

State of Tennessee
Learning Agenda
2025 Updates

September 2025

TN

Department of
**Finance &
Administration**

Office of Evidence
and Impact

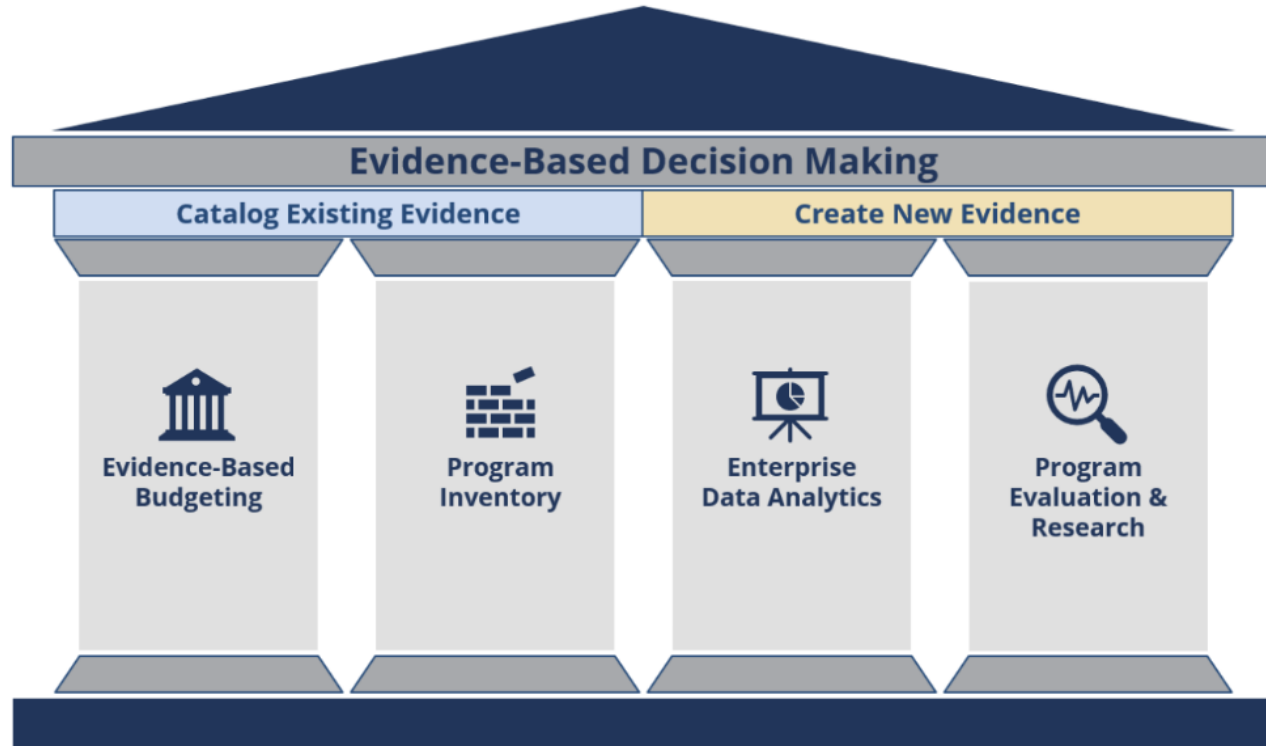
Learning Agenda Updates

September 24, 2025 Meeting Agenda

1. **Welcome**
2. **OEI Overview**
3. **Learning Agenda Progress Updates**
4. **Agency Panel #1: Research and Data in Action for Career Pathways**
5. **Agency Panel #2: Using Research to Support Agency Priorities**
6. **Q&A**
7. **Next Steps**

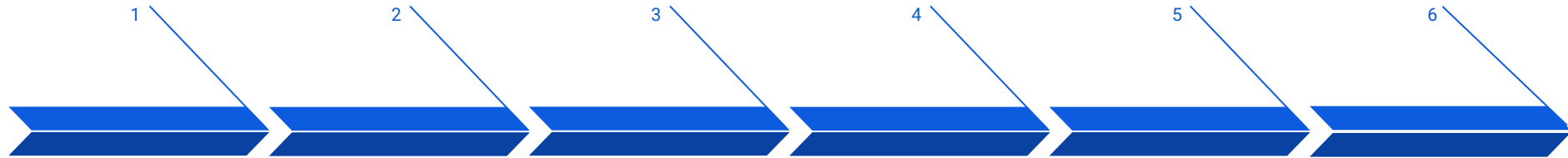


Office of Evidence and Impact Foundations



Office of Evidence and Impact: Theory of Change

The Office of Evidence and Impact's theory of change focuses on production and use of evidence in priority areas for the State of Tennessee



Learning Agenda

The Tennessee Learning Agenda identifies key areas for evidence building

Evaluations

Agencies and outside researchers perform evaluations to develop new evidence

Updated Program Inventory

New evidence from evaluations is incorporated into agencies' program inventories

Decisions Use Evidence

Budget, policy, and program decisions are made using the latest evidence

Evidence-Based Budgeting

Evidence-driven decisions lead to increased investments in programs that we know work

Improved Outcomes

Increased use of evidence leads to better outcomes and increased efficiency for Tennesseans



What is a Learning Agenda?

*A learning agenda is a **strategic roadmap describing the specific areas where the State seeks to generate credible information** in response to important short- and long-term strategic questions.*

***It focuses on building and using the research and evidence needed to solve big problems.** A learning agenda can:*

- ✓ *Prioritize key questions*
- ✓ *Spur coordinated evaluation and research*
- ✓ *Ensure results inform decisions*

A Learning Agenda Aims To:



Reinforce a focus on learning



Bridge silos



Catalyze innovation beyond the State Government

Tennessee Learning Agenda Cycle

4. Learning agenda findings inform program inventories and state budget process

3. Agencies provide updates on learning agenda

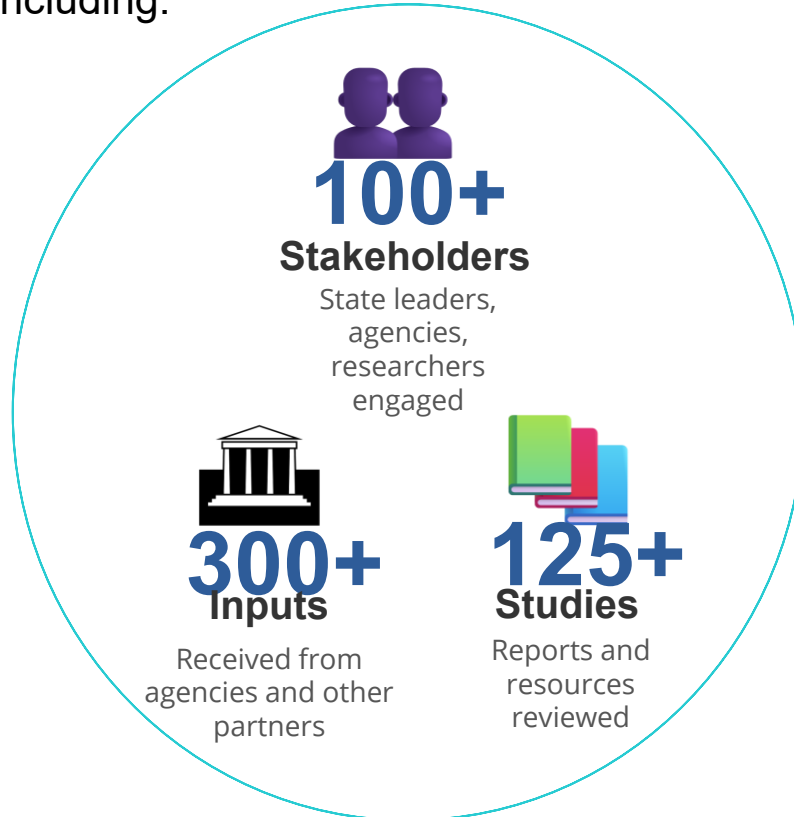


1. Learning agenda development (and updates)

2. Agencies conduct evaluations on learning agenda questions (**funding available**)

Learning Agenda Update Process

During summer 2025, OEI gathered updates about progress on the Tennessee Learning Agenda, including:



Tennessee's Learning Priorities



EDUCATION QUALITY & ACCESS



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT



RURAL DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION



STRONG FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES



GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS

Tennessee's Learning Priorities



EDUCATION QUALITY & ACCESS



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GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS

Selected Studies:

- Tennessee Department of Education: Tennessee Literacy Success Act Implementation Report
- University of Tennessee: Summer Reading Program Meta-Analysis
- SCORE: Leading in Literacy Report

Highlighted Learnings:

- Research on early literacy includes state reports, outside evaluations, and case studies on teacher training, tutoring, and instructional materials.
- Studies on summer learning review multiple programs and look at which approaches show the most promise.
- Reviews of the new school funding formula (TISA) and other policies show how changes are affecting schools and students.
- Student well-being studies include evaluations of behavioral health liaisons, school-based health centers, and surveys connecting supports to attendance and performance.
- Career and technical education research tracks student participation in work-based learning and highlights opportunities to expand access.

Tennessee's Learning Priorities



EDUCATION QUALITY & ACCESS



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GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS

Selected Studies:

- Tennessee Higher Education Commission: Fact Book
- Office of Evidence and Impact: Education-to-Employment Dashboard
- Multi-agency: Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report
- Tennessee Department of Transportation: Evaluating Transit Accessibility to Food, Education, Recreation, and Other Essential Services in Tennessee

TN

Highlighted Learnings:

- Dashboards and data reports track enrollment, credential attainment, and wages for adult and returning learners.
- Studies examine rural workforce challenges, including teacher shortages, healthcare provider supply, and access to behavioral health care.
- Research provides data on workforce participation by older adults and people with disabilities.
- Transportation access studies examine how proximity to services relates to employment and community participation.

Tennessee's Learning Priorities



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GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS

Highlighted Learnings:

- Research on industry growth, broadband expansion, and tourism examine how infrastructure affects rural development.
- Agriculture studies include return-on-investment evaluations, survey data on farming practices, and conservation program tracking.
- Environmental studies examine aquifer health, wastewater system, PFAS monitoring, and watershed planning.

Selected Studies:

- Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development: Broadband Dashboard
- Tennessee Department of Agriculture: Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program ROI Study
- Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations: Wastewater Systems Report

Tennessee's Learning Priorities



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STRONG FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES



GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS

Selected Studies:

- Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations: Childcare Barriers Report
- Tennessee Housing Development Agency: County Housing Indicators Dashboard
- TACIR: Housing Affordability Report

TN

Highlighted Learnings:

- Child welfare and youth justice studies track placements, re-entries, and program outcomes.
- Childcare and housing research highlight affordability challenges and regional differences.
- Health studies describe maternal health expansions and preventive supports.
- Housing research and dashboards provide data on affordability, supply, and county-level needs.

Tennessee's Learning Priorities



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GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS

Highlighted Learnings:

- Technology modernization includes cloud platforms, portals, and data dashboards.
- Customer service upgrades include call centers, chatbots, and satisfaction surveys.
- Data governance and integration frameworks track performance and inform decision-making.
- Agency analysis describe how new tools support service delivery and accountability.

Selected Studies:

- NASCIO and Tennessee Department of Human Services: Clearinghouse Award Case Study –
- Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security: Zendesk Customer Satisfaction Dashboard –

Tennessee's Learning Priorities: Crosscutting CTE Research



EDUCATION QUALITY & ACCESS



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYMENT



RURAL DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION



GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS

PROGRESS ON THE TENNESSEE LEARNING AGENDA

Evidence on Career and Technical Education

Recent research provides a clearer picture of how Tennessee can align education and workforce strategies to strengthen CTE pathways. The [Academic Supply and Occupational Demand Report](#), produced through a multi-agency partnership, highlights which programs are producing high-earning, in-demand graduates and where gaps remain. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission's [Fact Book](#) adds detailed data on credential attainment, enrollment, and job outcomes across student populations, including nontraditional learners.

At the secondary level, SCORE's [Work-Based Learning Participation & Success Memo](#) offers the first statewide look at how high school students are engaging in credit-bearing work-based learning, with [follow-up memos](#) providing recommendations for expanding and deepening opportunities. The [Education-to-Employment Dashboard](#), developed by the Office of Evidence and Impact, links secondary and postsecondary data to wage and employment outcomes, providing new visibility into the value of CTE pathways.

Together, these resources show how Tennessee is building a stronger evidence base to identify the most valuable credentials, understand labor market demand, and scale pathways that connect students to high-skill, high-wage employment.

Learning Agenda Update Product

OEI has created various products related to the Learning Agenda update:

- **Internal Baseline:** Current internal snapshot of all learning agenda related activities to use as the basis for tracking future progress.
- **External Summary:** Summary of learning agenda progress in each priority area to be shared publicly via website, etc.
- **Graphics:** Eye-catching shorter summaries by individual priority area to be used for social media, presentations, etc.

Tennessee Learning Agenda Updates:
Summary of Agency Responses and External Research
Draft—For Internal Review Only
[Summary of Agency and External Progress by Learning Agenda Question](#)
Priority Area 1: Education Quality and Access
Learning Agenda Question 1a:
What state-wide and/or local early childhood literacy programs and strategies are demonstrating progress and can be effectively scaled to improve child literacy rates in Tennessee?
The Tennessee Department of Education Implementation Report (Draft)

Tennessee Learning Agenda:
2025 Progress Update
Background
Learning Agenda Context
In June 2024, the State of Tennessee released the first State of Tennessee Learning Agenda. Coordinated by the Office of Evidence and Impact (OEI) within the Tennessee Department of Finance and Administration, the Learning Agenda is a strategic roadmap describing the specific areas where the state seeks to generate credible information in response to important short- and long-term strategic questions.
The Tennessee Learning Agenda was developed through a prioritization process to identify information needed to achieve the state's strategic operating priorities. The Learning Agenda was designed to stimulate evaluation and research activities and identify which policy approaches work, why, and for whom so the state can apply those lessons across contexts to improve outcomes.

PROGRESS ON THE TENNESSEE LEARNING AGENDA

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Progress Update
Learning Agendas are designed to be living documents that evolve as priorities shift and information becomes available. As such, over the summer of 2025, the Office of Evidence and Impact worked with state agencies to document evaluations, data analyses,



What have we learned?

Areas of the Learning Agenda where a body of research is being created:

- **Education:** Considerable research related to literacy, academic achievement, teacher retention, and schools
- **Workforce:** Wide body of cross agency research related to career and technical education, higher education, and workforce pathways
- **Rural professionals:** Numerous studies assessing rural recruitment and retention for education, mental health, and healthcare professionals
- **Land Use and Environment:** Ongoing work to examine land and water use in rural areas, with specific focus agriculture and best management practices to protect water quality
- **Housing:** Numerous data sources and reports focused on housing availability and cost in communities across the state

Opportunities for additional learning

Areas of the Learning Agenda where additional research could be done:

- **Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice:** Examining Connections between child welfare issues (placement, permanency) and their connection to juvenile justice
- **Government Efficiency and Effectiveness:** data and performance management, IT cost containment, customer experience, artificial intelligence.
- **Agency Priorities:** Other areas where agencies are interested in high priority research to inform their policy, program, and budget decisions.

Learning Agenda Next Steps

To make continued progress on learning agenda related research, the Office of Evidence and Impact can:

1. Partner with agencies to evaluate state programs, including providing OEI funds for research and evaluation work
2. Assist with the further development of agency research work, including the development of agency specific learning agendas
3. Help agencies use TN DATA to develop data insights for research and program improvement
4. Support a cross-agency community of research and evidence champions



Office of Evidence
and Impact

THANK YOU