

From: Commissioner Schwinn <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 10/21/2021 6:00:13 AM
To: Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Commissioner's Update for Directors, October 21

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We will set all students on a path to success.

If we are successful, then Tennessee will see a substantial increase in the number of students on-track to meeting postsecondary goals two years after graduation.



- [Key Updates](#) - Learn about the Tennessee Funding Review Engagement Updates, Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSO) Week, the Summer 2021 Learning Camp Staffing Survey Deadline, and more.
- [Academics](#) - Receive information on the Early Literacy Network Approved Vendor List & Funding Guidance, the Call for Mathematics Instructional Materials Advisory Panelists, Updated Tennessee Universal Reading Screener Resources, and more.
- [Student Readiness](#) - Learn about the TSIC Exam Reviewer Application Materials Submission Deadline, Defined Careers & Elevate TN Webinar, the 2021 Fall ST(E)AM Resource Hub Themes and Challenges for October, Summer 2022 Advanced Placement Summer Institute Sign-Ups, and more.
- [Educators](#) - Receive information on the SPED & ESL Additional Endorsement Pathway Application, Educator Preparation Working Group Participant Application, and more.
- [Supporting Work](#) - Learn about the ELC Grant Opportunity to Support COVID-19 Testing, the Virtual Education Webinar, the InformTN District Planning Timeline, the Seat Restraint Grant, and Assessment and Accountability updates.
- [In Case You Missed It](#) - Catch up on updates from previous issues!



New item



Previously run
announcement



Deadline before
next update

Key Updates



Tennessee Funding Review Engagement Updates: Committee Announcements

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

On Friday, October 8, Governor Lee [announced](#) a full review of the state's funding formula for public education to focus on a student investment strategy that emphasizes all students rather than systems, empowers parents to engage in their child's education and outcomes, ensures all students are prepared for postsecondary success and reflects Tennesseans' values.

The state's engagement includes a [central steering committee](#) composed of policymakers from across the state and [18 subcommittees](#), composed of over 200 Tennesseans representing students, families, district and school leaders, higher education partners, elected officials, business leaders, education stakeholders, and members of the public. Each of the 18 subcommittees will meet twice a month and are led by a chair who is tasked with capturing ideas and feedback based in the unique perspective of the stakeholder group or respective topic area they serve.

Throughout the coming days, the department will announce the members of the subcommittees and additional public engagement opportunities. Yesterday, October 20, the department [announced the school- and district-focused subcommittee members](#)- specifically the Teacher Advisory Subcommittee, Principal Advisory Subcommittee, School System Personnel Subcommittee, School System Leadership Subcommittee, Rural, and Small District Subcommittee, Suburban Districts, Municipals, and Fast-Growing Communities Subcommittee, Urban District Subcommittee.

On Tuesday, October 19, the department [announced the members of the student- and parent-focused funding review subcommittees](#).

Over 1,000 Tennesseans have already submitted their interest in engaging in discussions and receiving updates related to a student-centered investment strategy. Members of the public will be engaged via a public survey to be released this fall and are encouraged to continue to submit their interest via [this form](#).

All associated committee meeting materials, including recordings, transcripts, and minutes, will be posted [here](#).

Visit this webpage for more information and learn how to get involved: <https://www.tn.gov/education/tnedufunding>. For funding-related inquiries, contact [REDACTED].

Tennessee Celebrates Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs) Week

Audience: Counselors, CTE Directors, CTE Educators, Director of Schools, District Staff, Educators, Principals, School Staff, Secondary Supervisors

Contact: [REDACTED]

This week, the Tennessee Department of Education, in collaboration with districts and schools across the state, is celebrating the unique role [early postsecondary opportunities \(EPSOs\)](#) play in preparing students for college and career during the 6th annual EPSO Week, happening October 18-22.

Across the state, schools and districts will spotlight and promote these opportunities for students through various activities and events during the week. The department encourages schools, educators, and districts to join in highlighting their work by sharing on social media using [#EPSOWeek2021](#).

Early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) include a course and/or exam that give students a chance to obtain postsecondary credit while still in high school. In Tennessee, there are eight different types of EPSOs offered widely by districts.

To learn more about early postsecondary opportunities in Tennessee, visit the [department's website](#). Learn more about the 2021 EPSO Week [here](#).

Summer 2021 Learning Camp Staffing Survey

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

The TN Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act (T.C.A. 49-6-1509) requires the department to report to the governor and legislature by November 1 each year on several topics related to the summer programs outlined in this Act.

In order to provide the information required, the department is asking districts to complete [this very brief survey](#) related to staffing experiences with the 2021 Summer Learning Camps. This survey includes, at most, 9 multiple-choice questions. No written narrative is required. The department will provide a statewide trend analysis of these responses for the report and will not identify any individual district. The deadline for completing this survey is **October 22, 2021**. Please contact [Meghan McLeroy](#) with questions.

2021-22 ACT Appeals Window

Audience: Directors of schools & Data coordinators

Contact: [REDACTED]

On Friday, October 22, the department will release student-, school-, and district-level ACT files for 2021 graduates through the Accountability application. The fall appeals window for ACT files will open on **Monday, October 25**, and closes at **5 p.m. CT on Friday, November 12**. Any submissions received after this deadline will be automatically denied for purpose of reporting. Directors of schools should send appeals using the instructions and submission worksheet found on the department's website. Additionally, the department has released the [2021-22 ACT Appeals Guidance](#) as a resource.

★ 2021-22 Assessment Calendar

Audience: *Directors of schools, District Testing Coordinators, Special Population Coordinators, Educators*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The department has released an updated version of the 2021-22 Assessment Calendar on [the department's Assessment webpage](#). This calendar lists the dates for both required and optional assessment windows during the 2021-22 school year, including TCAP, TCAP-Alternate and MSAA, WIDA, and ACT/SAT. As required by law, districts must include assessment dates on their public websites.

An updated 2021-22 Assessment Milestones Document is also now available on the [Assessment Logistics LiveBinder](#).

Academics

All Tennessee students will have access to a high-quality education, no matter where they live.

★ Early Literacy Network: Approved Vendor List and Funding Guidance

Audience: *Directors of Schools & Instructional Supervisors Participating in the Early Literacy Network*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Early Literacy Network provides districts with additional funding and support for the implementation of foundational skills and knowledge-building curricula in Pre-Kindergarten through second grade. Participating districts receive funding to contract with a one-on-one implementation support provider to address district-specific needs in foundational skills instruction as an extension of the Tennessee Early Reading Training. The Early Literacy Network focuses on the implementation of the Tennessee Foundational Skills Instructional Practice Guide (IPG), unit and lesson preparation using high-quality instructional materials, and provides optional opportunities for tailored learning around topics of interest through free and optional Communities of Practice. The first module in the Communities of Practice series launched in September. To learn more about the Communities of Practice and register participants for upcoming sessions [click here](#).

As part of the Early Literacy Network, districts will receive grant funding for two years (2021-22 and 2022-23) to contract with an approved one-to-one implementation support provider. [This guidance document](#) is designed to assist districts in the ePlan application and vendor contracting processes. Included in this document is the list of vendors approved for this foundational skills work.

Please follow the next steps detailed in the [guidance document](#). With additional questions, reach out to [Kim Reznicek](#).

Call for Mathematics Instructional Materials Advisory Panelists

Audience: Directors of Schools, Instructional Supervisors, Teachers

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Tennessee Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission is charged with recommending for approval instructional materials to the State Board of Education for use in Tennessee school districts. The Tennessee Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission is recruiting applicants to serve as a mathematics instructional materials advisory panelists. Selected panelists will be charged with reviewing mathematics instructional materials to ensure they are aligned to the Tennessee mathematics standards.

The application can be found [here](#). Applications are due on or before **November 22, 2021**.

Updated Tennessee Universal Reading Screener Resources

Audience: Director of Schools, Instructional Supervisors

Contact: [REDACTED] Or [REDACTED]

Overview

The TN Universal Reading Screener was released by the department to provide a free and optional reading and math screener to enable districts to comply with the requirements of the Tennessee Literacy Success Act. Districts may also choose to use the other State Board of Education-approved universal reading screeners to meet the screening requirements required by the act.

Updated Matrix Guidance and Resources

In response to district feedback and engagement, as well as a review of all relevant laws and policies, the department is providing updated guidance and additional flexibility for districts related to the TN-URS and dyslexia screening. Please see [this guidance document](#) for more information and an updated TN-URS screening matrix.

All guidance documents, including the [Universal Reading Screener Administration: Requirements for Universal Reading Screeners](#), are publicly posted on the [2021 Special Session Legislation Resources webpage](#).

Support and Training

Support is available through weekly office hours every Friday from 10-11 a.m. CT. Join by using this [link](#).

Contact Information

With questions or for more information about the Universal Reading Screener, please reach out to [REDACTED].

Applications Now Open for the 2021-22 Governor's Schools Program

Audience: Directors of Schools, Principals, Assistant Principals, School Counselors, Teachers

Contact: [REDACTED]

All eleven Governor's Schools are now accepting applications for their 2021-22 summer programs. Each school offers a unique learning environment for students interested in one of the following disciplines: the arts, humanities, agriculture science, STEM programs, advanced mathematics, physics, leadership, international studies, Tennessee history, or potential teaching careers.

Each university host site offers a challenging and high-intensity program for rising 11th and 12th-grade students nominated by high school faculty.

Additional information about the Governor's School programs, including contact and application information for all eleven schools, can be found [here](#).

With questions, contact [Charlotte Woehler](#).

Next Phase of State of the Arts Program: New Arts Education Network and Study Opportunities for Districts

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Instructional Supervisors, District Visual and Performing Arts Leads, Principals, Visual and Performing Arts Teachers*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The department is excited to announce the launch of the State of the Arts: Arts Education Network and State of the Arts Study. Through a partnership between the Tennessee Department of Education, CMA Foundation, and the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, we seek to better understand the inequities and barriers affecting the quality of arts education programming in order to better inform policymaking, district strategic planning, development of resources and support systems, and investment/philanthropic activities by conducting a first-of-its-kind statewide arts education landscape study. This analysis will identify the barriers preventing student access to high-quality programming, gaps in sequential K-12 pathways, and identification of the types of support needed at the school, district, and state level that would have the greatest impact on students.

The State of the Arts: The Arts Education Network will develop and strengthen public-private partnerships to support arts education and facilitate the collaboration and sharing of ideas and promising practices between districts. Membership in the Arts Education Network is free and open to all Tennessee public school districts and charter schools.

Network participants will have immediate access to the State of the Arts Study, a statewide landscape study/analysis of school and district arts education programs facilitated by the CMA Foundation and Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation in partnership with the Department of Education. The landscape study is a comprehensive assessment of district arts (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts) education programs and will collect data relative to the quality indicators of arts education programs. Participation in the State of the Arts Study is free for every Tennessee school district.

Learn more about the Arts Education Network, State of the Arts Study, and other network benefits [here](#).

We encourage all districts to consider participating in the network in order to develop a strong network of practice across the state. Districts interested in participating in the network should [submit an intent to participate form](#). The intent to participate opt-in window is open on a rolling basis.

With questions, reach out to [Todd Shipley](#), Director of Arts Education.

Presidential Scholars Application Window Now Open

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Principals, Assistant Principals, School Counselors and CTE Directors*

Contact: [REDACTED] Or [REDACTED]

The Tennessee Department of Education is excited to share an opportunity for each Tennessee high school to nominate a maximum of two seniors to be considered as state finalists for the U.S. Presidential Scholars program. One senior may be nominated from each school for the general academic component of the program, and one senior may be nominated for the CTE component of the program.

General Academic Component

Our state can nominate high school seniors to be considered based on academic success and perseverance. The general academic component emphasizes the following areas on the application:

- Academic achievement
- Leadership skills
- Community involvement
- Overcoming obstacles
- Strong writing skills

The school principal, guidance counselor, or other designee may assist the student nominee with the completion of the online academic component state application, linked [here](#). Applications are due by **5 p.m. CT on November 6, 2021**.

CTE Component

Our state can nominate high school seniors to be considered based on excellence in career and technical education (CTE). This component emphasizes the following areas on the application:

- Academic rigor
- Technical competence
- Employability skills
- Ingenuity and creativity

The school principal, guidance counselor, or other designee may assist the student nominee with the completion of the online CTE component state application, linked [here](#). Applications are due by **5 p.m. CT on November 6, 2021**.

Student Readiness

Tennessee public schools will be equipped to serve the academic and non-academic needs of all students in their career pathways.



Tennessee Specific Industry Certification (TSIC) Exam Reviewers Needed

Audience: CTE Directors, CTE educators, Educators, Secondary Supervisors

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Division of College, Career and Technical Education is currently seeking individuals to serve on four TSIC exam review committees to validate the accuracy and relevance of current TSIC exam questions with the newly revised course standards. The review will include a 50-question practice exam, a 100-question exam, and questions in the respective exam question banks for Animal Science, Dietetics & Nutrition, Horticulture Science, and Human & Social Sciences.

Role and Responsibilities

Exam Reviewer

- Attend three committee meetings to understand the trajectory of the review process, logistics, goals, and exam outcomes. These trainings will be held virtually.
- Validate the accuracy and relevance of current TSIC exam questions within the respective exam question banks with the newly revised course standards.
- Revise the exam questions for the respective TSIC exam bank.

Qualifications

- Three years of teaching or work experience in a Tennessee Specific Industry Certification (TSIC) subject area.
- Must be a secondary teacher, postsecondary faculty, or industry representative.
- Secondary teachers must have experience in TSIC exam review and the development of TSIC exams or TSIC training materials.
- Postsecondary faculty must be on staff at a postsecondary institution that accepts TSIC credit; must have participated in the development of past TSIC exams or training materials; and must actively teach or provide educational support in the related content area.
- Industry representatives must be recommended by a stakeholder or educator group and must be recognized as an industry authority in the content area.

Assignment Criteria

Revision Lead – A selected applicant who meets the requirements outlined above and has previous experience with editing, formatting, and/or organizing question banks may be assigned as revision lead.

To apply, please submit the items below to [Steven Gass](#) by **Monday, Nov. 15**.

Required Application Materials

- Up-to-date resume
- Cover letter
- Sample deliverable: *Createsample test questions related to two different TSIC learning outcomes for the TSIC Exam content area for which you are applying. It should include the TSIC exam name, content area, learning outcome, and a clear question asking for specific knowledge or skill aligned to the learning outcome written at three different cognitive levels of Blooms Taxonomy.*

Compensation

An individual can expect to be compensated up to \$752 if selected as an exam reviewer. The exam reviewer can be expected to be compensated up to \$2,002 if selected as a review lead for their content area. Compensation will be based on the work completed and meetings attended.

Elevate Tennessee and Defined Careers

Audience: *Counselors, CTE Directors, CTE educators, Educators*

Contact: [REDACTED]

Recently, two new platforms were released to educators for grades 6-12 to expand and enhance career exploration and advising.

[Defined Careers](#) is a project-based solution that allows students in grades 6-12 to explore and experience careers. It includes a career assessment that guides students towards real-world projects across recommended career pathways. Defined Careers empowers educators to provide all students with equitable access to careers.

[Elevate TN](#) seeks to create a pipeline of skilled workers in Tennessee. The statewide web portal is available for any educator that serves grades 8-12 in any subject area including CTE programs of study. This platform provides students with job-shadowing and internship experiences, career exploration, and resume-building activities developed around local employer needs. Students can earn industry-recognized badges for their resumes while building skills that will support CTE industry credentials.

Learn more with our prerecorded webinar that can be accessed [here](#).

2021 Fall STE(A)M Resource Hub Themes and Challenges for October

Audience: CTE Educators, Educators

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network (TSIN) have released the 2021 Fall STE(A)M Resource Hub themes and descriptions for October. The 2021 Fall STE(A)M Resource Hub engages students with challenges around design activities, critical thinking, and career exploration throughout the month of October. For more information click the following [link](#).

October 25-29: Exploring Geology

Geology rocks! Geology is a branch of Earth science concerned with the solid Earth, the rocks of which it is composed, and the processes by which they change over time. Looking at rocks, minerals, and gemstones can be fascinating. There are endless colors, textures, and patterns that are fascinating and tell the story of each rock. Careers in geology can take you all over the world studying everything from reconstructing history to working toward environmental conservation.

For more information, click [here](#).

Summer 2022 Advanced Placement Summer Institute Sign Ups

Audience: Counselors, Director of Schools, District Staff, Educators, Principals, Secondary Supervisors, School Staff

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Niswonger Foundation, in partnership with the department, has opened its scholarship registration for summer 2022 Advanced Placement Summer Institutes (APSI) to be held in Tennessee. Educators who are interested in teaching AP in either the home district or virtually through AP Access for ALL should apply! To apply for a scholarship click [here](#) and submit by **Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021**.

APSIs are week-long summer professional development opportunities led by veteran AP teachers and college faculty that prepare educators to teach AP courses. To learn more about APSIs click [here](#).

STEM/STE(A)M Designation Application Now Open!

Audience: CTE Directors, CTE educators, Educators, Principals, Secondary Supervisors

Contact: [REDACTED]

The 2021-22 STEM or STE(A)M School Designation application is **now open through January 17th**. Schools that have completed the self-assessment and indicated their intent to apply will submit their full application, including narrative responses and artifacts for each section, through the online platform shared during the initial phone interview.

Tennessee STEM and STE(A)M School Designation was developed to provide a “roadmap” for schools to successfully implement a STEM or STE(A)M education plan at the local level. The tools and resources created define the attributes necessary for a school to create a comprehensive STEM or STE(A)M learning environment for its students. A school that receives Tennessee STEM or STE(A)M School Designation will be recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education for its use of STEM or STE(A)M teaching and learning strategies and serve as a model from which other schools may visit and learn. All K-12 schools serving students in Tennessee are eligible. Schools interested in a STEM or STE(A)M Designation should visit the [Tennessee STEM Innovation Network website](#).

Resources for the STEM/STE(A)M Designation process can be found [here](#).

Register for the 2022 Winter Occupational License New Teacher Training (OLNTT)

Audience: Counselors, CTE Directors, CTE Educators, District Staff, Educators, School Staff, Secondary Supervisors

Contact: [REDACTED]

Mark your calendars for the 2022 Winter Occupational License New Teacher Training (OLNTT) to be held January 10-14, 2022 at The Read House in Chattanooga, TN. This training ensures that new career and technical education (CTE) teachers are prepared to achieve immediate, measurable success with their students upon entering the classroom.

As this training is our first in-person training since COVID, there are limited capacities for each career cluster group. Registration is expected to fill up quickly and will close **Friday, Dec. 10, 2021**. No late registrations will be accepted.

NOTE: Currently, this training is expected to be held in person. We are actively taking precautions and making decisions for the overall wellbeing of our attendees and training staff, as well as considering the best method to deliver the information. If it is determined that the best course of action is to host this event virtually, that decision will be made by Monday, Nov. 1. All registered attendees will be notified, and the registration website will be updated to reflect the decision to go virtual. There will be no hybrid option for this training.

To register, click [here](#).

Register today as space is limited to 50 registrants per group. The group structure we will use for the week of OLNTT is listed below:

- Group 1: Health Science
- Group 2: Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
- Group 3: Arts, AV Technology & Communications, IT, STEM
- Group 4: Human Services, Hospitality & Tourism, Supply Chain Management, & Academic Content Areas
- Group 5: Advanced Manufacturing, Architecture & Construction, Transportation

Announcing the Statewide Design Challenge

Audience: CTE Educators, Educators, Principals

Contact: [REDACTED]

TSIN, in collaboration with the TN Chamber of Commerce, is excited to announce the 2022 Statewide Design Challenge: Infrastructure. Infrastructure is defined as the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities needed for the operation of a society or enterprise, which includes roads, buildings, utilities/power supplies, and more!

This year's challenge invites students to consider how they can improve their school, community, or world by reimagining an existing physical space, system, product, or service so that it is more equitable, accessible, or efficient. Students have a choice about how they approach the topic to best consider the needs of their local communities.

Participating schools will conduct classroom-level presentations and then nominate outstanding projects to participate in a virtual competition in Spring 2022. For safety and equity, all

competitions will be held virtually this year. The cost and time of travel can be a burden to some families and schools. To alleviate that burden and encourage more students to explore STEM challenges, we will hold all levels of competition virtually. No student should be excluded from this opportunity due to constraints of their location in the state.

Sign up [here](#) to receive a Welcome Packet email.

TDOE & UT Martin Offer Free ACT Prep Workshops and Classes to All Tennessee High School Students and Teachers

Audience: Counselors, Director of Schools, CTE Educators, CTE Directors, Educators, Principals, School Staff, Secondary Supervisors

Contact: 

In partnership with the University of Tennessee at Martin (UT Martin), the [department announced](#) in May that all Tennessee high school students and teachers will have access to workshops that help prepare students to succeed on the ACT, one of the most important college entrance exams offered to high school students across the country. These workshops began in Summer 2021 and are expected to continue through Fall 2022.

This fall we will offer five (5) [ACT Teacher Workshops](#). These free, two-hour workshops, conducted via Zoom, will provide strategies and practical skills to teachers to help them improve student ACT outcomes. Interested teachers can learn more about and register for the workshops [here](#).

The [ACT Success Tactics Workshops and Mastery Classes](#) and [Virtual Office Hours](#) are available to rising 11th and 12th graders in Tennessee. During these free virtual workshops, we will share resources and tools that will teach students effective test-taking strategies, as well as provide them content practice in specific subject areas. Interested students can learn more about and register for the workshops, classes, and office hours [here](#).

Educators

Tennessee will set a new path for the education profession and be the top state to become and remain a teacher and leader.

SPED and ESL Additional Endorsement Pathway

Audience: Directors of Schools, Special Education & ESL Directors

Contact: 

The **Tennessee Department of Education** is pleased to announce a new **Special Education and English as a Second Language additional endorsement pathway**. This pathway will be run by the Department of Education and will provide all necessary coursework for endorsement in Special Education Interventionist K-8 (144) and English as a Second Language Pre-K-12 (490), at no cost to participants.

For the **inaugural 2021-22 cohort**, we will be offering 25 seats in each endorsement pathway. Participants will be selected equitably across the state to ensure that various districts, grade and experience levels, and future interests are represented. All participants must possess a **current** and **valid Tennessee teaching license** and must successfully complete all preparation requirements prior to taking the necessary praxis assessment.

Course work will begin in December 2021 and conclude in June 2022. Participants must commit to taking the required praxis exams during the first two weeks in July. The cost of the praxis exams is the only cost participants of this program will incur.

Praxis Test Requirements

Endorsement	Test Name	Test Code
Second Language Pre-K-12 (490)	English to Speakers of Other Languages	5362
Special Education Interventionist K-8 (144)	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications	5543
	Teaching Reading: Elementary	5205

Interested applicants should apply using [this link](#). Applications are due on or before **November 12, 2021**. Applicants will be notified of their status by November 17, 2021.

Educator Preparation Working Group – Call for Participants

Audience: EPPs & LEAs (Directors of Schools, Supervisors, Principals, Educators)

Contact: [REDACTED]

The department is seeking representatives from both districts and educator preparation providers to serve on the educator preparation working group (EPWG) for the 2022 and 2023 calendar years. The EPWG provides clear and transparent lines of communication between the department and various stakeholder groups regarding key initiatives associated with improving educator preparation. Members include both EPP and district representatives who work together to support the department's efforts to ensure educators entering Tennessee classrooms are well-prepared to meet the needs of all students.

This application is open to any EPP or LEA faculty or staff member except those who served on the EPWG during the 2020 and/or 2021 calendar years. Individuals interested in participating in the EPWG for the 2022-23 calendar years should complete the [application](#) by **Friday, Nov. 19**.

PAEMST Awards: 2022 Nominations Now Open

Audience: Director of Schools, Principals, School Administrators, Educators

Contact: [REDACTED]

The **Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST)** are the highest honors bestowed by the United States government specifically for K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teaching.

Anyone—principals, teachers, parents, students, or members of the general public—[may nominate](#) exceptional STEM teachers who are currently teaching grades K-6 for the 2022 award year. Teachers may also apply directly [here](#).

Presidential Awardees receive a certificate signed by the President of the United States; a trip to Washington, D.C., to attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities; and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation. They also join a network of award-winning teachers from across the country. The National Science Foundation administers PAEMST on the behalf of The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The **nomination deadline is January 7, 2022**, and the **application deadline is February 6, 2022** for elementary teachers (grades K-6). Secondary teachers (grades 7-12) will be eligible to apply

during a future cycle.

With questions, please contact Tennessee PAEMST coordinator, [Janelle Brown](#).

Supporting Work

ELC Grant Opportunity to Support COVID-19 Testing– Round 2

Audience: *Director of Schools*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The department is excited to announce a second round of ELC grants in conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Health for LEAs and non-public schools to support the reopening and in-person instruction of K-12 schools through comprehensive screening testing. Initial testing would begin once the application is approved and extend through July 31, 2022. This opportunity is open to all LEAs and non-public schools who did not apply during the first round of grants.

If you are interested in this opportunity, you must complete an [Intent to Apply form](#) between **October 11-25, 2021**.

Applications will be open for LEAs and non-public schools in ePlan on November 8, 2021. Once awarded, ELC grant funds will be available upon an approved application and expire on **July 31, 2022**.

Information and materials to support LEAs and non-public schools with the ELC grant are and will be available in [ePlan.tn.gov > TDOE Resources > Epidemiology & Laboratory Capacity \(ELC\) Grant](#). Please review these resources to learn about the focus areas supported by these supplemental grant funds and the application components that will be required when the ELC application goes live.

Virtual Education Webinar

Audience: *Director of Schools & Principals*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Department of Choice will host a webinar on virtual education on, **Thursday, October 28, 2021, at 10 a.m. CT**. The training will address frequently asked questions related to virtual education, examine different statutory and regulatory requirements related to virtual schools and virtual education programs, and discuss virtual education operations and logistics. This training is for any district or school-level leader involved with virtual education—this includes both virtual schools and virtual education programs within a brick-and-mortar school.

For questions or to receive the WebEx link, please email [Matt Bowser](#).

InformTN District Planning Timeline

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Supervisors*

Contact: [REDACTED]

At the conclusion of district planning in spring 2021, district leaders shared feedback on the district planning process through the annual InformTN District Survey. Based on your feedback, we learned a great deal about improvements and adjustments to better meet the needs of stakeholders. After identifying the trends in the survey data, we have made updates to the platform for greater usability, increased support opportunities and guidance to aid in strong planning, and extended the planning timeline. An extended planning timeline was one of the pieces of feedback most often shared and is one of the most significant changes you'll experience in district planning this year.

The district planning window will be open from **November 8 to March 1**. Reviewing of plans will begin on **March 1, 2022**, and conclude with plan approvals by **April 15, 2022**. Throughout the planning window, you will have opportunities for support from various TDOE divisions that include training sessions, recorded webinars, individual support meetings, and office hours. More information about these supports for your planning team will be shared in the coming weeks.

The timeline for the 2022-23 planning cycle can be found [here](#).

Seat Restraint Grant

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Transportation Supervisors*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The General Assembly appropriated \$3 million in nonrecurring funds in the fiscal year 2018 for a school bus seat restraint demonstration program. The funds have been earmarked to help districts, charters, and charter management organizations address the extra costs associated with equipping school buses with seat restraints. The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) student transportation team is tasked with the implementation of the grant program.

In order to receive grant funding for this program, LEAs will need to complete all components of the Grant Application and return all required sections to the TDOE student transportation department via email to [REDACTED]. **The grant application window opened on October 15, 2021, and will close on March 31, 2022.**

Any questions regarding the grant or application process should be directed to the grant administrator, [Alex Spann](#).

2021 LEA Compliance Report

Audience: *Directors of Schools*

Contact: [REDACTED]

Districts are required to comply with all federal and state education laws and State Board of Education (SBE) rules. The commissioner of education is responsible for ensuring school laws and SBE rules are executed as well as taking corrective action when a district is noncompliant with those laws and rules or is not following a department-approved compliance plan.

The LEA Compliance Report is a document used by the department in its annual process of ensuring compliance. All districts are required to complete the [report](#), including the [corrective action plan template](#) if applicable, and upload it to ePlan (instructions [here](#)) by **November 30**.

Assessment and Accountability

TCAP Assessment Committee Application Open for Spring and Summer 2022

Audience: Directors of Schools, District Testing Coordinators, Special Population Coordinators, Educators

Contact: [REDACTED]

The department is seeking educators to participate in the spring and summer 2022 Assessment Committees. Each year, Tennessee educators from across the state come together to help build our Tennessee-specific statewide assessments by participating in educator assessment committees.

In line with the department's focus on expanding leadership opportunities for educators, as specified in the Best for All plan, the assessment committees give educators the unique experience of providing feedback on the passages and test questions that will become a part of the TCAP state assessments. Tennessee educators are an invaluable resource as we continue to build our unique assessments to provide valuable feedback on student learning. Educators are invited to apply to as many committees as they wish. The deadline to apply for spring 2022 committees is **Sunday, October 31 at 11:59 p.m. CT.** and for **summer 2022 committees is Sunday, February 27 at 11:59 p.m. CT.**

Since several 2022 committees are focused on TCAP-Alt, there is a need for educators experienced and certified to teach special education to apply. Complete descriptions of the committees convening are on the department's [Assessment Committees page](#) along with the link to apply. Share this opportunity with other educators on social media using the hashtag #IMakeTCAP.

Educators who applied in 2020 or 2021 do not need to reapply to be considered for the same assessment committees. Please contact [Grace Franklin](#) to update your existing application.

2021-22 WIDA ACCESS Technology Webinars

Audience: Directors of Schools, Tech Directors

Contact: [REDACTED]

Data Recognition Corp (DRC) and WIDA will be hosting a series of Technology Webinars for Technology Coordinators in the 2021-22 school year. The purpose of the webinars is to provide details related to the ACCESS 2021-22 Software Updates, Technology Installations, Technology Coordinator Support for Test Administrators, and Troubleshooting. Please see below for the links to register. If you are unable to attend, a recording will be available in [WIDA AMS](#) under *My Applications > General Information > Documents* after the presentation.

Topic: [Pre-Testing Technology Coordinator Support for Test Administrators](#)

Date: Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Time: 1 - 2 p.m. CT

Provide technology coordinators with information to communicate with test coordinators and administrators. Facilitate how to establish a local communication plan to identify issues and troubleshoot if problems arise. Review when to support test administrators at their testing sites by training them to respond to technical issues as well as when/how to report issues.

Topic: [During Testing: Technology Troubleshooting](#)

Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022

Time: 1 - 2 p.m. CT

An overview of the various troubleshooting solutions as well as common error messages.

Please contact DRC Customer Support with any questions at 1-[REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Release of EOC Mock-Interim Assessments

Audience: Directors of Schools, Supervisors of Student Services, Principals, and Assistant Principals, District Testing Coordinators

Contact: [REDACTED]

Mock Interims for all grades and subjects are now available in [Schoolnet](#). Mock Interims yield better information for educators than a traditional practice exam. These are full-length, summative, blueprint-aligned exams that can be used to gauge mastery of grade-level content and serve as practice exams. They can be used to monitor student progress toward building the knowledge and skills reflected in the full breadth of the Tennessee Academic Standards. Mock Interims for grades 3-8 Math, ELA, and Science, and grades 6-8 Social Studies are now live, along with all EOC courses including math, ELA, U.S. History, and Biology. Educators can administer the tests online in the Schoolnet platform or print paper copies and scannable answer documents for paper test administration and easy platform scoring and reporting. To learn more about Schoolnet, visit [our resources page](#).

National Assessment Governing Board Nominations

Audience: Directors of Schools, District Testing Coordinators, Special Population Coordinators

Contact: [REDACTED]

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which develops policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), is seeking candidates for several positions (to be appointed in fall 2022), including fourth-grade teacher, eighth-grade teacher, secondary school principal, and general public representative-parent leader.

Candidates can nominate themselves or be nominated by someone else. **Board nominations must be submitted online by Nov. 1, 2021.**

You can learn more about the open positions, Board members' responsibilities, and the submission requirements [here](#). This is a great opportunity to have the voice of Tennessee and your community represented on our national stage. All interested educators are encouraged to apply.

In Case You Missed It

TDOE, TERA Releases 2021 Tennessee Educator Survey Results

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

Recently, the Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) [released key findings and responses from the 2021 Tennessee Educator Survey](#) from 40,000 educators, representing over half of the state's educator population.

This survey collects data to understand educator experiences to provide direct feedback that will inform decision-making on key issues facing our schools and classrooms. This year's survey included questions to explore the instructional challenges due to COVID-related disruptions.

Key findings from the 2021 survey are below:

- Tennessee educators' top COVID-19 related concern was students missing instructional time during the school year. Teachers indicated fewer challenges for in-person instruction than for remote learning during the 2020-21 school year.

- Teachers continue to need more support to help meet the non-academic needs of students and families.
- Despite a challenging school year, job satisfaction and perceptions of school climate remains positive among Tennessee educators – continuing a positive trend that began in 2018

State-, district-, and school-level data is now available on the [survey results website](#) and the Tennessee Educator Survey: 2021 Overview brief can be found [here](#).

TDOE Announces 79 Districts Intend to Participate in TN ALL Corps Tutoring, Serve Nearly 150,000 Students Over Three Years

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED] & [REDACTED]

Last month, the Tennessee Department of Education announced [79 school districts](#), over half of all districts in the state, intend to participate in the [Tennessee Accelerating Literacy and Learning Corps](#) (TN ALL Corps) tutoring program to mitigate learning loss and accelerate student achievement. The participating districts and the department will invest a projected \$200 million in federal education funding in TN ALL Corps tutoring supports which stands to benefit nearly 150,000 Tennessee students over the next three years.

TN ALL Corps is a matching grant opportunity to empower districts to implement or strengthen tutoring supports for students in low ratios and at a high dosage, with TN ALL Corps tutoring occurring for small groups of students in 30–45-minute sessions, two to three times per week. This approach [in combination with summer programming](#) will provide students with 250-500 additional hours of academic instruction over the next three years and two summers.

Structured tutoring programs have been proven to significantly increase student achievement. As part of the [Tennessee Learning Loss and Student Acceleration Act](#) passed in the special session, the TN ALL Corps will support students across the state by providing access to tutoring in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math.

The formal application for TN ALL Corps is live in ePlan for all districts that submitted the intent to apply. A detailed guidance document outlining allowable uses of funds, instructions for budgeting local match dollars, and instructions for completing the application in ePlan can be found [here](#), or in ePlan under TDOE Resources > Grants > TN ALL Corps.

A list of districts intending to participate is available [here](#). Read more [here](#).

Statewide Literacy Awareness Campaign Launched: Starting with Sounds

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

Last month, the Tennessee Department of Education, in collaboration with Tennessee PBS, [launched Starting with Sounds](#), a [Reading 360](#) statewide awareness campaign to help Tennessee parents and students understand the importance of reading in an engaging and fun way.

In collaboration with Tennessee PBS, the state's six PBS stations- WCTE, WETP, WKNO, WKOP, WLJT, WNPT, WTCI- covering east to west and north to south, the department created [Starting with Sounds](#) to highlight the importance of early literacy and how families and students can practice reading by watching and listening to national and local musicians, athletes, and champions of student success read their favorite books and sing songs to help build these critical skills.

A list of the participating musicians, athletes, notable Tennesseans and national champions of youth achievement with links to their recorded videos is as follows:

- [Jason Crabb](#): Grammy award-winning singer and musician reads children's book "Most Days" and sings "What a Wonderful World"

- [Ellie Holcomb](#): Singer-songwriter reads children's book "My Father's Dragon" and sings "Family"
- [Kathy Mattea](#): Grammy award-winning country music and bluegrass singer reads "The Wind in the Willows" and sings "One Light, One Sun"
- [Ketch Secor](#): Grammy award-winning singer and founding member of Old Crow Medicine Show reads "Lorraine"
- [Scott Hamilton](#): Olympic gold medalist reads "Fritzy Finds a Hat"
- [Jake Hoot](#): NBC's "The Voice" winner and country music singer reads "Bloom" and sings "Best Job I Ever Had"
- [Carl Ray](#): Country music singer reads and sings "Tiger in my Soup"
- [Kelly Lang](#): Award-winning singer/songwriter reads "Most People"
- [Rissi Palmer](#): Country music singer reads "Magnificent Homespun Brown" and sings "Best Day Ever"
- [Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley](#): Nationally known musicians read "Farmer Falgu Goes on a Trip" and sing "No More Hard Times Blues"
- *More to come!*

Starting November 1, Starting with Sounds will air on Tennessee PBS during the department's [regularly scheduled](#) time block from 9 a.m.- 11 a.m. CT. Additional Starting with Sounds videos will be added soon, including videos featuring celebrities like country music singer Tenille Townes and country music singer and songwriter Niko Moon. Local and national musicians, athletes, and other champions for student success are invited and encouraged to participate. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Free ACT Retake Opportunities Available for All Tennessee High School Seniors to Help Boost Scores

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

In August, the Tennessee Department of Education [highlighted](#) an opportunity this fall for all high school seniors to boost their scores on the ACT college entrance exam after taking the test the first time as a junior during the COVID-19 pandemic. While a [recent ACT, Inc. study](#) found that the 2020-21 ACT results indicated an anticipated decline in ACT scores nationwide, Tennessee is the first and only state to offer this free retake opportunity to every Tennessee high school senior this fall.

This year, the department is urging all Tennessee high school seniors to take advantage of the fall ACT retake opportunity and has expanded the state testing windows to provide additional options. ACT Inc.'s research shows that students who take the ACT more than once increase their score by an average of 1 point. Students who improve their scores in one or more subject areas tested will have their super-score composite available to send to postsecondary institutions and scholarship programs.

Districts across the state will be able to offer the free fall ACT retake opportunities during the following two-day window:

- November 2-4, 2021

Additionally, with UT Martin, the department is continuing to provide free, virtual workshops and classes this fall for all Tennessee high school students and teachers on how to be successful on the ACT. Learn more and access these resources [here](#).

For more information, click [here](#).

District Information Dashboard & Attendance Coding

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

The District Information Dashboard for the 2021-22 school year is live. In addition to providing reporting on COVID counts in schools/districts, the dashboard will provide federal reporting requirements required under ESSER. You can find the dashboard at: <https://districtinformation.tnedu.gov>

New on the dashboard this year:

- If your district offers remote instruction during quarantine, you will be able to flag that information on the district information page.
- ESSER Allocations: The dashboard will provide a sum of ESSER 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 plans submitted by the district and approved by the state. This data will come straight from ePlan and will not require any input from the district.
- Enrollment and Attendance information: After the 15th of each month, the dashboard will provide a view of enrollment and attendance data submitted by the district through your student information systems into EIS.
- Waiver information: On a school level, if you are granted a waiver, this information will be inputted by the department and reflected on the school listing within the district.
- Links to ESSER document and response plans: The dashboard will provide links to your ESSER plan documents as well as your publicly posted, locally adopted COVID mitigation strategies and your ESSER-required health and safety plan. We ask that you submit the links to those documents for the department to link to your district profile by filling out the survey [here](#).

Like last year, COVID counts should be entered by the district representative no later than 5 p.m. CT on Mondays for confirmed COVID cases in the schools during the previous week.

If you or your designated representative do not have access to the dashboard, please contact the District Technology Help Desk at [REDACTED] and complete the access request form.

TDOE Remote Learning Waiver Letter and Application

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

For cases where districts can demonstrate and document COVID-related needs in their school communities that necessitate a temporary shift to remote instruction for classrooms or entire schools, Commissioner Schwinn will entertain waiver requests for districts to provide temporary remote instruction due to COVID-19 at the classroom and school level.

This waiver process is not required for individual students on quarantine to receive remote instruction, and waivers, if approved, will be valid for up to seven calendar days. The department will review waiver requests and respond in writing to the district as quickly as possible.

The commissioner of education is authorized by state law and state board of education (SBE) rule to grant waivers of certain statutes and SBE rules to local education agencies (LEAs) upon request. Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-203 and SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.12(6), the department will post any approved waivers within five (5) business days of the commissioner's approval to our website. The waivers shall include the name of the LEA requesting the waiver and an explanation of the waiver requested.

All waiver requests and responses related to the COVID-19 Remote Learning Waiver will be posted daily at 5:30 p.m. CT. Waivers that come in after 5:30 p.m. will be posted the following day. They will be accessible through this link at the very bottom of the webpage: <https://www.tn.gov/education/legal-services/public-notices.html>

The letter Commissioner Schwinn shared with directors about the application and process can be found [here](#) and the LEA COVID-19 Relief waiver request application can be found [here](#).

PBS Programming Continues During October Statewide

Audience: Director of Schools, Educators, Families

Contact: [REDACTED]

During the month of October, the department has resumed and is providing academic instructional videos airing on PBS statewide, which provide video lessons for Pre-K-2 students. Additionally, there are math video lessons for specific grades.

Families can watch these instructional video lessons created specifically for Tennessee students on all six state PBS stations – WNPT Nashville, East Tennessee PBS, WCTE Upper Cumberland, WKNO Memphis, West TN PBS, and Chattanooga WTCI from 9 a.m. –11 a.m. CST.

The schedule for October can be found on the [department's website](#). PBS Teaching Tennessee classroom lessons for 1st-8th grade students can be found on the [department's YouTube page](#). All 320 lessons have companion teacher lesson plans and student packets. Learn more [here](#).

Dates to Remember:

** Dates are subject to change as things continue to update. Please check the department's [online calendar](#) for updated dates.*

- **October 11-25:** ELC Grant Intent to Apply Window
- **October 18-22:** Annual EPSO Week
- **October 22:** Summer 2021 Learning Camp Staffing Survey Deadline
- **October 25:** 2020-21 ACT Appeals Window Opens
- **October 28:** Virtual Education Webinar
- **October 29:** SPED Interventionist 6-12 & SPED Comprehensive K-12 Additional Endorsement Programs Self-Registration Deadline
- **October 31:** Spring 2022 TCAP Assessment Committee Application Deadline
- **November 1:** Deadline to submit NAGB Board Nominations
- **November 1:** Middle School STEM & CTE Career Exploration Start-up & Expansion Grant Application Deadline
- **November 1:** HS School-Based Enterprise (SBE) Start-up Grant Application Deadline
- **November 6:** Presidential Scholars Application Deadline
- **November 8:** InformTN District Planning Window Opens
- **November 9:** Pre-Testing Technology Coordinator Support for Test Administrators Webinar
- **November 12:** SPED & ESL Additional Endorsement Pathway Applications Deadline
- **November 12:** 2021-22 ACT Appeals Window Closes
- **November 15:** TSIC Exam Reviewers Application Materials Submission Deadline
- **November 19:** EPWG Application Deadline
- **November 22:** Mathematics Instructional Materials Advisory Panelists Application Deadline
- **November 30:** 2021-22 Growth and Achievement Measure Selections and Scales Deadline
- **November 30:** LEA Compliance Report Due Date
- **November 30:** 2022 Advanced Placement Summer Institute Sign Up Deadline
- **December 10:** OLNTT Registration Closes
- **January 6:** During Testing: Technology Troubleshooting Webinar
- **January 7:** 2022 PAEMST Awards Nomination Deadline
- **January 10-14:** 2022 Winter Occupational License New Teacher Training
- **February 6:** 2022 PAEMST Awards Application Deadline
- **February 27:** Summer 2022 TCAP Assessment Committee Application Deadline

- **March 1:** InformTN District Planning Window Closes
- **March 31:** Seat Restraint Grant Application Window Closes

[Click here to return to the top of the newsletter](#)



In case you missed it, click [here](#) to view last week's edition of this newsletter!

Click [here](#) to sign up to receive other department newsletters.



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From: Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 10/21/2021 7:31:31 AM
To: CO Superintendent Group <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Fwd: Commissioner's Update for Directors, October 21

FYI.

Jason Golden
Superintendent
Williamson County Schools
[REDACTED]

Begin forwarded message:

From: Commissioner Schwinn <[REDACTED]>
Date: October 21, 2021 at 6:01:16 AM CDT
To: Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Commissioner's Update for Directors, October 21
Reply-To: Commissioner Schwinn <[REDACTED]>

WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS

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We will set all students on a path to success.

If we are successful, then Tennessee will see a substantial increase in the number of students on-track to meeting postsecondary goals two years after graduation.



- [Key Updates](#) - Learn about the Tennessee Funding Review Engagement Updates, Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSO) Week, the Summer 2021 Learning Camp Staffing Survey Deadline, and more.
- [Academics](#) - Receive information on the Early Literacy Network Approved Vendor List & Funding Guidance, the Call for Mathematics Instructional Materials Advisory Panelists, Updated Tennessee Universal Reading Screener Resources, and more.
- [Student Readiness](#) - Learn about the TSIC Exam Reviewer Application Materials Submission Deadline, Defined Careers & Elevate TN Webinar, the 2021 Fall ST(E)AM Resource Hub Themes and Challenges for October, Summer 2022 Advanced Placement Summer Institute Sign-Ups, and more.
- [Educators](#) - Receive information on the SPED & ESL Additional Endorsement Pathway Application, Educator Preparation Working Group Participant Application, and more.
- [Supporting Work](#) - Learn about the ELC Grant Opportunity to Support COVID-19 Testing, the Virtual Education Webinar, the InformTN District Planning Timeline, the Seat Restraint Grant, and Assessment and Accountability updates.
- [In Case You Missed It](#) - Catch up on updates from previous issues!



New item



Previously run announcement



Deadline before next update

Key Updates

★ Tennessee Funding Review Engagement Updates: Committee Announcements

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

On Friday, October 8, Governor Lee [announced](#) a full review of the state's funding formula for public education to focus on a student investment strategy that emphasizes all

students rather than systems, empowers parents to engage in their child's education and outcomes, ensures all students are prepared for postsecondary success and reflects Tennesseans' values.

The state's engagement includes a [central steering committee](#) composed of policymakers from across the state and [18 subcommittees](#), composed of over 200 Tennesseans representing students, families, district and school leaders, higher education partners, elected officials, business leaders, education stakeholders, and members of the public. Each of the 18 subcommittees will meet twice a month and are led by a chair who is tasked with capturing ideas and feedback based in the unique perspective of the stakeholder group or respective topic area they serve.

Throughout the coming days, the department will announce the members of the subcommittees and additional public engagement opportunities. Yesterday, October 20, the department [announced the school- and district-focused subcommittee members](#)- specifically the Teacher Advisory Subcommittee, Principal Advisory Subcommittee, School System Personnel Subcommittee, School System Leadership Subcommittee, Rural, and Small District Subcommittee, Suburban Districts, Municipals, and Fast-Growing Communities Subcommittee, Urban District Subcommittee. On Tuesday, October 19, the department [announced the members of the student- and parent-focused funding review subcommittees](#).

Over 1,000 Tennesseans have already submitted their interest in engaging in discussions and receiving updates related to a student-centered investment strategy. Members of the public will be engaged via a public survey to be released this fall and are encouraged to continue to submit their interest via [this form](#).

All associated committee meeting materials, including recordings, transcripts, and minutes, will be posted [here](#).

Visit this webpage for more information and learn how to get involved: <https://www.tn.gov/education/tnedufunding>. For funding-related inquiries, contact [REDACTED].

Tennessee Celebrates Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs) Week

Audience: Counselors, CTE Directors, CTE Educators, Director of Schools, District Staff, Educators, Principals, School Staff, Secondary Supervisors

Contact: [REDACTED]

This week, the Tennessee Department of Education, in collaboration with districts and schools across the state, is celebrating the unique role [early postsecondary opportunities \(EPSOs\)](#) play in preparing students for college and career during the 6th annual EPSO Week, happening October 18-22.

Across the state, schools and districts will spotlight and promote these opportunities for students through various activities and events during the week. The department encourages schools, educators, and districts to join in highlighting their work by sharing on social media using [#EPSOWeek2021](#).

Early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) include a course and/or exam that give students a chance to obtain postsecondary credit while still in high school. In Tennessee, there are eight different types of EPSOs offered widely by districts.

To learn more about early postsecondary opportunities in Tennessee, visit the [department's website](#). Learn more about the 2021 EPSO Week [here](#).

Summer 2021 Learning Camp Staffing Survey

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

The TN Learning Loss Remediation and Student Acceleration Act (T.C.A. 49-6-1509) requires the department to report to the governor and legislature by November 1 each year on several topics related to the summer programs outlined in this Act.

In order to provide the information required, the department is asking districts to complete [this very brief survey](#) related to staffing experiences with the 2021 Summer Learning Camps. This survey includes, at most, 9 multiple-choice questions. No written narrative is required. The department will provide a statewide trend analysis of these responses for the report and will not identify any individual district. The deadline for completing this survey is **October 22, 2021**. Please contact [Meghan McLeroy](#) with questions.

2021-22 ACT Appeals Window

Audience: Directors of schools & Data coordinators

Contact: [REDACTED]

On Friday, October 22, the department will release student-, school-, and district-level ACT files for 2021 graduates through the Accountability application. The fall appeals window for ACT files will open on **Monday, October 25**, and closes at **5 p.m. CT** on **Friday, November 12**. Any submissions received after this deadline will be automatically denied for purpose of reporting. Directors of schools should send appeals using the instructions and submission worksheet found on the department's website. Additionally, the department has released the [2021-22 ACT Appeals Guidance](#) as a resource.

2021-22 Assessment Calendar

Audience: Directors of schools, District Testing Coordinators, Special Population Coordinators, Educators

Contact: [REDACTED]

The department has released an updated version of the 2021-22 Assessment Calendar on [the department's Assessment webpage](#). This calendar lists the dates for both required and optional assessment windows during the 2021-22 school year, including TCAP, TCAP-Alternate and MSAA, WIDA, and ACT/SAT. As required by law, districts must include assessment dates on their public websites.

An updated 2021-22 Assessment Milestones Document is also now available on the [Assessment Logistics LiveBinder](#).

Academics

All Tennessee students will have access to a high-quality education, no matter where they live.

Early Literacy Network: Approved Vendor List and Funding Guidance

Audience: *Directors of Schools & Instructional Supervisors Participating in the Early Literacy Network*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Early Literacy Network provides districts with additional funding and support for the implementation of foundational skills and knowledge-building curricula in Pre-Kindergarten through second grade. Participating districts receive funding to contract with a one-on-one implementation support provider to address district-specific needs in foundational skills instruction as an extension of the Tennessee Early Reading Training. The Early Literacy Network focuses on the implementation of the Tennessee Foundational Skills Instructional Practice Guide (IPG), unit and lesson preparation using high-quality instructional materials, and provides optional opportunities for tailored learning around topics of interest through free and optional Communities of Practice. The first module in the Communities of Practice series launched in September. To learn more about the Communities of Practice and register participants for upcoming sessions [click here](#).

As part of the Early Literacy Network, districts will receive grant funding for two years (2021-22 and 2022-23) to contract with an approved one-to-one implementation support provider. [This guidance document](#) is designed to assist districts in the ePlan application and vendor contracting processes. Included in this document is the list of vendors approved for this foundational skills work.

Please follow the next steps detailed in the [guidance document](#). With additional questions, reach out to [Kim Reznicek](#).

Call for Mathematics Instructional Materials Advisory Panelists

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Instructional Supervisors, Teachers*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Tennessee Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission is charged with recommending for approval instructional materials to the State Board of Education for use in Tennessee school districts. The Tennessee Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission is recruiting applicants to serve as a mathematics instructional materials advisory panelists. Selected panelists will be charged with reviewing mathematics instructional materials to ensure they are aligned to the Tennessee mathematics standards.

The application can be found [here](#). Applications are due on or before **November 22, 2021**.

Updated Tennessee Universal Reading Screener Resources

Audience: *Director of Schools, Instructional Supervisors*

Contact: [REDACTED] Or [REDACTED]

Overview

The TN Universal Reading Screener was released by the department to provide a free and optional reading and math screener to enable districts to comply with the requirements of the Tennessee Literacy Success Act. Districts may also choose to use the other State Board of Education-approved universal reading screeners to meet the screening requirements required by the act.

Updated Matrix Guidance and Resources

In response to district feedback and engagement, as well as a review of all relevant laws and policies, the department is providing updated guidance and additional flexibility for districts related to the TN-URS and dyslexia screening. Please see [this guidance document](#) for more information and an updated TN-URS screening matrix.

All guidance documents, including the [Universal Reading Screener Administration: Requirements for Universal Reading Screeners](#), are publicly posted on the [2021 Special Session Legislation Resources webpage](#).

Support and Training

Support is available through weekly office hours every Friday from 10-11 a.m. CT. Join by using this [link](#).

Contact Information

With questions or for more information about the Universal Reading Screener, please reach out to [REDACTED].

Applications Now Open for the 2021-22 Governor's Schools Program

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Principals, Assistant Principals, School Counselors, Teachers*

Contact: [REDACTED]

All eleven Governor's Schools are now accepting applications for their 2021-22 summer programs. Each school offers a unique learning environment for students interested in one of the following disciplines: the arts, humanities, agriculture science, STEM programs, advanced mathematics, physics, leadership, international studies, Tennessee history, or potential teaching careers.

Each university host site offers a challenging and high-intensity program for rising 11th and 12th-grade students nominated by high school faculty.

Additional information about the Governor's School programs, including contact and application information for all eleven schools, can be found [here](#).

With questions, contact [Charlotte Woehler](#).

Next Phase of State of the Arts Program: New Arts Education Network and Study Opportunities for Districts

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Instructional Supervisors, District Visual and Performing Arts Leads, Principals, Visual and Performing Arts Teachers*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The department is excited to announce the launch of the State of the Arts: Arts Education Network and State of the Arts Study. Through a partnership between the Tennessee Department of Education, CMA Foundation, and the Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, we seek to better understand the inequities and barriers affecting the quality of arts education programming in order to better inform policymaking, district strategic planning, development of resources and support systems, and investment/philanthropic activities by

conducting a first-of-its-kind statewide arts education landscape study. This analysis will identify the barriers preventing student access to high-quality programming, gaps in sequential K-12 pathways, and identification of the types of support needed at the school, district, and state level that would have the greatest impact on students.

The State of the Arts: The Arts Education Network will develop and strengthen public-private partnerships to support arts education and facilitate the collaboration and sharing of ideas and promising practices between districts. Membership in the Arts Education Network is free and open to all Tennessee public school districts and charter schools.

Network participants will have immediate access to the State of the Arts Study, a statewide landscape study/analysis of school and district arts education programs facilitated by the CMA Foundation and Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation in partnership with the Department of Education. The landscape study is a comprehensive assessment of district arts (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts) education programs and will collect data relative to the quality indicators of arts education programs. Participation in the State of the Arts Study is free for every Tennessee school district.

Learn more about the Arts Education Network, State of the Arts Study, and other network benefits [here](#).

We encourage all districts to consider participating in the network in order to develop a strong network of practice across the state. Districts interested in participating in the network should [submit an intent to participate form](#). The intent to participate opt-in window is open on a rolling basis.

With questions, reach out to [Todd Shipley](#), Director of Arts Education.

Presidential Scholars Application Window Now Open

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Principals, Assistant Principals, School Counselors and CTE Directors*

Contact: [REDACTED] Or [REDACTED]

The Tennessee Department of Education is excited to share an opportunity for each Tennessee high school to nominate a maximum of two seniors to be considered as state finalists for the U.S. Presidential Scholars program. One senior may be nominated from each school for the general academic component of the program, and one senior may be nominated for the CTE component of the program.

General Academic Component

Our state can nominate high school seniors to be considered based on academic success and perseverance. The general academic component emphasizes the following areas on the application:

- Academic achievement
- Leadership skills
- Community involvement
- Overcoming obstacles
- Strong writing skills

The school principal, guidance counselor, or other designee may assist the student nominee with the completion of the online academic component state application, linked [here](#). Applications are due by **5 p.m. CT on November 6, 2021**.

CTE Component

Our state can nominate high school seniors to be considered based on excellence in career and technical education (CTE). This component emphasizes the following areas on the application:

- Academic rigor
- Technical competence
- Employability skills
- Ingenuity and creativity

The school principal, guidance counselor, or other designee may assist the student nominee with the completion of the online CTE component state application, linked [here](#). Applications are due by **5 p.m. CT on November 6, 2021**.

Student Readiness

Tennessee public schools will be equipped to serve the academic and non-academic needs of all students in their career pathways.

Tennessee Specific Industry Certification (TSIC) Exam Reviewers Needed

Audience: CTE Directors, CTE educators, Educators, Secondary Supervisors

Contact: 

The Division of College, Career and Technical Education is currently seeking individuals to serve on four TSIC exam review committees to validate the accuracy and relevance of current TSIC exam questions with the newly revised course standards. The review will include a 50-question practice exam, a 100-question exam, and questions in the respective exam question banks for Animal Science, Dietetics & Nutrition, Horticulture Science, and Human & Social Sciences.

Role and Responsibilities

Exam Reviewer

- Attend three committee meetings to understand the trajectory of the review process, logistics, goals, and exam outcomes. These trainings will be held virtually.
- Validate the accuracy and relevance of current TSIC exam questions within the respective exam question banks with the newly revised course standards.
- Revise the exam questions for the respective TSIC exam bank.

Qualifications

- Three years of teaching or work experience in a Tennessee Specific Industry Certification (TSIC) subject area.
- Must be a secondary teacher, postsecondary faculty, or industry representative.
- Secondary teachers must have experience in TSIC exam review and the development of TSIC exams or TSIC training materials.
- Postsecondary faculty must be on staff at a postsecondary institution that accepts TSIC credit; must have participated in the development of past TSIC exams or training materials; and must actively teach or provide educational support in the related content area.
- Industry representatives must be recommended by a stakeholder or educator group and must be recognized as an industry authority in the content area.

Assignment Criteria

Revision Lead – A selected applicant who meets the requirements outlined above and has previous experience with editing, formatting, and/or organizing question banks may be assigned as revision lead.

To apply, please submit the items below to [Steven Gass](#) by **Monday, Nov. 15**.

Required Application Materials

- Up-to-date resume
- Cover letter
- Sample deliverable: *Create sample test questions related to two different [TSIC learning outcomes](#) for the TSIC Exam content area for which you are applying. It should include the TSIC exam name, content area, learning outcome, and a clear question asking for specific knowledge or skill aligned to the learning outcome written at three different cognitive levels of Blooms Taxonomy.*

Compensation

An individual can expect to be compensated up to \$752 if selected as an exam reviewer. The exam reviewer can be expected to be compensated up to \$2,002 if selected as a review lead for their content area. Compensation will be based on the work completed and meetings attended.

Elevate Tennessee and Defined Careers

Audience: Counselors, CTE Directors, CTE educators, Educators

Contact: 

Recently, two new platforms were released to educators for grades 6-12 to expand and enhance career exploration and advising.

[Defined Careers](#) is a project-based solution that allows students in grades 6-12 to explore and experience careers. It includes a career assessment that guides students towards real-world projects across recommended career pathways. Defined Careers empowers educators to provide all students with equitable access to careers.

[Elevate TN](#) seeks to create a pipeline of skilled workers in Tennessee. The statewide web portal is available for any educator that serves grades 8-12 in any subject area including CCTE programs of study. This platform provides students with job-shadowing and internship experiences, career exploration, and resume-building activities developed around local employer needs. Students can earn industry-recognized badges for their resumes while building skills that will support CCTE industry credentials.

Learn more with our prerecorded webinar that can be accessed [here](#).

2021 Fall STE(A)M Resource Hub Themes and Challenges for October

Audience: CTE Educators, Educators

Contact: 

The Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee STEM Innovation Network (TSIN) have released the 2021 Fall STE(A)M Resource Hub themes and descriptions for

October. The 2021 Fall STE(A)M Resource Hub engages students with challenges around design activities, critical thinking, and career exploration throughout the month of October. For more information click the following [link](#).

October 25-29: Exploring Geology

Geology rocks! Geology is a branch of Earth science concerned with the solid Earth, the rocks of which it is composed, and the processes by which they change over time. Looking at rocks, minerals, and gemstones can be fascinating. There are endless colors, textures, and patterns that are fascinating and tell the story of each rock. Careers in geology can take you all over the world studying everything from reconstructing history to working toward environmental conservation.

For more information, click [here](#).

Summer 2022 Advanced Placement Summer Institute Sign Ups

Audience: *Counselors, Director of Schools, District Staff, Educators, Principals, Secondary Supervisors, School Staff*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Niswonger Foundation, in partnership with the department, has opened its scholarship registration for summer 2022 Advanced Placement Summer Institutes (APSI) to be held in Tennessee. Educators who are interested in teaching AP in either the home district or virtually through AP Access for ALL should apply! To apply for a scholarship click [here](#) and submit by **Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021**.

APSIs are week-long summer professional development opportunities led by veteran AP teachers and college faculty that prepare educators to teach AP courses. To learn more about APSIs click [here](#).

STEM/STE(A)M Designation Application Now Open!

Audience: *CTE Directors, CTE educators, Educators, Principals, Secondary Supervisors*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The 2021-22 STEM or STE(A)M School Designation application is **now open through January 17th**. Schools that have completed the self-assessment and indicated their intent to apply will submit their full application, including narrative responses and artifacts for each section, through the online platform shared during the initial phone interview.

Tennessee STEM and STE(A)M School Designation was developed to provide a “roadmap” for schools to successfully implement a STEM or STE(A)M education plan at the local level. The tools and resources created define the attributes necessary for a school to create a comprehensive STEM or STE(A)M learning environment for its students. A school that receives Tennessee STEM or STE(A)M School Designation will be recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education for its use of STEM or STE(A)M teaching and learning strategies and serve as a model from which other schools may visit and learn. All K-12 schools serving students in Tennessee are eligible. Schools interested in a STEM or STE(A)M Designation should visit the [Tennessee STEM Innovation Network website](#).

Resources for the STEM/STE(A)M Designation process can be found [here](#).

Register for the 2022 Winter Occupational License New Teacher Training (OLNTT)

Audience: Counselors, CTE Directors, CTE Educators, District Staff, Educators, School Staff, Secondary Supervisors

Contact: [REDACTED]

Mark your calendars for the 2022 Winter Occupational License New Teacher Training (OLNTT) to be held January 10-14, 2022 at The Read House in Chattanooga, TN. This training ensures that new career and technical education (CTE) teachers are prepared to achieve immediate, measurable success with their students upon entering the classroom.

As this training is our first in-person training since COVID, there are limited capacities for each career cluster group. Registration is expected to fill up quickly and will close **Friday, Dec. 10, 2021**. No late registrations will be accepted.

NOTE: Currently, this training is expected to be held in person. We are actively taking precautions and making decisions for the overall wellbeing of our attendees and training staff, as well as considering the best method to deliver the information. If it is determined that the best course of action is to host this event virtually, that decision will be made by Monday, Nov. 1. All registered attendees will be notified, and the registration website will be updated to reflect the decision to go virtual. There will be no hybrid option for this training.

To register, click [here](#).

Register today as space is limited to 50 registrants per group. The group structure we will use for the week of OLNTT is listed below:

- Group 1: Health Science
- Group 2: Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
- Group 3: Arts, A/V Technology & Communications, IT, STEM
- Group 4: Human Services, Hospitality & Tourism, Supply Chain Management, & Academic Content Areas
- Group 5: Advanced Manufacturing, Architecture & Construction, Transportation

Announcing the Statewide Design Challenge

Audience: CTE Educators, Educators, Principals

Contact: [REDACTED]

TSIN, in collaboration with the TN Chamber of Commerce, is excited to announce the 2022 Statewide Design Challenge: Infrastructure. Infrastructure is defined as the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities needed for the operation of a society or enterprise, which includes roads, buildings, utilities/power supplies, and more!

This year's challenge invites students to consider how they can improve their school, community, or world by reimagining an existing physical space, system, product, or service so that it is more equitable, accessible, or efficient. Students have a choice about how they approach the topic to best consider the needs of their local communities.

Participating schools will conduct classroom-level presentations and then nominate outstanding projects to participate in a virtual competition in Spring 2022. For safety and equity, all competitions will be held virtually this year. The cost and time of travel can be a burden to some families and schools. To alleviate that burden and encourage more students to explore STEM challenges, we will hold all levels of competition virtually. No student should be excluded from this opportunity due to constraints of their location in the state.

Sign up [here](#) to receive a Welcome Packet email.

TDOE & UT Martin Offer Free ACT Prep Workshops and Classes to All Tennessee High School Students and Teachers

Audience: Counselors, Director of Schools, CTE Educators, CTE Directors, Educators, Principals, School Staff, Secondary Supervisors

Contact: 

In partnership with the University of Tennessee at Martin (UT Martin), the [department announced](#) in May that all Tennessee high school students and teachers will have access to workshops that help prepare students to succeed on the ACT, one of the most important college entrance exams offered to high school students across the country. These workshops began in Summer 2021 and are expected to continue through Fall 2022.

This fall we will offer five (5) [ACT Teacher Workshops](#). These free, two-hour workshops, conducted via Zoom, will provide strategies and practical skills to teachers to help them improve student ACT outcomes. Interested teachers can learn more about and register for the workshops [here](#).

The [ACT Success Tactics Workshops and Mastery Classes](#) and [Virtual Office Hours](#) are available to rising 11th and 12th graders in Tennessee. During these free virtual workshops, we will share resources and tools that will teach students effective test-taking strategies, as well as provide them content practice in specific subject areas. Interested students can learn more about and register for the workshops, classes, and office hours [here](#).

Educators

Tennessee will set a new path for the education profession and be the top state to become and remain a teacher and leader.

SPED and ESL Additional Endorsement Pathway

Audience: Directors of Schools, Special Education & ESL Directors

Contact: 

The **Tennessee Department of Education** is pleased to announce a new **Special Education and English as a Second Language additional endorsement pathway**. This pathway will be run by the Department of Education and will provide all necessary coursework for endorsement in Special Education Interventionist K-8 (144) and English as a Second Language Pre-K-12 (490), at no cost to participants.

For the **inaugural 2021-22 cohort**, we will be offering 25 seats in each endorsement pathway. Participants will be selected equitably across the state to ensure that various districts, grade and experience levels, and future interests are represented. All participants must possess a **current** and **valid Tennessee teaching license** and must successfully complete all preparation requirements prior to taking the necessary praxis assessment.

Course work will begin in December 2021 and conclude in June 2022. Participants must commit to taking the required praxis exams during the first two weeks in July. The cost of the praxis exams is the only cost participants of this program will incur.

Praxis Test Requirements

Endorsement	Test Name	Test Code
Second Language Pre-K-12 (490)	English to Speakers of Other Languages	5362
Special Education Interventionist K-8 (144)	Special Education: Core Knowledge and Mild to Moderate Applications	5543
	Teaching Reading: Elementary	5205

Interested applicants should apply using [this link](#). Applications are due on or before **November 12, 2021**. Applicants will be notified of their status by November 17, 2021.

Educator Preparation Working Group – Call for Participants

Audience: EPPs & LEAs (Directors of Schools, Supervisors, Principals, Educators)

Contact: 

The department is seeking representatives from both districts and educator preparation providers to serve on the educator preparation working group (EPWG) for the 2022 and 2023 calendar years. The EPWG provides clear and transparent lines of communication between the department and various stakeholder groups regarding key initiatives associated with improving educator preparation. Members include both EPP and district representatives who work together to support the department's efforts to ensure educators entering Tennessee classrooms are well-prepared to meet the needs of all students.

This application is open to any EPP or LEA faculty or staff member except those who served on the EPWG during the 2020 and/or 2021 calendar years. Individuals interested in participating in the EPWG for the 2022-23 calendar years should complete the [application](#) by **Friday, Nov. 19**.

PAEMST Awards: 2022 Nominations Now Open

Audience: Director of Schools, Principals, School Administrators, Educators

Contact: 

The **Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST)** are the highest honors bestowed by the United States government specifically for K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teaching.

Anyone—principals, teachers, parents, students, or members of the general public—[may nominate](#) exceptional STEM teachers who are currently teaching grades K-6 for the 2022 award year. Teachers may also apply directly [here](#).

Presidential Awardees receive a certificate signed by the President of the United States; a trip to Washington, D.C., to attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities; and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation. They also join a network of award-winning teachers from across the country. The National Science Foundation administers PAEMST on the behalf of The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The **nomination deadline is January 7, 2022**, and the **application deadline is February 6, 2022** for elementary teachers (grades K-6). Secondary teachers (grades 7-12) will be eligible to apply during a future cycle.

With questions, please contact Tennessee PAEMST coordinator, [Janelle Brown](#).

Supporting Work



ELC Grant Opportunity to Support COVID-19 Testing– Round 2

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

The department is excited to announce a second round of ELC grants in conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Health for LEAs and non-public schools to support the reopening and in-person instruction of K-12 schools through comprehensive screening testing. Initial testing would begin once the application is approved and extend through July 31, 2022. This opportunity is open to all LEAs and non-public schools who did not apply during the first round of grants.

If you are interested in this opportunity, you must complete an [Intent to Apply form](#) between **October 11-25, 2021**.

Applications will be open for LEAs and non-public schools in ePlan on November 8, 2021. Once awarded, ELC grant funds will be available upon an approved application and expire on **July 31, 2022**.

Information and materials to support LEAs and non-public schools with the ELC grant are and will be available in [ePlan.tn.gov > TDOE Resources](#)> Epidemiology & Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Grant. Please review these resources to learn about the focus areas supported by these supplemental grant funds and the application components that will be required when the ELC application goes live.



Virtual Education Webinar

Audience: Director of Schools & Principals

Contact: [REDACTED]

The Department of Choice will host a webinar on virtual education on, **Thursday, October 28, 2021, at 10 a.m. CT**. The training will address frequently asked questions related to virtual education, examine different statutory and regulatory requirements related to virtual schools and virtual education programs, and discuss virtual education operations and logistics. This training is for any district or school-level leader involved with virtual education—this includes both virtual schools and virtual education programs within a brick-and-

mortar school.

For questions or to receive the WebEx link, please email [Matt Bowser](#).

InformTN District Planning Timeline

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Supervisors*

Contact: [REDACTED]

At the conclusion of district planning in spring 2021, district leaders shared feedback on the district planning process through the annual InformTN District Survey. Based on your feedback, we learned a great deal about improvements and adjustments to better meet the needs of stakeholders. After identifying the trends in the survey data, we have made updates to the platform for greater usability, increased support opportunities and guidance to aid in strong planning, and extended the planning timeline. An extended planning timeline was one of the pieces of feedback most often shared and is one of the most significant changes you'll experience in district planning this year.

The district planning window will be open from **November 8 to March 1**. Reviewing of plans will begin on **March 1, 2022**, and conclude with plan approvals by **April 15, 2022**. Throughout the planning window, you will have opportunities for support from various TDOE divisions that include training sessions, recorded webinars, individual support meetings, and office hours. More information about these supports for your planning team will be shared in the coming weeks.

The timeline for the 2022-23 planning cycle can be found [here](#).

Seat Restraint Grant

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Transportation Supervisors*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The General Assembly appropriated \$3 million in nonrecurring funds in the fiscal year 2018 for a school bus seat restraint demonstration program. The funds have been earmarked to help districts, charters, and charter management organizations address the extra costs associated with equipping school buses with seat restraints. The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) student transportation team is tasked with the implementation of the grant program.

In order to receive grant funding for this program, LEAs will need to complete all components of the Grant Application and return all required sections to the TDOE student transportation department via email to [REDACTED]. **The grant application window opened on October 15, 2021, and will close on March 31, 2022.**

Any questions regarding the grant or application process should be directed to the grant administrator, [Alex Spann](#).

2021 LEA Compliance Report

Audience: *Directors of Schools*

Contact: [REDACTED]

Districts are required to comply with all federal and state education laws and State Board of Education (SBE) rules. The commissioner of education is responsible for ensuring school laws and SBE rules are executed as well as taking corrective action when a district is noncompliant with those laws and rules or is not following a department-approved compliance plan.

The LEA Compliance Report is a document used by the department in its annual process of ensuring compliance. All districts are required to complete the [report](#), including the [corrective action plan template](#) if applicable, and upload it to ePlan (instructions [here](#)) by **November 30**.

Assessment and Accountability

TCAP Assessment Committee Application Open for Spring and Summer 2022

Audience: *Directors of Schools, District Testing Coordinators, Special Population Coordinators, Educators*

Contact: [REDACTED]

The department is seeking educators to participate in the spring and summer 2022 Assessment Committees. Each year, Tennessee educators from across the state come together to help build our Tennessee-specific statewide assessments by participating in educator assessment committees.

In line with the department's focus on expanding leadership opportunities for educators, as specified in the Best for All plan, the assessment committees give educators the unique experience of providing feedback on the passages and test questions that will become a part of the TCAP state assessments. Tennessee educators are an invaluable resource as we continue to build our unique assessments to provide valuable feedback on student learning. Educators are invited to apply to as many committees as they wish. The deadline to apply for spring 2022 committees is **Sunday, October 31 at 11:59 p.m. CT.** and for **summer 2022 committees is Sunday, February 27 at 11:59 p.m. CT.**

Since several 2022 committees are focused on TCAP-Alt, there is a need for educators experienced and certified to teach special education to apply. Complete descriptions of the committees convening are on the department's [Assessment Committees page](#) along with the link to apply. Share this opportunity with other educators on social media using the hashtag #IMakeTCAP.

Educators who applied in 2020 or 2021 do not need to reapply to be considered for the same assessment committees. Please contact [Grace Franklin](#) to update your existing application.

2021-22 WIDA ACCESS Technology Webinars

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Tech Directors*

Contact: [REDACTED]

Data Recognition Corp (DRC) and WIDA will be hosting a series of Technology Webinars for Technology Coordinators in the 2021-22 school year. The purpose of the webinars is to

provide details related to the ACCESS 2021-22 Software Updates, Technology Installations, Technology Coordinator Support for Test Administrators, and Troubleshooting. Please see below for the links to register. If you are unable to attend, a recording will be available in [WIDA AMS](#) under *My Applications > General Information > Documents* after the presentation.

Topic: [Pre-Testing Technology Coordinator Support for Test Administrators](#)

Date: Tuesday, November 9, 2021

Time: 1 - 2 p.m. CT

Provide technology coordinators with information to communicate with test coordinators and administrators. Facilitate how to establish a local communication plan to identify issues and troubleshoot if problems arise. Review when to support test administrators at their testing sites by training them to respond to technical issues as well as when/how to report issues.

Topic: [During Testing: Technology Troubleshooting](#)

Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022

Time: 1 - 2 p.m. CT

An overview of the various troubleshooting solutions as well as common error messages.

Please contact DRC Customer Support with any questions at 1-██████████ or ████████████████████.

Release of EOC Mock-Interim Assessments

Audience: *Directors of Schools, Supervisors of Student Services, Principals, and Assistant Principals, District Testing Coordinators*

Contact: ██████████

Mock Interims for all grades and subjects are now available in [Schoolnet](#). Mock Interims yield better information for educators than a traditional practice exam. These are full-length, summative, blueprint-aligned exams that can be used to gauge mastery of grade-level content and serve as practice exams. They can be used to monitor student progress toward building the knowledge and skills reflected in the full breadth of the Tennessee Academic Standards. Mock Interims for grades 3-8 Math, ELA, and Science, and grades 6-8 Social Studies are now live, along with all EOC courses including math, ELA, U.S. History, and Biology. Educators can administer the tests online in the Schoolnet platform or print paper copies and scannable answer documents for paper test administration and easy platform scoring and reporting. To learn more about Schoolnet, visit [our resources page](#).

National Assessment Governing Board Nominations

Audience: *Directors of Schools, District Testing Coordinators, Special Population Coordinators*

Contact: ██████████

The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), which develops policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), is seeking candidates for several positions (to be appointed in fall 2022), including fourth-grade teacher, eighth-grade teacher, secondary school principal, and general public representative-parent leader.

Candidates can nominate themselves or be nominated by someone else. **Board nominations must be submitted online by Nov. 1, 2021.**

You can learn more about the open positions, Board members' responsibilities, and the submission requirements [here](#). This is a great opportunity to have the voice of Tennessee and your community represented on our national stage. All interested educators are encouraged to apply.

In Case You Missed It

TDOE, TERA Releases 2021 Tennessee Educator Survey Results

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

Recently, the Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) [released key findings and responses from the 2021 Tennessee Educator Survey](#) from 40,000 educators, representing over half of the state's educator population.

This survey collects data to understand educator experiences to provide direct feedback that will inform decision-making on key issues facing our schools and classrooms. This year's survey included questions to explore the instructional challenges due to COVID-related disruptions.

Key findings from the 2021 survey are below:

- Tennessee educators' top COVID-19 related concern was students missing instructional time during the school year. Teachers indicated fewer challenges for in-person instruction than for remote learning during the 2020-21 school year.
- Teachers continue to need more support to help meet the non-academic needs of students and families.
- Despite a challenging school year, job satisfaction and perceptions of school climate remains positive among Tennessee educators – continuing a positive trend that began in 2018

State-, district-, and school-level data is now available on the [survey results website](#) and the Tennessee Educator Survey: 2021 Overview brief can be found [here](#).

TDOE Announces 79 Districts Intend to Participate in TN ALL Corps Tutoring, Serve Nearly 150,000 Students Over Three Years

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED] & [REDACTED]

Last month, the Tennessee Department of Education announced [79 school districts](#), over half of all districts in the state, intend to participate in the [Tennessee Accelerating Literacy and Learning Corps](#) (TN ALL Corps) tutoring program to mitigate learning loss and accelerate student achievement. The participating districts and the department will invest a projected \$200 million in federal education funding in TN ALL Corps tutoring supports which stands to benefit nearly 150,000 Tennessee students over the next three years.

TN ALL Corps is a matching grant opportunity to empower districts to implement or strengthen tutoring supports for students in low ratios and at a high dosage, with TN ALL Corps tutoring occurring for small groups of students in 30–45-minute sessions, two to three times per week. This approach [in combination with summer programming](#) will provide students with 250-500 additional hours of academic instruction over the next three years and two summers.

Structured tutoring programs have been proven to significantly increase student achievement. As part of the [Tennessee Learning Loss and Student Acceleration Act](#) passed in the special session, the TN ALL Corps will support students across the state by providing access to tutoring in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math.

The formal application for TN ALL Corps is live in ePlan for all districts that submitted the intent to apply. A detailed guidance document outlining allowable uses of funds, instructions for budgeting local match dollars, and instructions for completing the application in ePlan can be found [here](#), or in ePlan under TDOE Resources > Grants > TN ALL Corps.

A list of districts intending to participate is available [here](#). Read more [here](#).

Statewide Literacy Awareness Campaign Launched: Starting with Sounds

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

Last month, the Tennessee Department of Education, in collaboration with Tennessee PBS, [launched Starting with Sounds](#), a [Reading 360](#) statewide awareness campaign to help Tennessee parents and students understand the importance of reading in an engaging and fun way.

In collaboration with Tennessee PBS, the state's six PBS stations- WCTE, WETP, WKNO, WKOP, WLJT, WNPT, WTCI- covering east to west and north to south, the department created [Starting with Sounds](#) to highlight the importance of early literacy and how families and students can practice reading by watching and listening to national and local musicians, athletes, and champions of student success read their favorite books and sing songs to help build these critical skills.

A list of the participating musicians, athletes, notable Tennesseans and national champions of youth achievement with links to their recorded videos is as follows:

- [Jason Crabb](#): Grammy award-winning singer and musician reads children's book "Most Days" and sings "What a Wonderful World"
- [Ellie Holcomb](#): Singer-songwriter reads children's book "My Father's Dragon" and sings "Family"
- [Kathy Mattea](#): Grammy award-winning country music and bluegrass singer reads "The Wind in the Willows" and sings "One Light, One Sun"
- [Ketch Secor](#): Grammy award-winning singer and founding member of Old Crow Medicine Show reads "Lorraine"
- [Scott Hamilton](#): Olympic gold medalist reads "Fritz Finds a Hat"
- [Jake Hoot](#): NBC's "The Voice" winner and country music singer reads "Bloom" and sings "Best Job I Ever Had"
- [Carl Ray](#): Country music singer reads and sings "Tiger in my Soup"
- [Kelly Lang](#): Award-winning singer/songwriter reads "Most People"
- [Rissi Palmer](#): Country music singer reads "Magnificent Homespun Brown" and sings "Best Day Ever"
- [Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley](#): Nationally known musicians read "Farmer Falgu Goes on a Trip" and sing "No More Hard Times Blues"
- *More to come!*

Starting November 1, Starting with Sounds will air on Tennessee PBS during the department's [regularly scheduled](#) time block from 9 a.m.- 11 a.m. CT. Additional Starting with Sounds videos will be added soon, including videos featuring celebrities like country music singer Tenille Townes and country music singer and songwriter Niko Moon. Local and national musicians, athletes, and other champions for student success are invited and encouraged to participate. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Free ACT Retake Opportunities Available for All Tennessee High School Seniors to Help Boost Scores

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

In August, the Tennessee Department of Education [highlighted](#) an opportunity this fall for all high school seniors to boost their scores on the ACT college entrance exam after taking the test the first time as a junior during the COVID-19 pandemic. While a [recent ACT, Inc. study](#) found that the 2020-21 ACT results indicated an anticipated decline in ACT scores nationwide, Tennessee is the first and only state to offer this free retake opportunity to every Tennessee high school senior this fall.

This year, the department is urging all Tennessee high school seniors to take advantage of the fall ACT retake opportunity and has expanded the state testing windows to provide additional options. ACT Inc.'s research shows that students who take the ACT more than once increase their score by an average of 1 point. Students who improve their scores in one or more subject areas tested will have their super-score composite available to send to postsecondary institutions and scholarship programs.

Districts across the state will be able to offer the free fall ACT retake opportunities during the following two-day window:

- November 2-4, 2021

Additionally, with UT Martin, the department is continuing to provide free, virtual workshops and classes this fall for all Tennessee high school students and teachers on how to be successful on the ACT. Learn more and access these resources [here](#).

For more information, click [here](#).

District Information Dashboard & Attendance Coding

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

The District Information Dashboard for the 2021-22 school year is live. In addition to providing reporting on COVID counts in schools/districts, the dashboard will provide federal reporting requirements required under ESSER. You can find the dashboard at: <https://districtinformation.tnedu.gov>

New on the dashboard this year:

- If your district offers remote instruction during quarantine, you will be able to flag that information on the district information page.
- ESSER Allocations: The dashboard will provide a sum of ESSER 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 plans submitted by the district and approved by the state. This data will come straight from ePlan and will not require any input from the district.
- Enrollment and Attendance information: After the 15th of each month, the dashboard will provide a view of enrollment and attendance data submitted by the district through your student information systems into EIS.
- Waiver information: On a school level, if you are granted a waiver, this information will be inputted by the department and reflected on the school listing within the district.
- Links to ESSER document and response plans: The dashboard will provide links to your ESSER plan documents as well as your publicly posted, locally adopted COVID

mitigation strategies and your ESSER-required health and safety plan. We ask that you submit the links to those documents for the department to link to your district profile by filling out the survey [here](#).

Like last year, COVID counts should be entered by the district representative no later than 5 p.m. CT on Mondays for confirmed COVID cases in the schools during the previous week.

If you or your designated representative do not have access to the dashboard, please contact the District Technology Help Desk at [REDACTED] and complete the access request form.

TDOE Remote Learning Waiver Letter and Application

Audience: Director of Schools

Contact: [REDACTED]

For cases where districts can demonstrate and document COVID-related needs in their school communities that necessitate a temporary shift to remote instruction for classrooms or entire schools, Commissioner Schwinn will entertain waiver requests for districts to provide temporary remote instruction due to COVID-19 at the classroom and school level.

This waiver process is not required for individual students on quarantine to receive remote instruction, and waivers, if approved, will be valid for up to seven calendar days. The department will review waiver requests and respond in writing to the district as quickly as possible.

The commissioner of education is authorized by state law and state board of education (SBE) rule to grant waivers of certain statutes and SBE rules to local education agencies (LEAs) upon request. Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-203 and SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.12(6), the department will post any approved waivers within five (5) business days of the commissioner's approval to our website. The waivers shall include the name of the LEA requesting the waiver and an explanation of the waiver requested.

All waiver requests and responses related to the COVID-19 Remote Learning Waiver will be posted daily at 5:30 p.m. CT. Waivers that come in after 5:30 p.m. will be posted the following day. They will be accessible through this link at the very bottom of the webpage: <https://www.tn.gov/education/legal-services/public-notices.html>

The letter Commissioner Schwinn shared with directors about the application and process can be found [here](#) and the LEA COVID-19 Relief waiver request application can be found [here](#).

PBS Programming Continues During October Statewide

Audience: Director of Schools, Educators, Families

Contact: [REDACTED]

During the month of October, the department has resumed and is providing academic instructional videos airing on PBS statewide, which provide video lessons for Pre-K-2 students. Additionally, there are math video lessons for specific grades.

Families can watch these instructional video lessons created specifically for Tennessee students on all six state PBS stations – WNPT Nashville, East Tennessee PBS, WCTE Upper

The schedule for October can be found on the [department's website](#). PBS Teaching Tennessee classroom lessons for 1st-8th grade students can be found on the [department's YouTube page](#). All 320 lessons have companion teacher lesson plans and student packets. Learn more [here](#).

Dates to Remember:

** Dates are subject to change as things continue to update. Please check the department's [online calendar](#) for updated dates.*

- **October 11-25:** ELC Grant Intent to Apply Window
- **October 18-22:** Annual EPSO Week
- **October 22:** Summer 2021 Learning Camp Staffing Survey Deadline
- **October 25:** 2020-21 ACT Appeals Window Opens
- **October 28:** Virtual Education Webinar
- **October 29:** SPED Interventionist 6-12 & SPED Comprehensive K-12 Additional Endorsement Programs Self-Registration Deadline
- **October 31:** Spring 2022 TCAP Assessment Committee Application Deadline
- **November 1:** Deadline to submit NAGB Board Nominations
- **November 1:** Middle School STEM & CTE Career Exploration Start-up & Expansion Grant Application Deadline
- **November 1:** HS School-Based Enterprise (SBE) Start-up Grant Application Deadline
- **November 6:** Presidential Scholars Application Deadline
- **November 8:** InformTN District Planning Window Opens
- **November 9:** Pre-Testing Technology Coordinator Support for Test Administrators Webinar
- **November 12:** SPED & ESL Additional Endorsement Pathway Applications Deadline
- **November 12:** 2021-22 ACT Appeals Window Closes
- **November 15:** TSIC Exam Reviewers Application Materials Submission Deadline
- **November 19:** EPWG Application Deadline
- **November 22:** Mathematics Instructional Materials Advisory Panelists Application Deadline
- **November 30:** 2021-22 Growth and Achievement Measure Selections and Scales Deadline
- **November 30:** LEA Compliance Report Due Date
- **November 30:** 2022 Advanced Placement Summer Institute Sign Up Deadline
- **December 10:** OLNTT Registration Closes
- **January 6:** During Testing: Technology Troubleshooting Webinar
- **January 7:** 2022 PAEMST Awards Nomination Deadline
- **January 10-14:** 2022 Winter Occupational License New Teacher Training
- **February 6:** 2022 PAEMST Awards Application Deadline
- **February 27:** Summer 2022 TCAP Assessment Committee Application Deadline
- **March 1:** InformTN District Planning Window Closes
- **March 31:** Seat Restraint Grant Application Window Closes



In case you missed it, click [here](#) to view last week's edition of this newsletter!

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