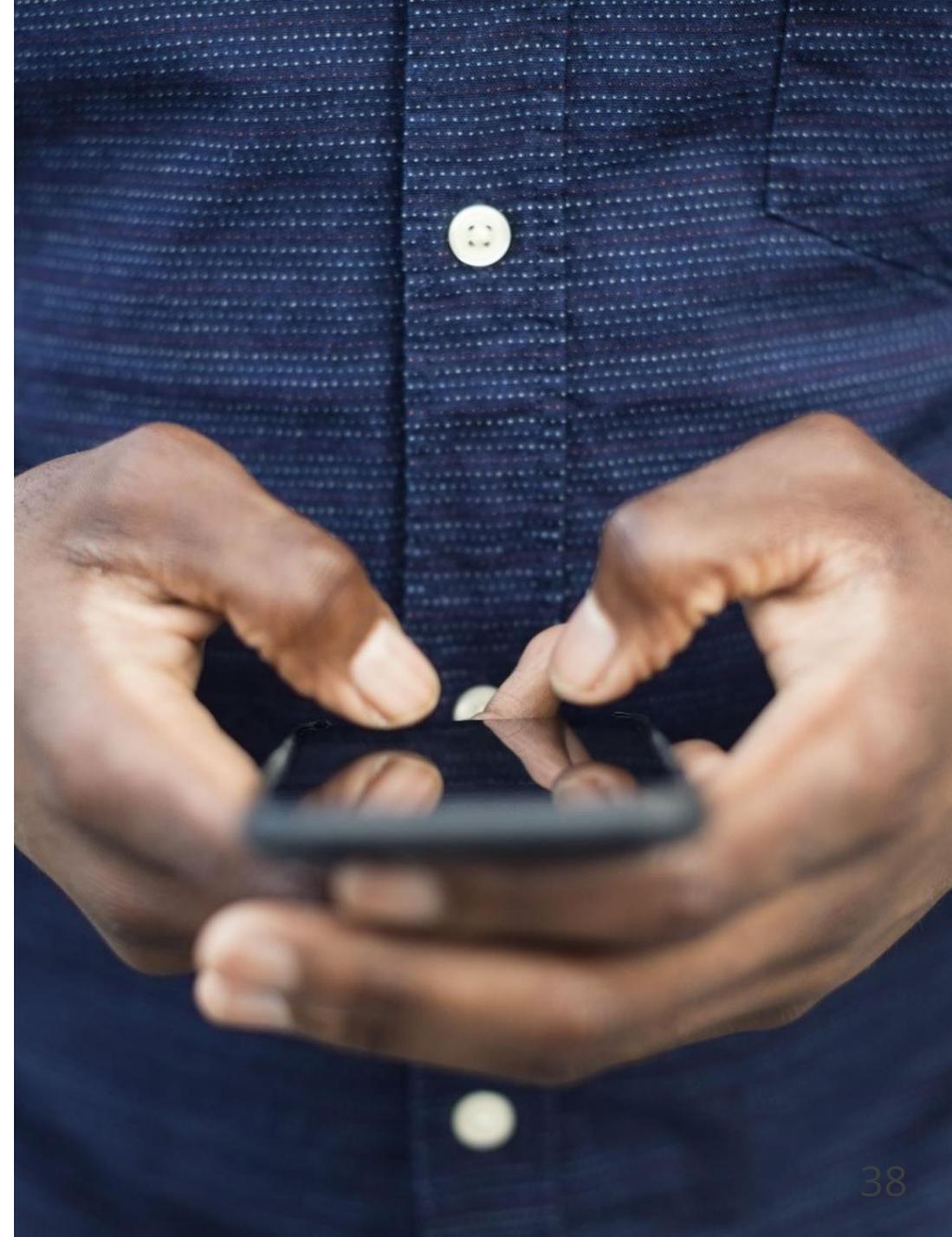
Communication "Chain of Command"

Test Administrators → Building Testing Coordinator → District Testing Coordinator → Assessment Team TDOE or Pearson

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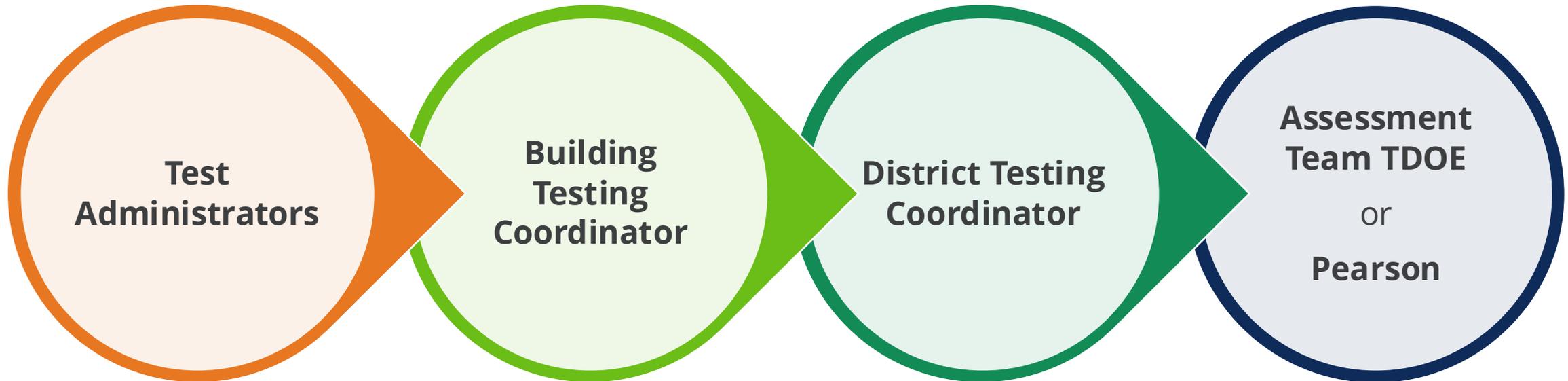
Your DTC

District Testing Coordinator

District Testing Coordinator (DTC)

- Your key contact for questions and policy is the public district testing coordinator (DTC) of the district where your school is established.

  - For some of you, this will mean multiple districts.

- While we are there to assist you with TCAP testing, we will not override district-level policy decisions.

DTC Contact Information

ASD (Achievement School District)
- **Adrienne Alford**
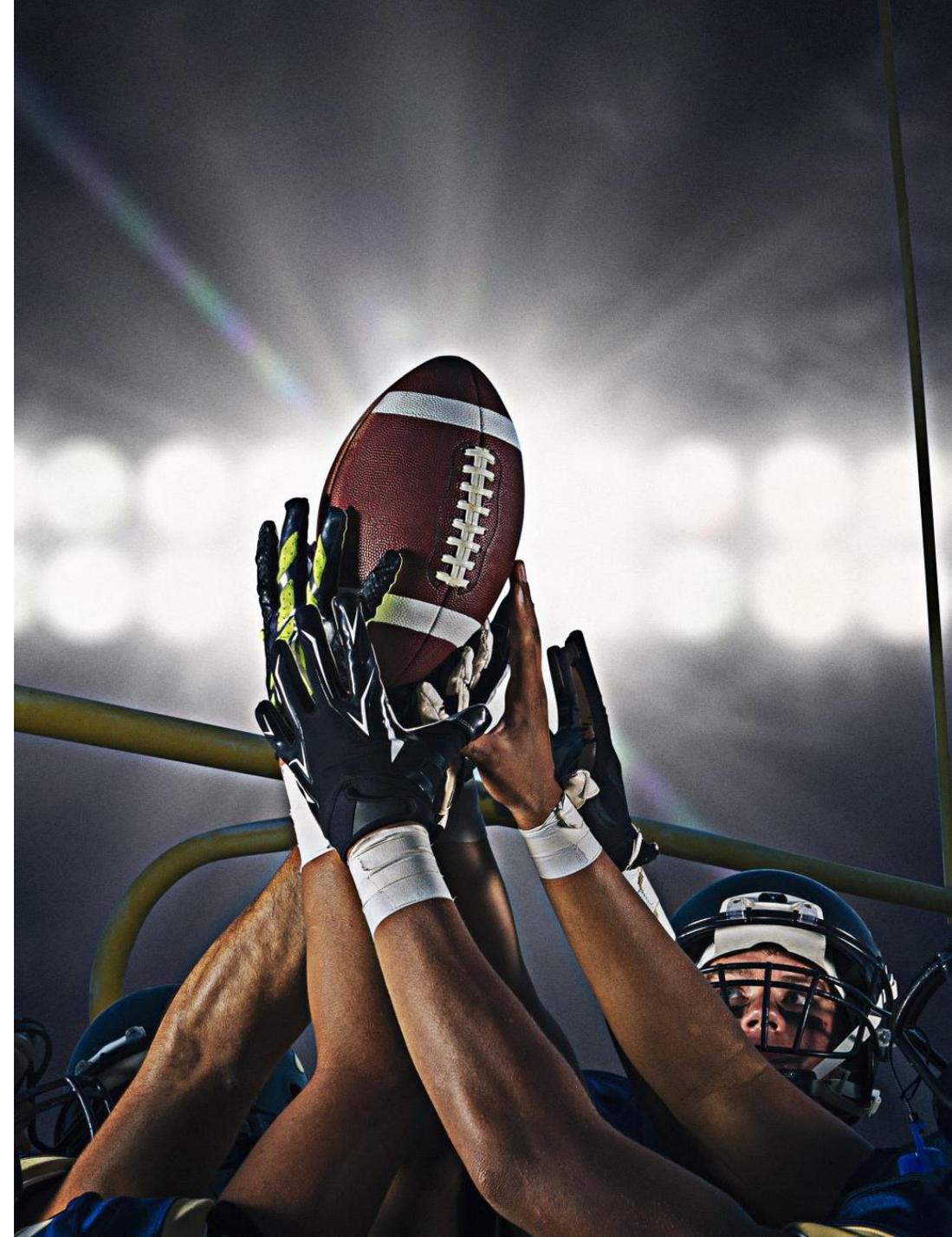- Adrienne.Alford@tn.gov
- 901-658-5610

Hamilton (Chattanooga)
- **Cheryl Paul-Ladd**
- ladd_cheryl@hcde.org
- 423-498-7110

Knox (Knoxville)
- **Weston Edmonds**
- weston.edmonds@knoxschools.org
- 865-594-1735

MNPS (Nashville)
- **Jan Lineberger**
- Jan.Lineberger@mnps.org
- 615-259-8429

MSCS (Memphis)
- **Brant Riedel**
- riedelbw@scsk12.org
- 901-416-5450

Rutherford County
- **Kevin Whittington**
- whittingtonk@rcschools.net
- 615-893-5812

TPCSC (TN Public Charter School Commission)
- **Natasha Teal**
- Natasha.Teal@tn.gov
- 629-259-3361

Test Security

Test Security: TN Test Security Law

Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) 49-1-607:

Any person found to have not followed security guidelines for administration of the TCAP test, or successor test, including making or distributing unauthorized copies of the test, altering a grade or answer sheet, providing copies of answers or test questions, or otherwise compromising the integrity of the testing process **shall be placed on immediate suspension, and such actions will be grounds for dismissal, including dismissal of tenured employees. Such actions shall be grounds for revocation of state license.**

[Acts 1992, ch. 535, 4.]

Test Security: Your First Call

- Potential Breach? Test Security question? Hearing crazy stuff from your school folks & just need to confirm the truth?

- Call your district testing coordinator!

Test Security: Secure Test Environment

- Things to check for:
  - Room clearly labeled as testing room
  - Electronics dealt with
  - Proper calculator use
  - Wise placement of computers

Signage provided in each TAPS

- Any material on the walls that could advantage a student should be covered or removed.
  - Key words in TAM & BTC Guide: "may include, **but** are not limited to"
  - You may provide your own specific guidance in addition to what is in the TAM!
  - Test administrators must be trained to take responsibility for this

Test Security: Secure Storage

- Don't let test materials escape!

- You need:
  - Room with lock
  - Lock with low "key count"
  - Check-out & check-in procedures
  - Custodian?
    - Save the boxes!
  - Documentation!

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Electronics

- Implement policies and procedures for managing electronic devices.

  - **Turn off** and collect all electronic communication devices (cell phones, smartphones, smart watches, tablets, etc.) in the test setting.

    - Suggestions:

      - Labeled baggies

      - Store securely in the room

      - Communicate expectations to parents

  - Temptation is a very difficult thing—remove it from the testing environment!

  - "No electronics" applies to test admins & proctors, too!

AI Apps – A New Concern

- We had a small number of students use AI apps to solve test questions this last year.

- In one case, the student had used AI not only on TCAP but on benchmarks and class tests & finals.

- We strongly suggest:
  - Attentive active monitoring by TAs and proctors
  - Meaningful consequences for students caught using AI on tests
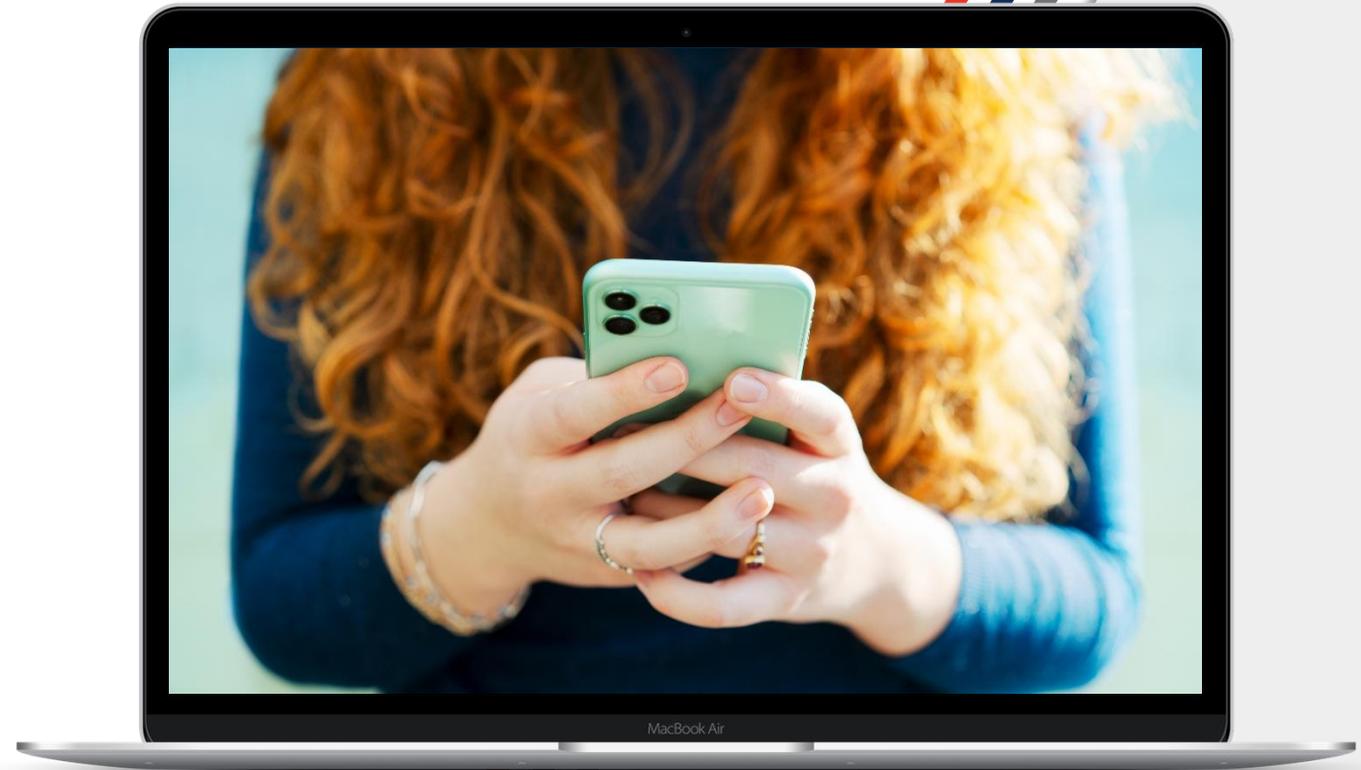
Meet the Team

Assessment Logistics Team

Denette Kolbe
- Denette.Kolbe@tn.gov
- **(615) 772-3573**
- Senior Director of Assessment Logistics

Charles Byrum
- Charles.Byrum@tn.gov
- **(615) 924-0743**
- TCAP Logistics Manager

Tonya Chase
- Tonya.F.Chase@tn.gov
- **(615) 924-7877**
- ESA Senior Manager of Assessment & Data

Melissa Istre
- Melissa.Istre@tn.gov
- **(615) 330-3741**
- TCAP Logistics Manager

Mark Jackson
- Mark.Jackson@tn.gov
- **(615) 982-1963**
- Manager of TCAP Customer Experience

Megan Sellers
- Megan.Sellers@tn.gov
- **(629) 259-0247**
- NAEP/ACT State Senior Manager

Nancy Williams
- Nancy.E.Williams@tn.gov
- **(615) 795-7981**
- Special Populations Assessment Manager

Questions?

Local Finance-December 1 and Year End Experience Reports

Karen Justice, Finance Data
Manager

Staffing

- Employees with an **active educator license** must be "staffed" to appear on reports

Licensure Administrator
Evaluation Administrator
Superintendent Designee
Superintendent

These roles have
Staffing Privileges

"December 1" Components

Create salary schedule(s) – *Administration/ Salary Schedules*

Choose supplements – *Administration/ Salary Dashboard/ District Supplements*

Enter/Upload December 1 salary data and Non-licensed headcount

Enter -Administration/ Salary Dashboard

Upload –Administration/ Import Wizard

Certify

Reports

- **_December 1_**
  - Active ON *December 1*
    - Salary
    - Years
    - Education Level
    - Work Assignment
    - Funding Source
    - Non-Licensed Staff

  Based on salary schedule

  Deadline **FEBRUARY 1**

- **_Year End Experience_**
  - Everyone
    - Time
    - Work Assignment

  Deadline **JULY 31**

* Interims and substitutes should not be reported on either report

Reporting Methods

- Bulk upload – pulls data from last year

- Manual entry - Administration/Salary Dashboard

- Import template – Administration/Import Wizard

Manual Input

Experience Years (State): 6   **Education Level (State):** Bachelor   **Educator Inactive Status:**

Assigment Code   337 Physical Education   **Coaching** $ 0

Schedule   Teachers and Principals   **Differential Pay** $ 0

Paid Months   10   **Salary Equity** $ 0

Paid Days   0

Experience Years (District)   6

Education Level (District)   Bachelor

Base Salary $ 43203   **% of Assignment**   100 %

Salary Type   ⦿ Regular   **Total Assignment** $ 43203
      ○ Federal
      ○ Non-District Employee

Supplements

Based on salary schedule

Optional

➕ Additional Assignment

Mandatory

Base Salary Complete   Yes   **Career Ladder $**   0

Supplement Entry Complete   Yes   **Total Salary $**   43203

Auto populates based on other entries

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Common Issues/Questions

- 20 days=1 Month
- 10-12 Months=1 Year
- Cannot enter more than 12 months
- Cannot enter more than 19 days
- Must match salary schedule configuration
- Cannot manually add staff to import file, educators must be staffed in order to appear

Non-Licensed Headcount report

- All employees working for your district who do not have an active educator license and reported on the Dec 1 report should be counted here.
- Report full-time workers as 1.

Non-Licensed Headcount

Nurses	Food Service Personnel
11	50
Transportation Personnel	Library Aides
3	0
Special Education Aides	Data Processing Personnel
91	0
Psychologist	Vocational Aides
3	1
Regular Instruction Aides	Custodians
62	62
Social Worker	School Secretaries and Bookkeepers
8	30
Other Personnel	Plant Maintenance and Operations Personnel
30	12
School Resource Officer	Central Office Administration
0	5
Other Health Personnel	Other Safety Personnel

OK

Completed Report

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Contacts

- Karen Justice

  December 1 & Year End Report

  (615) 964-3612

  karen.justice@tn.gov

- Educator Licensure and Preparation

  (615) 532-4885

  Educator.Licensure@tn.gov
  Educator.Preparation@tn.gov

- TNCompass support

  (877) 314-1412

  support@tncompass.org

- Evaluation

  TEAM.Questions@tn.gov

Educator Effectiveness-TNCompass Support

Educator Effectiveness Team

Educator Effectiveness, LOE generation, and TNCompass

[2025-26 TEAM Evaluation Timeline](#)

Educator Effectiveness Team

Amy Floyd
- **Senior Director of Educator Effectiveness**

Tracy Riddle
- **Director of Educator Effectiveness and District Support**

Micah Fager
- **Director of TEAM Training and Support**

Sarah Brown
- **Senior Coordinator of Educator Recognition and Communication**

TEAM Website

Home	Evaluation Statute & Policy	Observation	Achievement	Growth Measures	Student Growth Portfolios	AGM
TN Charters	TNCompass	Roster Verification	TEAM Training	TEAM Best Practices Video Library	Office Hours	Contacts

search here …   Go

Evaluation Policy

According to state board rule 0520-02-01 and state board policy 5.201, shall implement annual evaluations for educators.

- All educators must be evaluated annually by a certified evaluator.

- Observation pacing for teachers, school services personnel, and library media specialists shall meet the requirements.

- Achievement measure choices for specific grade levels and/or content are dependent upon the assessments given each year.

- The student growth score comprises 35 percent of an educator's level of overall effectiveness.

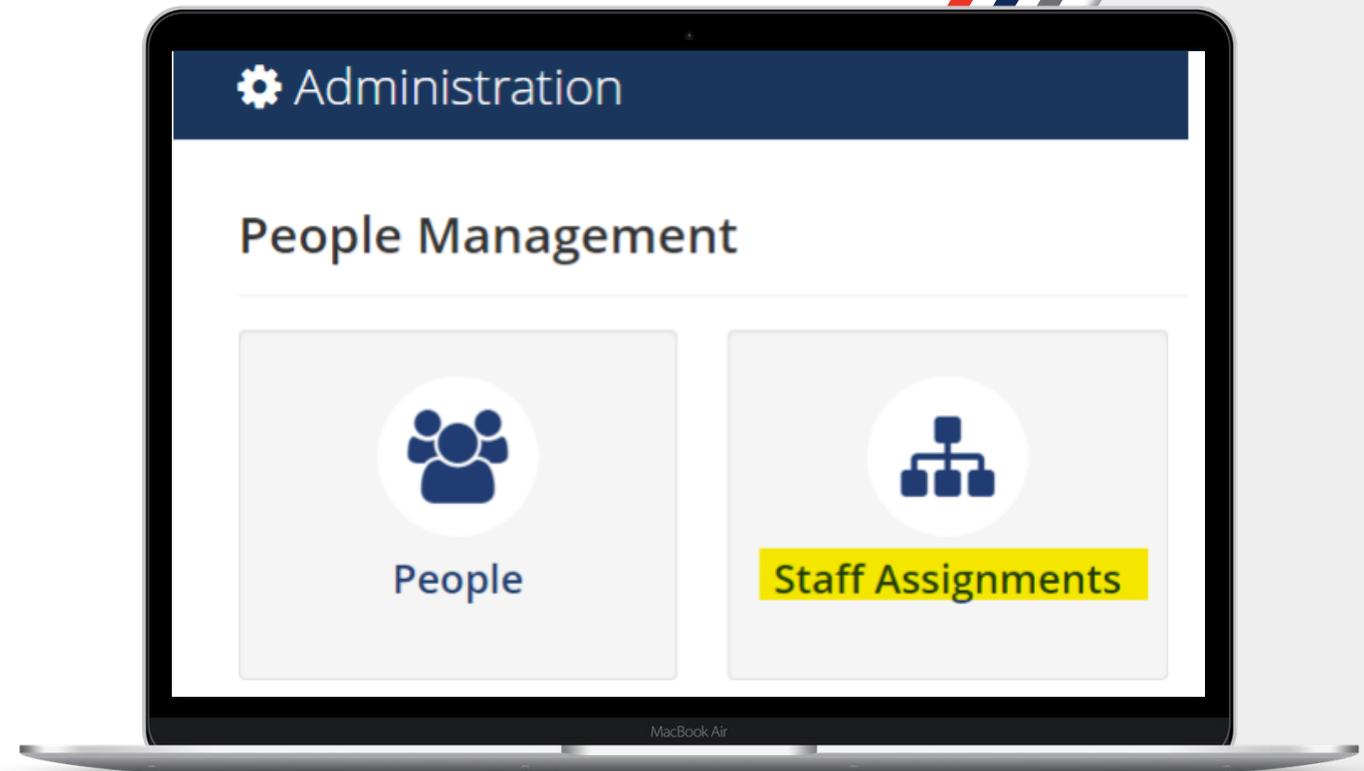# Complete Staffing in TNCompass

LEA Staff

- Non-Instructional
- Observer
- District Staff
- Instructional Supervisor
- Superintendent Designee
- Evaluation Administrator
- Licensure Administrator

School Staff

- Teacher
- Non-Instructional
- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Observer

[District and School Staff Assignments Roles and Permissions Quick Guide](#)

Enter Evaluation Data

Observation	TEAM-TN	Achievement Measures	TEAM-TN	Growth Measures	TEAM-TN

Observation Score

Licensure Status	Previous Year Individual Growth or Level of Overall Effectiveness [2]	Minimum Required Observations*	Minimum Required Observations per Domain*	Minimum Number of Minutes per School Year
Practitioner	Levels 1-4	All domains observed, with a minimum of three (3) domains observed in each semester and a minimum of three (3) formal observations.	3 Instruction 2 Planning 2 Environment	90 minutes
	Level 5	One (1) formal observation covering all domains first semester; two (2) walk-throughs second semester.	1 Instruction 1 Planning 1 Environment	60 minutes
Professional	Level 1	All domains observed, with a minimum of three (3) domains observed in each semester and a minimum of three (3) formal observations.	3 Instruction 2 Planning 2 Environment	90 minutes
	Levels 2-4	All domains observed with a minimum of two (2) domains observed in each semester and a minimum of two (2) formal observations.	2 Instruction 1 Planning 1 Environment	60 minutes
	Level 5	One (1) formal observation covering all domains first semester; two (2) walk-throughs second semester.	1 Instruction 1 Planning 1 Environment	60 minutes

Achievement Measure Score

- Every educator must have an achievement measure selection in TNCompass.
- Measure should align as closely as possible to what the educator teaches.
- Achievement measure criteria must be set when the selection is made.

Growth Measure Score

- Every educator must have a growth measure selection in TNCompass.
- For most educators this will be a school level TVAAS Composite.
- Measure should align as closely as possible to what the educator teaches.
- Teachers staffed in multiple schools may choose a district measure.

Email Support

- TEAM.Questions@tn.gov
  - TNCompass
  - Observations
  - Growth Measures
    - TVAAS
    - Alternative Growth Measure –Universal Reading Screener
  - Achievement Measures
  - Evaluation Training

- Portfolio.Questions@tn.gov
  - Portfolio
- RV.Questions@tn.gov
  - TVAAS Roster Verification

Email Support

- Educator.Licensure@tn.gov
  - Licensure questions
  - Professional Development Points (PDPs)
  - Experience

- TASL.Information@tn.gov
  - Tennessee Academy for School Leaders (TASL)
    - Academies
    - Credits

- TN.Universalscreener@tn.gov
  - Test Administration
  - Reporting

- TNED.Assessment@tn.gov
  - Assessment

Department Updates and Support, Early Literacy

Early Literacy Team

TN Department of Education

Overview

- Foundational Literacy Skills Plan Requirements and Communication
- Early Literacy Network
- Instructional Resources Available
- District/School Literacy Resources for Families

Foundational Literacy Skills Plans

Tennessee Literacy Success Act (TLSA)

- **Focus on Early Literacy**: Governor Lee, the General Assembly, and the department have made long-term, strategic investments to address Tennessee's literacy crisis.

- **2021 Special Session**: The TN General Assembly passed the TLSA to ensure students reach *grade-level reading proficiency* by the end of 3rd grade.

- **Statewide Collaboration**: TLSA engages students & families, districts & charter schools, teachers & higher education partners

- **Instructional Focus**: Emphasizes *foundational literacy skills* to drive improved reading outcomes for all students

TLSA Requirements for Charter Schools

The TLSA requires school districts and charter schools to:

- use foundational literacy skills instruction with a **phonics-based approach** for early reading instruction; *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-903(4); § 49-1-905(a)(1).*
- administer a **universal reading screener (URS)** to students in grades K-3 to identify students needing additional reading support and intervention and report the reading screener data to the department; *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-905(c).*
- use **English language textbooks** and instructional materials approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) and aligned with Tennessee academic standards, unless the district or charter school has been granted a waiver; and *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-905(b).*
- develop and maintain **foundational literacy skills plans.** *Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-905(f).*

Annual FLSP Resubmission Timeline

March-April

1

Communication to districts and charter schools regarding required submission.

May 1

2

Formstack opens for FLSP revisions and resubmissions.

May-June

3

Submissions reviewed and approved by the TDOE team.

July 1

4

Deadline for districts and charter schools to submit a revised FLSP.

Approvals for FLSPs may extend beyond the July 1 submission deadline.

What information is required in the FLSP?

Foundational Literacy Skills Plans include six sections for grades K-5:

- the amount of time devoted to foundational literacy skills instruction and a description of how that time is used;
- the adopted foundational skills instructional materials;
- the approved Universal Reading Screener;
- interventions and support available to students;
- a family notification plan (Home Literacy Report); and
- a professional development plan focused on foundational literacy skills for K-5 teachers.

How do charter schools submit updates to the FLSP?

- Submissions for districts and charter schools are completed via a Formstack.
- A link to the Formstack is shared each spring in the CUFD and Instructional Insider Newsletter.
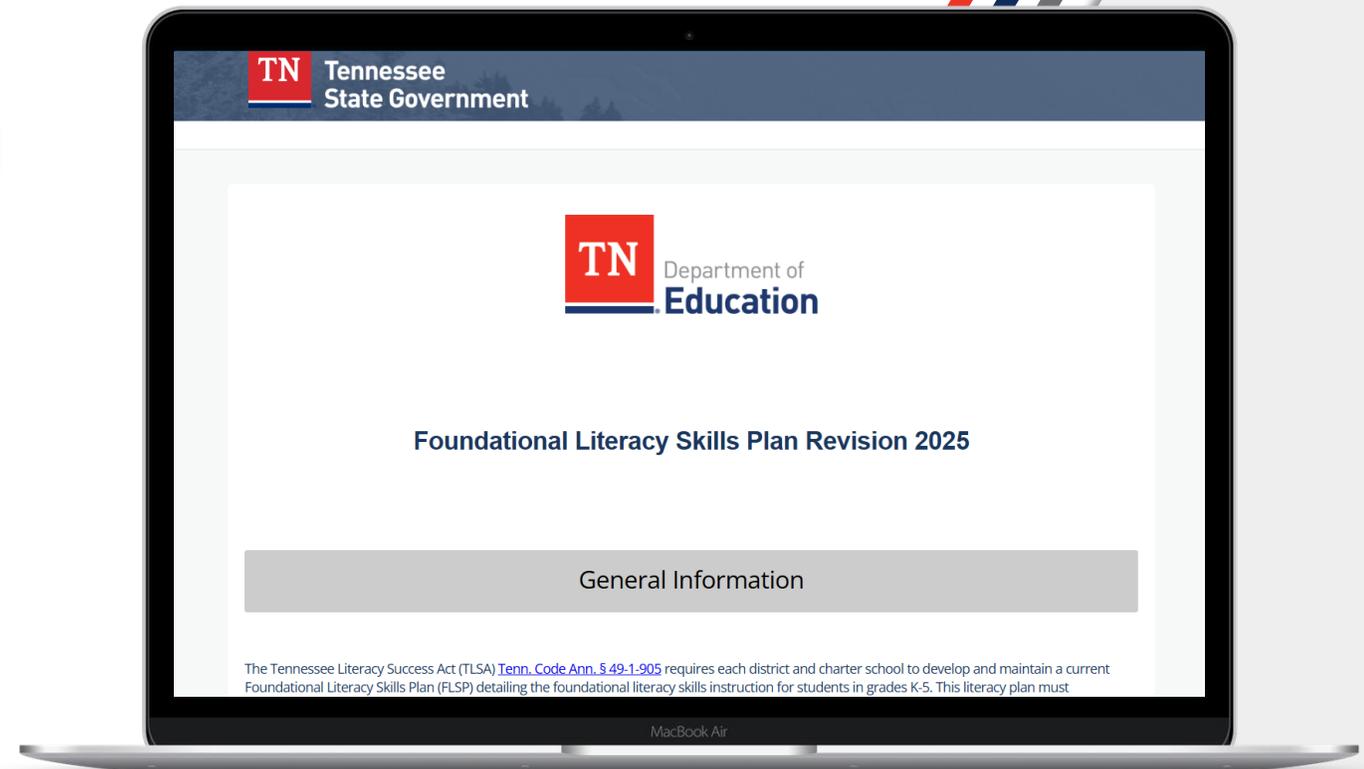
FLSP Resubmission Support

We encourage all districts and charter schools to use these support resources as you revise and resubmit your literacy plan.

These resources can be found on Best for All Central. [FLSP Resubmission Resources](#)

- **Foundational Literacy Skills Plan Toolkit**
  - _Revision_ support for narratives and artifacts
- **Guidance for Formstack FLSP Submissions**
  - _Formstack_ submission support
- **TLSA FLSP Guidance Document for Districts and Charter Schools**
  - _Resubmission_ guideline support
- **FAQ for FLSP Revisions and Submissions**
  - _Answers for most frequently asked questions during the revision and submission process_
- **FLSP Support Learning Session**
  - _Pre-recorded webinar providing FLSP revision and submission supports_

Early Literacy Network 2.0 Support

ELN 2.0 Offerings

- In-person Regional Convenings
- Virtual Learning Sessions
- Asynchronous Modules

Content
- Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction
- High-Quality Instructional Materials
- Intellectual Preparation
- Instructional Practice Guide and Learning Walks
- Scaffolding and Access Points

ELN 2.0 Meeting Dates 2025-26

Virtual Learning Session 1	In-Person Regional Convening 1 (Locations TBA)
East - August 12, 2025, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET Middle - August 13, 2025, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET West - August 14, 2025, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET	East - August 19, 2025, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. ET Middle - August 20, 2025, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. CT West - August 21, 2025, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. CT
Virtual Learning Session 2	In-Person Regional Convening 2 (Locations TBA)
East - September 23, 2025, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET Middle - September 24, 2025, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET West - September 25, 2025, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET	East - November 4, 2025, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. ET Middle - November 5, 2025, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. CT West - November 6, 2025, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. CT
Virtual Learning Session 3	In-Person Regional Convening 3 (Locations TBA)
East - January 13, 2026, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET Middle - January 14, 2026, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET West - January 15, 2026, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET	East - May 19, 2026, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. ET Middle - May 20, 2026, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. CT West - May 21, 2026, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. CT
Virtual Learning Session 4	
East - May 5, 2026, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET Middle - May 6, 2026, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET West - May 7, 2026, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET	
Virtual Learning Session 5	
East - June 9, 2026, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET Middle - June 10, 2026, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET West - June 11, 2026, 8:30-10:00 a.m. CT/9:30-11:00 a.m. ET	

Literacy Resources

HQIM Implementation Resources

- Tennessee Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement
  - This supplemental resource follows evidenced-based research and was carefully crafted in order to build a solid foundation for early literacy. This supplement uses a systematic and explicit approach to instruction so that all students can gain the foundational skills necessary to become proficient readers.
- Foundational Skills Instructional Practice Guide & Knowledge Instructional Practice Guide:
  - These resources established clear expectations for foundational skills and knowledge-building instruction, ensuring consistency across the state. They also provided a framework for delivering meaningful and consistent feedback to teachers, helping to strengthen instruction and enhance HQIM implementation.
- HQIM Framework:
  - This framework established a structured approach to HQIM implementation, outlining key stages for districts to assess their progress, identify areas for growth, and strategically plan for continuous improvement.
- Intellectual Preparation Protocols
  - Unit Preparation Protocols, Lesson Preparation Protocols, and Student Work Analysis Protocols provide educators with a structured, intentional approach to lesson planning using HQIM. These protocols are adaptable to any approved district curriculum, fostering collaboration while emphasizing the most critical instructional components—ensuring teachers focus their time and energy on what matters most for student learning.

K-12 Standard Resources

- K-12 Standards Guides
  - The ELA standards guides are a supplemental resource to the Tennessee ELA standards that are designed to provide instructional leaders and teachers with a deeper understanding of each standard. This understanding will enhance teachers' ability to facilitate the use of high-quality instructional materials in the classroom. The guides include four sections for each standard:
    - An unpacking of key elements of the standard
      - A glossary of key terms in the standard
      - Examples of how the standard can be represented in classroom tasks
      - A snapshot of the vertical progression of the standard
- Introduction to ELA Standards Guides for Grades K-2- TeachALL Training
- Introduction to ELA Standards Guides for Grades 3-5- TeachALL Training
- Introduction to ELA Standards Guides 6-12 Webinar A
- Introduction to ELA Standards Guides 6-12 Webinar B

Cycle of Continuous Improvement

- Foundational Skills Instructional Practice Guide & Knowledge Instructional Practice Guide:
  - These resources established clear expectations for foundational skills and knowledge-building instruction, ensuring consistency across the state. They also provided a framework for delivering meaningful and consistent feedback to teachers, helping to strengthen instruction and enhance HQIM implementation.

- Intellectual Preparation Protocols
  - Unit Preparation Protocols, Lesson Preparation Protocols, and Student Work Analysis Protocols provide educators with a structured, intentional approach to lesson planning using HQIM. These protocols are adaptable to any approved district curriculum, fostering collaboration while emphasizing the most critical instructional components—ensuring teachers focus their time and energy on what matters most for student learning.
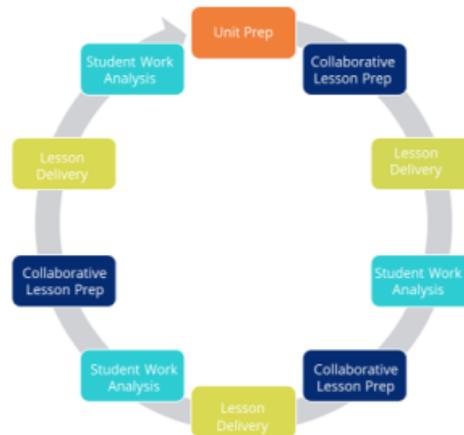
Professional Development Literacy Resources

▪ Continuous professional learning and development are essential for staying current with best practices, advancing skills, and improving outcomes for students. By investing in ongoing growth, educators remain adaptive, informed, and empowered to meet the evolving needs of their learners.

▪ Available on TeachALL
  – Early Reading Training Course 1
  – Early Reading Training Course 2
  – Secondary Literacy Training Course 1
  – Secondary Literacy Training Course 2
  – Early Literacy Advanced Courses
  – Foundational Skills IPG On-Demand
  – ELN Asynchronous Modules Year 1
  – ELN Asynchronous Modules Year 2
  – Coming soon! Foundations First: Pre-K Reading Training

District/School Literacy Resources to Support Families

District/Charter Resources for Families

- **District, Educator, and Community Resources to Support Families with Reading**
  - This page provides a rich assortment of family toolkits aimed at equipping parents and caregivers with the essential knowledge and practical strategies necessary to actively engage in their child's education. Whether it is understanding testing procedures, supporting literacy development, or learning how to communicate effectively with teachers, these toolkits provide families with actionable tools to promote their child's growth and help them thrive in their learning journey.

- **Interactive Decodable Book Series**
  - The Interactive Decodable Book Series is available at no cost for all Tennessee families and educators to support reading! This exciting resource is designed to support reading practice and help young learners develop stronger literacy skills. Each book in the series features engaging stories carefully crafted to align with foundational reading skills, ensuring children can practice decoding words in a meaningful way. These books also include interactive elements to make learning fun and engaging, allowing families to actively participate in their child's reading journey or to provide extra reading practice at school.

District/Charter Resources for Families

- **Pre-K to Kindergarten Transition Resources for Families**
  - Families can use simple strategies to help children start school strong. This resource provides Pre-K and kindergarten families with simple tips, helpful links, fun games, and valuable information that support children's early learning.

- **Educator Resources for Supporting Sounds First Learning At Home**
  - Early literacy begins at home, and when educators provide families with guidance, resources, and strategies, they empower caregivers to reinforce essential reading skills outside the classroom. By fostering a partnership between school and home, educators help create a literacy-rich environment where children can practice and build confidence in their reading abilities. Phonemic awareness—the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken words—is a foundational skill that directly impacts a child's ability to decode and comprehend text. When families are equipped with effective tools and activities, they can engage in meaningful literacy experiences that support their child's reading journey. Use these resources to empower families in their essential role of nurturing strong, confident readers!
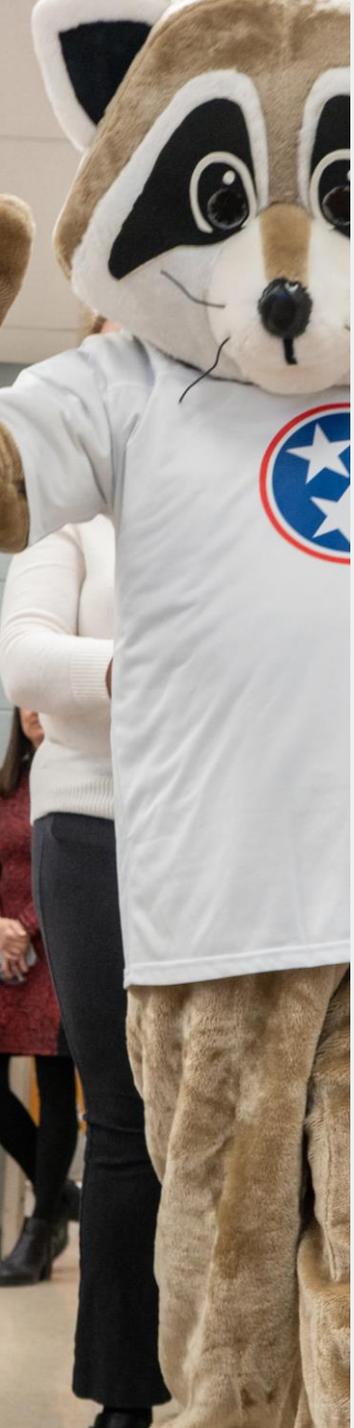
District/Charter Resources for Families

- **Sounds First Videos for Families**
  - These videos model games and activities for families to work with children at home to build sound awareness.

- **Family Literacy Nights Turnkey Package**
  - The files on this page support districts as they plan and execute the turnkey Family Literacy Nights. The Family Literacy Night offers school districts and community partners an engagement opportunity that provides knowledge in a parent-friendly way on how children learn to read and how families can support their children as they grow.

District/Charter Resources for Families Coming Soon...

- BookBlitz Turnkey Resource
- StoryBook Stroll Resource

Thank You!

Contact Info or Questions?

Earlyreading.training@tn.gov

Best Practices to Impact Student Achievement

Crystal McCarver, *Senior Director of Charter and Virtual School Programs*

TN Department of **Education**

Promising Practices Grant

- $3M one-time allocation
- To continue and disseminate promising practices
- Available to Reward Schools in 2022 accountability cycle

Recipients

- KIPP Nashville College Prep Elementary (KNCPE)
- KIPP Academy Nashville (KAN)
- KIPP Nashville College Prep Middle (KNCP)
- KIPP Antioch College Prep Middle (KACP)
- Memphis Grizzles Prep
- Memphis Rise Academy

- Memphis School of Excellence Elementary-Cordova
- Nashville Classical East
- Purpose Preparatory Academy
- Rocketship United Academy
- Valor Flagship Academy
- Valor Voyager Academy

Three Key Practices

Focus on Culture

- Staff and student culture
- Serve the whole child-social, cognitive, emotional, and physical
- Structures, procedures, and routines

Data-Driven Decision Making

- Internal interim assessments
- Regular meetings to review assessments and student work
- Personalized learning
- Tiered interventions

Professional Development

- Structured in scope and sequence
- Up to 3 weeks
- Specific leadership training
- Instructional coaching
- Continual feedback for improvement

Charter School Funding

Maryanne Durski, *Chief Financial Officer*

Caryn Burkholder, *Director of Operational Data Strategy*

Charter School Funding

Maryanne Durski

Chief Financial Officer / Finance / Operations

TN Department of **Education**

Agenda

- Public Chapter 456 Changes
- Overview of charter funding
- New charter schools
- Continuing charter schools
- District considerations

Public Chapter 456 Changes

TISA State Funding- Direct Payment

- The department is now mandated to disburse the state share of TISA funds directly to public charter schools.

- For charter schools authorized by the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC) or Achievement School District (ASD), the department will allocate funds directly to the respective authorizer.

- A public charter school's generated TISA funds will be split between state and local funding responsibilities, based on the school's geographic LEA.

- The state will disburse the state share of base, weights, and all the direct funding. As with LEA allocations, funding for postsecondary assessments will be withheld at the state level.

Local Funding Payments and Adjustments

- The geographic LEA is responsible for providing payments to charter schools for the required local contribution of the school's generated TISA funds, the additional local per pupil funds, and current year enrollment adjustments. This includes average per-pupil state and local funds for new and expanding charter schools.

- LEAs are now required to adjust local payments to public charter schools at least **five times** per year– in October, **December**, February, **April**, and June– based on changes in revenue or student membership.

Dispute Resolution

- New procedures have been added to the TISA Guide to address charter school disputes regarding final funding allocations

  1. Initial Review by Charter School
  2. LEA Review and Response
  3. Escalation to the State
  4. State Review and Resolution

Overview of Charter Funding

Charter School Funding

- Charter schools receive one hundred percent (100%) of state and local funds received by the LEA pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-14-01-.03

- Charter funding is **more** than TISA funding
  - Step 1 – TISA funding generated by charter school ADM
  - Step 2 – Additional per-pupil local funding
  - Step 3 – Changes in enrollment

Charter School Funding

- Initial funding is based on prior year Average Daily Membership (ADM)

- Charter school funding is unique in that funding is adjusted to reflect current year ADM

- Adjustments are made by TDOE in October, **December**, February, **April**, and June

- Final adjustment is made within 5 business days of district's completed and approved Final Expenditure Report (FER)

Charter School Funding

- Charter school funding has three steps
    1. TISA funding calculated by the formula
    2. Additional local funding
    3. Adjustment for current year change in enrollment (increase or decrease)
- New charter schools are funded differently in year one

New Charter Schools – Initial Funding

New Charter School Funding

- Initial funding is based on the anticipated enrollment in the charter agreement
- Authorizer and charter school may agree on a projection of enrollment not to exceed any enrollment caps or maximums set forth in the charter agreement

New Charter School Funding

- Initial funding allocation is based on the per-student average of all state and local funds received by the geographic LEA in which the charter school is located

- This is Step 3 in the overall charter school funding calculation

- If current year budget for the geographic LEA is not approved in ePlan at the beginning of the year, then prior year actual (if FER has been approved in ePlan) or budgeted revenue (state and local) is used in the calculation

- Step 3 payments for new and expanding charter schools are made by the LEA

Sample New Charter Funding - Initial

STEP 3: Current Year Enrollment Adjustments			
Geographic LEA Actual Revenues to District*			$ 187,656,446.00
Geographic LEA State Funds (Excluding ACT- Administered by State)		+	$ 342,532,262.72
Total Funding		=	$ 530,188,708.72
Total Funding to District			$ 530,188,708.72
Projected ADM (all schools within bounds)		/	50,751.03
Average Per Pupil Local and State Funds		=	$ 10,446.86
Estimated Change (Positive/Negative) in ADM			765
Average Per Pupil Local and State Funds (Excluding ACT)		x	$ 10,446.86
Current Year Change in Enrollment Funding		=	$ 7,991,844.94

Continuing Charter Schools – Initial Funding

Continuing Charter Schools – Step 1

- TISA calculation is done for each charter school, base, weights, and direct funding
- Prior year ADM is used for calculations
- Per Chapter 456 change, the state's share of the TISA allocation is calculated and shown in the table. As with LEA allocations, ACT funding is withheld at the state level.

STEP 1: TISA Calculation - FY26 Projections						
Geographic District		**District ID**				
School	Sample Charter			**Combo School ID**		
Element	**Amount**	**Students/Services**				**Funding**
Base	$ 7,295.00	383.97				$ 2,801,027.81
WEIGHTS	**Weight**	**Students/Services**				**Funding**
Economically Disadvantaged	25%	203.95				$ 371,950.72
Concentrated Poverty	5%	383.97				$ 140,051.39
Small	5%	-				$ -
Sparse	5%	-				$ -
ULN 1	15%	13.32				$ 14,577.84
ULN 2	20%	106.20				$ 154,940.40
ULN 3	40%	17.14				$ 50,013.08
ULN 4	60%	30.79				$ 134,787.28
ULN 5	70%	2.00				$ 10,213.00
ULN 6	75%	13.74				$ 75,199.29
ULN 7	80%	3.25				$ 18,967.00
ULN 8	100%	0.38				$ 2,782.90
ULN 9	125%	0.18				$ 1,621.11
ULN 10	150%	0.13				$ 1,398.21
DIRECT						
K-3 Literacy	$ 500.00	-				$ -
4th Grade Supports	$ 500.00	-				$ -
CTE	Varies	-				$ -
ACT (per test)	$ 43.00	30.78				$ 1,323.54
Charter	$ 500.47	383.97				$ 192,163.89
OUTCOMES						
TBD						
STATE AND LOCAL BREAKOUT	**State**		**Local**		**Total**	
Base	34.12%	$ 955,648.21	65.88%	$ 1,845,379.60	$ 2,801,027.81	
Weights	52.26%	$ 510,348.73	47.74%	$ 466,153.48	$ 976,502.21	
Direct	100.00%	$ 193,487.43	0.00%	$ -	$ 193,487.43	
TOTAL		$ 1,659,484.38		$ 2,311,533.08	$ 3,971,017.46	
TOTAL (Excluding ACT)		$ 1,658,160.84		$ 2,311,533.08	$ 3,969,693.92	

Continuing Charter Schools – Step 2

- Additional per-pupil local funding for the geographic LEA is calculated
- For initial estimates and allocation, local funding is based on prior year approved budget in ePlan
  - Current year local budgeted revenue is used, if available

STEP 2: Projected Additional Local Per Pupil				
ePlan Approved Local Budget (as of 6/16/24)			$	516,657,612.86
ePlan Approved Local Debt Service		-	$	-
ePlan Approved MDHA (MNPS Only)		-	$	-
ePlan Approved Trustees Commission		-	$	7,500,926.65
Projected Geographic LEA Revenues to District		=	$	509,156,686.21
Geographic LEA Actual Revenues to District			$	509,156,686.21
Local Required Match		-	$	255,545,736.61
Projected Additional Local Funds		=	$	253,610,949.60
Projected Additional Local Funds			$	253,610,949.60
Projected ADM (all schools within bounds)		/		111,131.23
Projected Additional Local Per Student		=	$	2,282.09
Projected Additional Local Per Student			$	2,282.09
Charter School ADM		x		409.12
Additional Local Funds for Prior Yr Enrollment		=	$	933,635.80

Continuing Charter Schools – Step 3

- If charter school is expanding, step 3 is used to estimate the additional allocation for expected expansion
  - Overall per-pupil funding amount for geographic LEA is calculated
  - Includes:
    - District TISA – state and required local contribution
    - District additional local funding
  - Per pupil amount is multiplied by anticipated increase in enrollment
  - State only includes projected ADM for new charter schools or charter schools adding a grade level

STEP 3: Projected Current Year Enrollment Adjustments				
Geographic LEA Actual Revenues to District				$516,657,612.86
Geographic LEA State Funds (excluding ACT and Charter Direct Funding)			+	$839,876,137.70
Total Funding			=	$1,356,533,750.56
Total Funding to District				$1,356,533,750.56
Projected ADM (all schools within bounds)			/	111,131.23
Average Per Pupil Local and State Funds			=	$12,206.59
Estimated Change (Positive/Negative) in ADM				50
Average Per Pupil Local and State Funds			x	$12,206.59
Current Year Change in Enrollment Funding			=	$610,329.50

Adjustments to Funding

Adjustments to Funding

- Authorizing district local revenue numbers are updated as budgets are submitted and approved in ePlan
- ADM for adjusting charter school allocations are pulled from TEDS on October 16, December 16, February 16, April 16 and June 16

Adjustments to Funding – New Charters

- Only Step 3 is used to make any adjustments in the allocation for a change in ADM

- Local revenues are updated as available from ePlan

- Current year charter school ADM is multiplied by the updated per-pupil amount to determine the adjusted allocation

- Repeated following October, December, February, April, and June ADM pulls from TEDS

STEP 3: Projected Current Year Enrollment Adjustments			
Geographic LEA Actual Revenues to District			$187,656,446.00
Geographic LEA State Funds (excluding ACT and Charter Direct Funding)		+	$342,532,262.72
Total Funding		=	$530,188,708.72
Total Funding to District			$530,188,708.72
Projected ADM (all schools within bounds)		/	50,751.03
Average Per Pupil Local and State Funds		=	$10,446.86
Estimated Change (Positive/Negative) in ADM			-225
Average Per Pupil Local and State Funds		x	$10,446.86
Current Year Change in Enrollment Funding		=	($2,350,542.63)

Adjustments to Funding – Continuing Charters

- Step 1 (TISA calculation) remains the same throughout the year
- Step 2 is updated using local revenue data from the geographic LEA's approved budget in ePlan and current year LEA ADM
  - This updates the additional local revenue per pupil amount
- Step 3 is used to make any adjustments in current year ADM
- Repeated following December, February, April and June ADM pulls from TEDS

Final True-up

Final True-Up

- Once the geographic LEA completes the State Funds Final Expenditure Report (FER), the final allocation for each charter school is calculated by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE)
- This generally occurs in September or October if the FER is delayed
- Any amounts owed **by** the charter school or **to** the charter school are settled between the geographic LEA and the charter school

District Considerations

District Considerations

- Adjustments to charter school allocations must be made following the October, December, February, April and June ADM pulls from TEDS

- TDOE will calculate revised allocations and share with charter schools and geographic LEAs

- Geographic LEA may choose to make adjustments more frequently if they wish

District Considerations

- Districts pay the charter schools at least 9 times per year from the funds they receive from the state and local funding body
- Be sure to reflect both state and local shares of the payments on the general ledger
- Do not show the total payment as TISA – that is not correct

District Considerations

- For charters authorized by the Tennessee Public Charter School Commission (TPCSC), the charter school allocations are withheld from the TISA payments to the geographic LEAs and transferred to the TPCSC by TDOE
- Initial allocations are withheld in full
- Withheld amounts are revised following the ADM adjustments in October, December, February, April and June

District Considerations

- Establish good communications with charter schools to stay aware of any changes in enrollment that may impact allocations before they happen

- Communicate known changes to the charter schools, such as changes in revenue projections for their planning purposes

Thank You!

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Licensure Overview

Licensure Team

Agenda:

- Educator Licensure Overview
- Emergency Credentials
- Renewals
- Advancements
- Reactivations
- Questions

Educator Licensure Overview

- The State Board's rule and policies determine which aspects of licensure requirements can be established by the Department.

Statute

State Board Rules

State Board Policies

Department Guidance
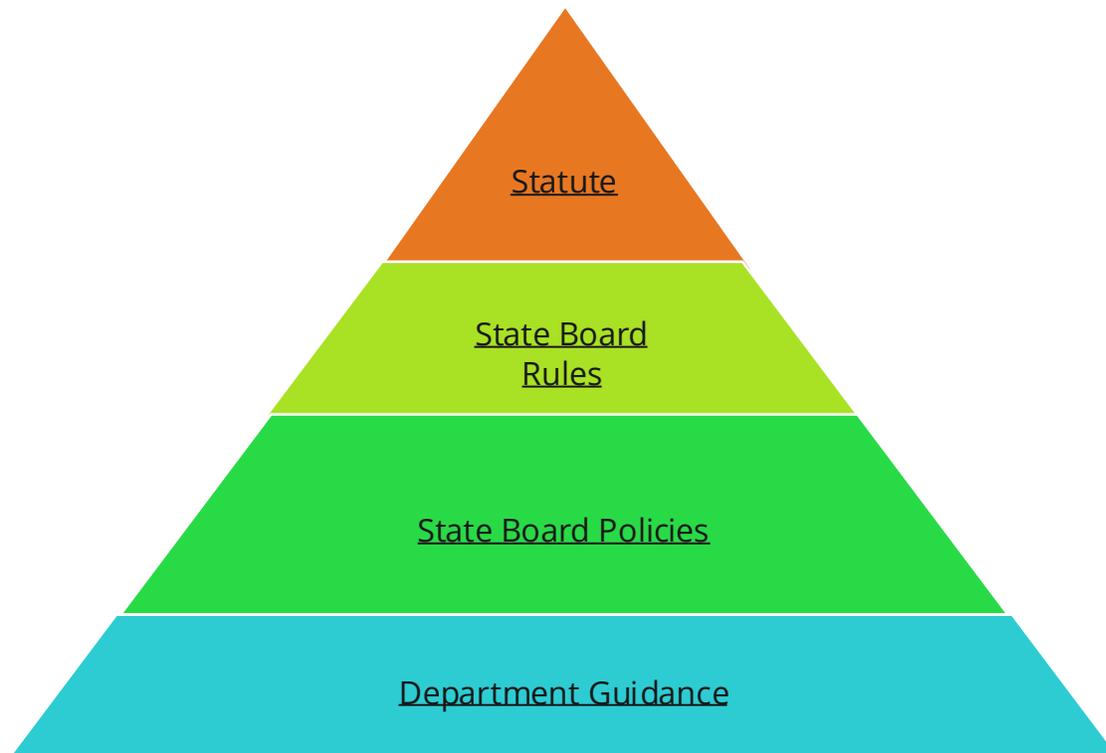
Emergency Credentials

- An emergency credential is **not** a license.
- Educators enrolled in a job-embedded program MUST hold a practitioner license during their job-embedded clinical practice.
- Application window for emergency credentials opens **July 1st**
- All emergency credentials expire on **June 30th**
- Emergency credentials CANNOT be issued for positions requiring an *ILL* or a *School Service Personnel License.*

Renewals:

- A renewal of an **active** educator license resets its validity period.

- *Professional- 2 yrs. of experience within the validity of the license.

Practitioner 1st
- EPP completion and Recommendation
- Assessments
- TLSA

Practitioner
- 30 PDPs
- TLSA

Professional
- 60 PDPS
- OR
- 2 yrs. of Experience
- TLSA
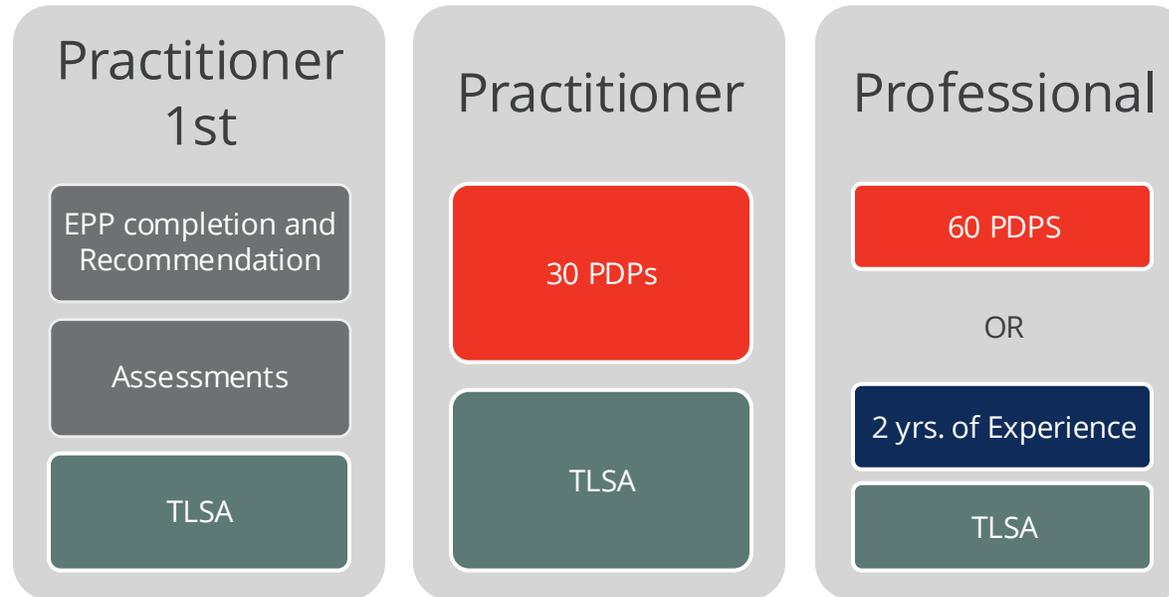
Advancement:

▪ An advancement is **transitioning** from a practitioner-level license to a professional-level license.

Practitioner 1st

- EPP completion and Recommendation
- Out-of-State Professional License
- 30 PDPs/ Director's Recommendation
- 25 Months of Experience
- TLSA

Practitioner

- Out-of-State Professional License
- 30 PDPs/ Director's Recommendation
- 25 Months of Experience
- TLSA
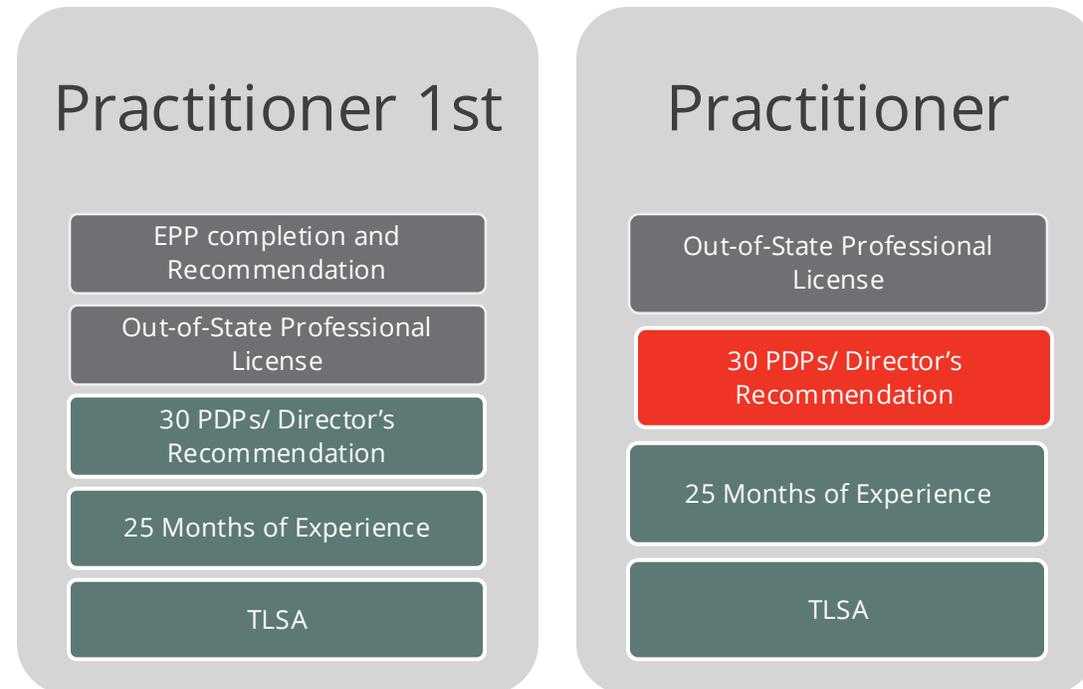
Reactivation:

- A reactivation is reactivating an **inactive** license.

Practitioner / Other
EPP completion and Recommendation
AND
Out-of-State Professional License
NBPTS
Current Content Assessments
TLSA

Professional
60 PDPS or 2 yrs. of Experience
OR
Out-of-State Professional License
NBPTS
Current Content Assessments
TLSA
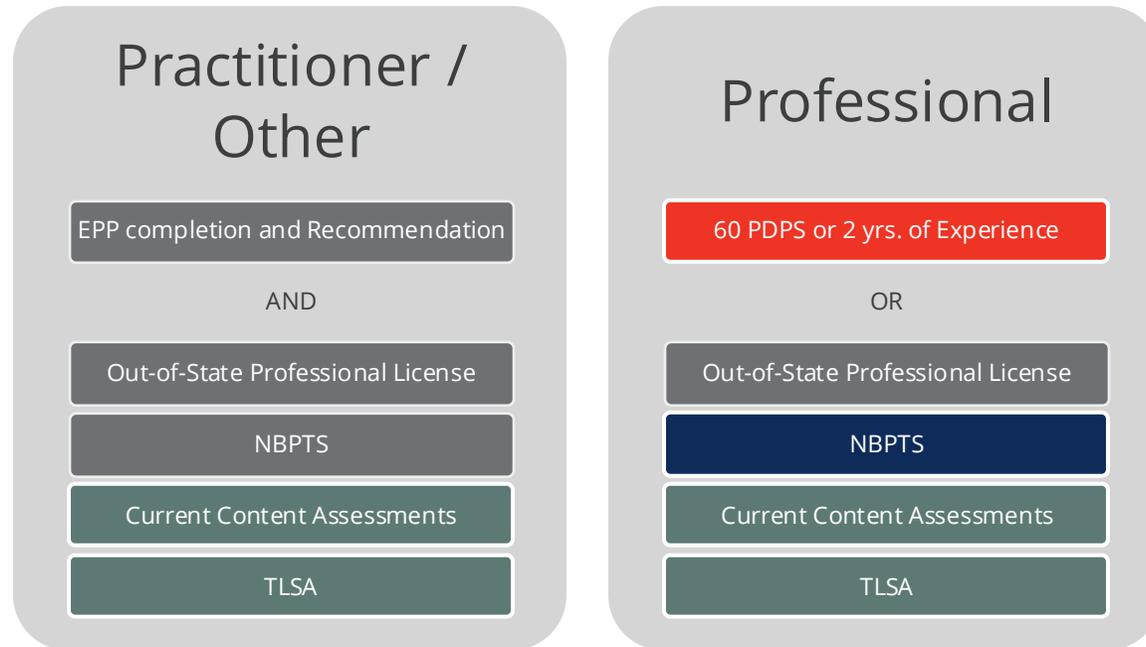
Thank You!

West TN: Cordrea Nance – Cordrea.Nance@tn.gov

Middle TN: Corey Cummings –Corey.Cummings@tn.gov

East TN: Brooke Ruoff – Brooke.Ruoff@tn.gov

Special Education and Student Support

Special Education and Student Support Team

TN Department of **Education**

Special Education and Student Supports

Assistant Commissioner
Dr. Jennifer Jordan

Senior Director of Special Education
Susan Usery

Senior Manager of SPED Operations and Oversight/Gifted
Laurie Bruce

Senior Director of IDEA Data
Zac Stone

Director of Learning Acceleration
Tess Yates

Senior Director of Student Support
Joann Runion

Senior Manager of Communication and Engagement
Michael Holman

Senior Manager of Professional Learning and Low-Incidence
Dr. Alison Gauld

Director of Psychological & Behavioral Services
Dr. April Ebbinger

Director of IDEA General Supervision and LEA Support
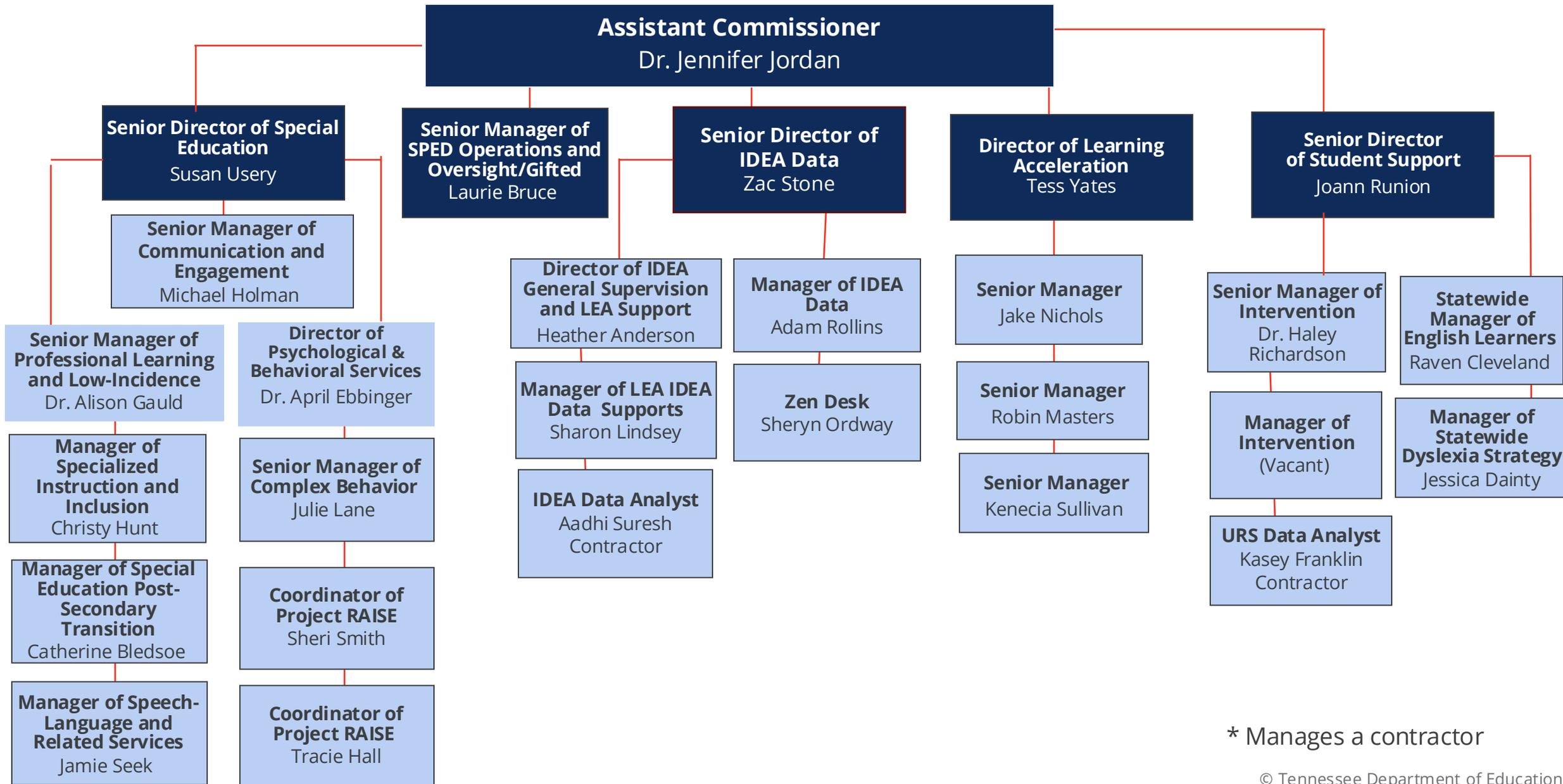Heather Anderson

Manager of IDEA Data
Adam Rollins

Senior Manager
Jake Nichols

Senior Manager of Intervention
Dr. Haley Richardson

Statewide Manager of English Learners
Raven Cleveland

Manager of Specialized Instruction and Inclusion
Christy Hunt

Senior Manager of Complex Behavior
Julie Lane

Manager of LEA IDEA Data Supports
Sharon Lindsey

Zen Desk
Sheryn Ordway

Senior Manager
Robin Masters

Manager of Intervention
(Vacant)

Manager of Statewide Dyslexia Strategy
Jessica Dainty

Manager of Special Education Post-Secondary Transition
Catherine Bledsoe

Coordinator of Project RAISE
Sheri Smith

IDEA Data Analyst
Aadhi Suresh
Contractor

Senior Manager
Kenecia Sullivan

URS Data Analyst
Kasey Franklin
Contractor

Manager of Speech-Language and Related Services
Jamie Seek

Coordinator of Project RAISE
Tracie Hall

* Manages a contractor

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Special Education Programming Supports

Eligibility & Evaluation

Behavioral Supports

Low Incidence Disabilities

Specialized Instruction & Inclusion

Secondary Transition

Professional Learning

Recruitment & Retention

Speech-Language & Related Services

Student Support Programming

RTI^2 Academics + Behavior

High Dosage Low Ratio Tutoring

Dyslexia/ Characteristics of Dyslexia

Summer Programs

English Learner Instruction

English Language Development Standards

Individual Learning Plan Development for ILPs and ILP-Ds

Data Based Decision Making

Free Access to Special Education Resources for All Districts

https://www.specialedconnection.com/

Online resource for guidance on special education policy and legal developments.

https://tndoe-ds.lrp.com/login/index.php

Online self-paced e-courses for educators on a variety of special education topics.

Images retrieved from http://lrp.com

Tennessee Technical Assistance Network (TN-TAN)

provides school districts, administrators, educators, and families access to free high-quality training, resources, and supports designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, ages 3-22. See below for more information about our areas of support.

[TN-TAN website](#)

Intensive Behavior

TRIAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides technical assistance for complex behavior support needs and associated training. Supports include direct instruction for staff on behavior assessment and intervention implementation, as well as ongoing coaching to help students engage within their least restrictive environments.

Autism

TRIAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides training, consultation, and coaching services designed to support educators in their classrooms and develop school and system-wide supports to address needs specific to students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

RTI²-A+RTI²-B

Tennessee Tiered Supports Center assists districts and schools as they build and implement an aligned student support system. The center provides training, coaching, and resources for building an aligned framework for tiered academic and behavioral supports.

Secondary Transition

Transition Tennessee provides a range of services to transition stakeholders to improve in-school and post-school outcomes for transition-aged students (14-22) with disabilities. Supports include tiered technical assistance for in-school transition stakeholders and resources and services specific to educator and family needs.

Assistive Technology

The Assistive Technology Project (ATP) assists districts and staff in building capacity to provide assistive technology supports for students with disabilities. Supports include strategic action planning, professional development, direct coaching for staff, and access to AT equipment-lending libraries for assessment trials.

Family Engagement

The Arc Tennessee partners with schools and caregivers of students with disabilities. Family Engagement provides educator training and technical assistance to schools, integrates family supports into existing school networks and strategic plans, and connects families to available services and family-friendly special education resources in order to ensure a successful school experience.
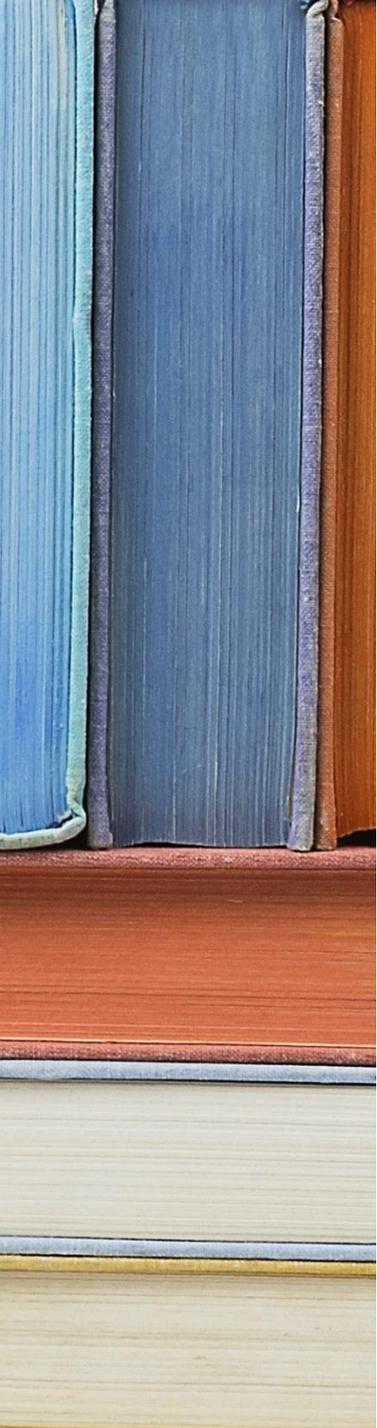
Engagement Opportunities

- [Let's Talk About Speech and Language](#)
  - Third Thursday of each month from 10-11 am CT
  - Opportunities to connect with other SLPs, SLPAs, and SLTs
  - Review updates and questions

- [Assessment Specialist Communities of Practice](#)

- Communities of Practice Student Support
  - [2025-26 Student Support Technical Support Calendar](#)
  - [2025-26 Characteristics of Dyslexia](#)
  - [2025-26 English Learner Instruction](#)
  - 2025-26 Response to Instruction and Intervention Academics and Behavior (*coming soon*)

- [Statewide Conference in Chattanooga](#)
  - October 28 & 29, 2025

Digital Assessment Library

- Access to an unlimited library of 42+ assessments across domains.
- Electronic administration of assessments via Q-Interactive will be included.
- Contact April.Ebbinger@tn.gov

https://www.pearsonassessments.com/content/dam/school/global/clinical/us/assets/dal/dals-guide.pdf

Resources

- [IDEA Part B Regulations](#)
- [Rules of the Tennessee Department of Education & State Board of Education](#)
- [TDOE Special Education Webpage](#)
- [Early Childhood Special Education Webpage](#)
- [IEP Self-Assessment Rubric](#)
- [Diploma Decision Guide](#)
- [Timelines in Special Education](#)
- [PWN One-Pager](#)
- [RTI Resources](#)
- [TDOE English Learners](#)
- [Dyslexia Advisory Council](#)
- Learning Acceleration Webpage
  - HDLR Tutoring
  - Summer Program

Questions

For questions, please email

Special.populations@tn.gov

Legislative Updates and Waivers

Marlee Lizarraga, Associate Counsel for Charter

Legal Resources Toolkit

- Guidance Memos
- FAQs and Other Guidance Documents
- Public Notices
- **Hot off the presses!**
  - Family Leave for Birth or Placement of Child Guidance - Revised June 2025
  - Retired K-12 Personnel Reemployment - Issued 7/1/2025
  - Required Trainings for Local Education Agencies – Revised July 2025
  - Physical Activity Requirements Guidance - Issued August 2025
  - Local Education Agency and Public Charter School Waiver Requests

Legislative Report

- **Tenn. Code Ann. 49-1-201(c)**
  - Duties of the commissioner include the duty to: "Distribute in electronic format to the local boards of education, at the conclusion of each regular session of the general assembly, copies of newly enacted public chapters pertaining to public education."

- [2025 Legislative Report.pdf](2025%20Legislative%20Report.pdf)

- **Some highlights …**

Public Chapter 275

Changes to the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002

TN Department of **Education**

Chapter 275 of the Public Acts of 2025

- Governing bodies that have at least one public charter school that has been in operation for at least one year can apply for replication in the same LEA, directly to the LEA or the commission.
- Allows a public charter school sponsor to apply directly to the commission to open a new public charter school, where:
  - the commission has overturned an LEA decision to deny a public charter school application on three (3) separate occasions within a three-consecutive-year period, then, for the five-consecutive-year period immediately following the date on which the commission overturned the LEA's decision to deny a public charter school application within the last three (3) years.
- Shifts various responsibilities in the Act from the department to the state board.

Public Chapter 103

Wireless Communication Devices

Wireless Communication Devices PROHIBITED

- Schools are required to implement a policy **prohibiting students from displaying, using, or accessing a wireless communication device** during instructional time.
- Wireless communication device includes:
  - cellular telephones
  - tablet computers
  - laptop computers
  - gaming devices
- School policy may authorize a teacher to withhold a student's "cell phone" during instructional time if student is non-compliant with the policy.

Required Exceptions

The policy shall:

- Authorize a teacher to allow for educational purposes;

- Permit during an emergency *or* to manage a student's health;

- Permit when its use is included in a student's IEP, Section 504 Plan or individualized learning plan; and

- Permit when being used by a student with a disability for the operation of assistive technology to increase, maintain, or improve the student's functional capabilities.

Special Considerations

- Establishment of a process for notification to parents of emergencies is required
- Publishing the policy on the school website is required
- A student may need the wireless communication device to manage their own health
(e.g., a phone to measure blood glucose levels for a student with diabetes)
  - Student's support plan (e.g., IEP or 504 plan) should list the device
  - Teachers and other employees should be informed that the support plan includes access to the device
  - Confiscating a wireless communication device for a student with health concerns could violate constitutional protections as well as the IDEA or Section 504
- Be prepared for frustrated parents
  - The phone contract doesn't need to be in the student's name for the school to withhold the device

Public Chapter 244

School Searches

Chapter 244 of the Public Acts of 2025

Effective April 24, 2025

PC 244 revised three sections of the **School Security Act of 1981** *(Title 49, Chapter 6, Part 42)* impacting the following searches:

– Searches of vehicles parked by students or visitors on school property

– Searches of containers, packages, lockers or other enclosures used for storage by students or visitors

– Searches of areas accessible to students or visitors

– Physical searches of students

PC 244 requires orientation and training for school administrators, developed by the department of education prior to them conducting a search.

Link to training: Student Searches and the 4th Amendment | TeachALL

Public Chapter 306

Physical Activity (Recess)

Chapter 306 of the Public Acts of 2025

- PC 306 amends T.C.A. § 49-6-1021 revising the physical activity requirements.

- Elementary School

  - Minimum of 40 minutes per full school day.

  - Physical activity time must include unstructured play outside, unless weather conditions negatively impact reasonable execution of physical activity outside.

  - Physical activity may not include time during which a student is permitted to use an electronic device.

  - Physical activity may not include time spent in a physical education class.

  - Schools may not withhold physical activity as a form of punishment for an elementary student.

- Middle School and High School - Minimum of 90 minutes per full school week

Public Chapter 172

Information about Type 1 & Type 2 Diabetes

Chapter 172 of the Public Acts of 2025

Requires an LEA and public charter school that provides parents or guardians of K-12 students with information on immunizations, infectious diseases, medications, or other school health issues to include information about Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes published by the department of education: TDOE_Diabetes_Infosheet.pdf

Chapters 165 & 346 of the Public Acts of 2025

Effective July 1, 2026

- Public Chapter 165 **requires** at least one full-time employee, who is not a school nurse, to annually received training in seizure safety and first aid.

- Public Chapter 346 **encourages** bronchodilator rescue inhalers be kept in a minimum of two (2) locations to be administered to students believed to be having asthma symptoms or in emergent respiratory distress.

Public Chapter 235 & Public Chapter 484

Calendar and Instructional Time

Calendar and Instructional Time Revisions to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3004

- Sections 13, 14, & 15 of Public Chapter 235 makes various changes to the provisions regarding accumulation of excess instructional time and remote instruction.
  - 5 days per semester of remote learning
  - Lunch is served on days remote instruction is provided only when possible and safe, as determined by the LEA

- Public Chapter 484 adds a new subsection allowing up to four days of classroom instruction to be via hybrid learning in the event of extreme weather or an emergency.

Public Chapter 296

Substitute Teachers & Parental Leave

TN Department of **Education**

Chapter 296 of the Public Acts of 2025

- Increases the maximum number of consecutive days a substitute teacher may substitute without possessing a teacher license, from 20 to 30;
- Requires the establishment of a policy that grants six work weeks of paid leave to an eligible employee after the birth, still birth, or adoption of the employee's child.
  - Maximum of six work weeks within a twelve-month period
  - Must be used within a twelve-month period of the birth, still birth, or adoption
  - Must be taken consecutively or in increments of one week.

Background Check Reminder

Required of Public Charter Schools

TBI/FBI RAP Back System

- RAP back Required by [T.C.A. § 49-5-413](#) (f)

- "Upon Tennessee's acceptance into the federal bureau of investigation rap back program, local boards of education, charter schools, and any childcare programs, as defined in Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-1102, shall conduct state and national criminal history record checks on the personnel identified in subsection (a) and **shall participate in the rap back program** to determine suitability or fitness for employment."

- TN has been accepted and RAP Back is now live statewide.

DCS Background Checks

- Required by [T.C.A. § 49-5-413(e)](#)

- Public Charter Schools may now directly access DCS database of background checks.

Waivers Review

LEA & Public Charter School
Waiver Requests

Under Public Notices Section of Toolkit:

Local Education Agency and
Public Charter School Waiver Guidance

General Waiver Request

Natural Disaster Waiver Request Application

Education.Waivers@tn.gov

Charter School Waivers

- Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-111 authorizes a public charter school to apply to either its authorizer or the commissioner for a waiver of any SBE rule or state statute that inhibits or *hinders the public charter school's ability to meet the school's goals or comply with the school's mission statement*

- Waivers cannot be granted for certain regulatory or statutory requirements.

- Department policy provides that waiver requests should first be submitted to the authorizer. Only if the authorizer denies the request can a request be submitted to the commissioner of education.

Charter School Waivers

- Requests for waivers from the commissioner of education should be submitted by completing the [General Waiver Request](#) to Education.Waivers@tn.gov.

- The request must include documentation that the request was initially submitted to the authorizer and the authorizer's response.

- The school and authorizer will be notified of the decision.

- All waivers granted by the commissioner are for one-year terms.

Charter School Waivers

- If the waiver request is in the charter application, and the application is approved, a separate waiver request is not necessary. This waiver shall be for the full term of the agreement unless otherwise specified.

- Authorizers are encouraged to develop their own waiver process that complies with Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-13-111.

- Authorizers should track approved waivers, and all approved waivers must be included in the authorizer report, due annually on January 1.

Thank You!

Contact Info or Questions?

TDOE.GeneralCounsel@tn.gov

Marlee.Lizarraga@tn.gov

School Safety and Transportation

School Safety and Transportation Team

TN Department of Education

School Safety and Transportation

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TBD	Student Transportation Manager		
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Allison Rutherford	East TN	allison.rutherford@tn.gov	615-955-5796

Public School Security Grant

- During the 2025 Legislative Session, Governor Bill Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly included a one-time, non-recurring investment of $20 million in school safety grant funds in the [Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget](#) and [Budget Amendment Overview](#). This funding is an additional allocation to the Public-School Security Grant that was provided in the budget during the 2023-24 Fiscal Year. This investment is part of Governor Lee's continued commitment to investing in school safety as a [priority](#) to ensure Tennessee students have a safe school environment to learn, grow, and thrive.

- [Grant Application](#)

- [Grant Webinar](#)

- Grant Applications due in ePlan no later than **September 30, 2025**

Contacts: Mark.Bloodworth@tn.gov or Bennett.Wilson@tn.gov

Emergency Operations Plans

- Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-804 establishes the requirement for a comprehensive district-wide and school-level safety plan regarding crisis intervention, emergency response, and emergency management. These plans must be developed by the district and school-level safety teams and must follow the template developed by the state-level safety team.

- Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-806 requires that school building-level safety teams include representatives of teacher, administrator, parent organizations, and school personnel, including school safety personnel, as well as community members, local law enforcement officials, local ambulance or other emergency response agencies, etc.

- State Templates
  - 2025-26 District EOP Template
  - 2025-26 School EOP Template

Resources:

Walkthrough of the Templates

Virtual Emergency Operations Planning Training

Emergency Operations Plans

- Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-804 requires that safety plans or Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) must be submitted by **July 1 of each year** to local law enforcement agencies with jurisdiction, the Tennessee Department of Education (department), and the Tennessee Department of Safety. Also, the safety plan should follow the template minimum requirements, as prescribed by Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-805.

- Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-804 also requires that public charter schools provide other plans, information, or records regarding school security upon request. The department requires the **prior year drill logs** to also be submitted by **July 1 of each year**. Also, during a drill or in an emergency situation, public charter schools shall, to the greatest extent possible, provide a responding law enforcement agency with access to security systems that may be required for the law enforcement agency's response. Security systems include, but are not limited to, audio recording systems, visual recording systems, any other camera systems, fire systems, communications systems, or other security measures in the school building.

School Security Assessments

- According to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-4302, each Tennessee public school is required to conduct a school security assessment using the assessment tool developed by the Tennessee Department of Homeland Security (TDOHS). Assessments are to be completed on an annual basis. For further information, contact Homeland.Security@tn.gov.

Requirements of School Buildings Constructed or Remodeled after July 1, 2023

- According to [Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-818](#), public schools, including public charter school buildings, constructed or remodeled after July 1, 2023, must, at minimum:
  - include a **door-locking mechanism on each classroom door that allows the classroom door to be locked from the inside**;
  - have installed a clear **entry-resistant film on the glass panel of each exterior entry** or basement level window and door to prevent individuals from entering the school building without authorization by breaking the glass in an exterior entry or basement level window or door (for buildings constructed/remodeled after July 1, 2023, but prior to July 1, 2025);
    - Buildings constructed/remodeled after July 1, 2025, the building must have installed a clear window film or security glazing that meets a nationally recognized test standard for forced entry resistance, such as ASTMF3561 test standard, for glazing systems of each exterior entry or door plus adjoining glazing and the secure interior vestibules serving as primary entrances to prevent individuals from entering the building without authorization (*Public Chapter 448*).
  - include a **camera system** that continuously monitors each entrance, hallway, and communal area in the school building during regular school hours and during school-related events and activities conducted on school grounds that is accessible by a local law enforcement agency in an emergency situation; and
  - include at least one (1) **secure vestibule** that serves as the primary entrance to the school building that contains two (2) separate sets of doors through which a person must pass to gain entrance into the school building that are each capable of being locked separately to prevent a person from entering the school building until an LEA or school employee authorizes a person to enter.

Door Safety Compliance

- Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-817 requires that each public school operated by an LEA, public charter school, non-public school, and church related school shall ensure that all exterior doors leading into a school building are locked at all times and access to the buildings is limited to the school's primary entrance. Outside or regular hours, the primary entrance can be unlocked if continuously monitored by a school or LEA employee who is physically present at the door to ensure access is limited to only authorized persons and will alert others if an unauthorized person enters.
- State and local law enforcement are authorized to inspect a door serving as an entrance to or exit from a school building to determine whether the door is locked as required. There is no limit to the number of inspections law enforcement personnel may conduct. If law enforcement personnel find that the door to an entrance or exit from a school building is unlocked, the school must immediately lock the door, and the law enforcement that found the unlocked door shall, within twenty-four (24) hours, send written notification to:
  - the LEA's director of schools or the leader of the public charter school, as applicable;
  - the chair of the local board of education or public charter school governing body, as applicable;
  - the head of the parent-teacher organization for the LEA or public charter school, if there is such an organization for the public charter school;
  - the school principal;
  - the Department of Safety (Homeland.Security@tn.gov);
  - the Department of Education (Door.Safety@tn.gov); and
  - each local law enforcement agency with jurisdiction.

Door Safety Compliance

The LEA's director of schools, the leader of the public charter school, or their respective designees, shall within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving notification from the law enforcement agency send written confirmation to the notifying law enforcement agency that the door was immediately locked as required and that processes are in place to ensure that the door remains locked as required. The director, leader, or their respective designee shall send a copy of the written confirmation to the recipients listed above. The written confirmation must state whether the LEA or public charter school has a full-time school resource officer whose primary location is the school found to be in violation.

Information about more than one exterior door lock violation can be found here. Please contact Brian.Yarbro@tn.gov for further questions.

Safety Training

- [Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-805(7)](#) requires policies and procedures for annual school safety training for all students, teachers, and other school personnel. Instruction on firearm safety required under Tenn. Code Ann. 49-6-1016 must be credited toward the annual school safety training, required by the state-level safety team's template for building-level school safety plans for all students, teachers, and other school personnel who receive or provide instruction.

- [Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-2-203(a)(14)](#) requires substitute teachers to receive annual school safety training as required by [Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-805(7)](#). Click [here](#) for tips and guidance on substitute teacher training.

- [Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-819](#) establishes that each public charter school shall ensure that each teacher, administrator, and other school personnel employed by the public charter school annually receives **de-escalation training** as created by the department of safety. [Click here](#) for the training.

Annual Drills

Fire Evacuation Drills

Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-102-137 and Public Chapter 315, requires fire drills in educational occupancies. Furthermore, fire drills requiring full evacuation in educational occupancies shall be held at least one (1) time every thirty (30) school days, with two (2) fire drills occurring during the first thirty (30) full days of the school year. Additionally, four (4) fire safety educational announcements will be conducted throughout the year. Best practices for fire evacuation drills can be found here.

Armed Intruder Drill

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-807 requires each school safety team, non-public school, and church related school to annually conduct an armed intruder drill. Each armed intruder drill must be conducted in coordination with the appropriate local law enforcement agency. Best Practices for armed intruder drills can be found here.

Annual Drills

Incident Command Drill

[Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-807](#) requires each school safety team, non-public school, and church related school to conduct an incident command drill annually. Each incident command drill must be conducted without students present and must prepare school staff and law enforcement agencies on what to expect in the event of an emergency in the school. Best practices for incident command drill can be found [here](#).

Emergency Bus Safety Drill

[Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-807](#) requires each school safety team, non-public school, and church-related school to conduct an emergency safety bus drill annually. Each emergency safety bus drill must be conducted without students present and must prepare school staff and law enforcement agencies on what to expect in the event of [an emergency situation](#) on a school bus. Best Practices for emergency bus safety drills can be found [here](#).

Annual Drills

Shelter in Place Drills

[Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-102-137(f)](#) requires that safety drills not requiring full evacuation of all persons from the building shall be conducted at least three (3) times during the school year. A record of all safety drills, including the time and date, shall be kept in the respective school offices and made available upon request to the state fire marshal, or the state fire marshal's deputies or assistants for inspection and review. Best practices for shelter-in-place drills can be found [here.](#)

Behavioral Threat Assessment

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-2701 establishes that each LEA shall adopt a policy to establish a threat assessment team within the LEA. The purpose of the threat assessment team is to develop comprehensive intervention-based approaches to prevent violence, manage reports of potential threat, and create a system that fosters a safe, supportive, and effective school environment. The threat assessment team must include LEA personnel and law enforcement personnel. The LEA may include juvenile justice services personnel, a representative of the local district attorney's office, a representative of children's services and mental health service providers. The U.S. Secret Service has developed a report on Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence.

Important Due Dates

- **July 1st:** New school year district and school emergency operations plans, and prior year school drill logs due to TDOE.
- **September 30th**: Signed assurances, annex M on safety spending, emergency contacts due to TDOE.
- **November, February, and May:** Mandatory Threat Assessment Reporting due quarterly to Homeland Security.
- **March to June:** Security Assessments Window.
- **Spring:** Coordinated School Health Institute
- **Monthly:** TDOE School Safety Communities of Practice Virtual Collaborative Calls

Trainings

Safety Coordinator Training 21 hours: Participants learn about school safety laws, emergency operation planning, conducting drills and exercises, reunification, PREPARE Postvention for Recovery, and Behavioral Threat Assessment.

Reunification Training 4 hours: Participants learn about best practices in planning for reunification after an emergency and participate in tabletop exercises and a mock reunification exercise.

Youth Mental Health First Aid 6.5 hours: Participants learn about the signs and symptoms of a mental health challenge in youth and also addresses strategies to help youth until and while professional help is received.

PREPARE Postvention (for recovery) 3 hours: Participants learn about what to do the first day back after a community tragedy, death of student or staff to recover and get back to learning.

Restorative Practices 7 hours: Participants learn strategies for resolving conflict and improving school climate and culture.

Averting Targeted School Violence 1.5 hours: Participants learn about the key findings from the U.S. Secret Service Report on Averting Targeted School Violence

Building Strong Brains (Adverse Childhood Experiences) 3 or 6 hours: Participants learn about how toxic stress or adverse childhood experiences can derail brain development and how to implement trauma informed strategies to ensure students with adverse childhood experiences are resilient and successful.

Resources:

Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance
Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security
Tennessee Emergency Management Agency
Coordinated School Health
School Safety and Transportation
Subscribe to our monthly newsletter here.

Safety Coordinator Manual

School Security Officer Information and Resources

Educators Guide to Addressing Bullying and Harassment Complaints

School Based Mental Health Supports

School Nutrition Program Disaster Assistance Guide

Emergency Planning for School Nurses

School safety Guidance for Front Office Staff and School Receptionist

School Safety Planning Guide

School Safety and Transportation

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Allison Rutherford	East TN	allison.rutherford@tn.gov	615-955-5796

Survey Link	Participant Questions Form	Charter Contact Change Request Form

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