While numerous studies show the academic benefits of teacher and leader diversity on achievement for students of color, educators of color remain underrepresented in Knoxville and Tennessee more broadly. The below chart breaks down the demographics of Tennessee’s educator workforce.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2016-17
In Knox County Schools, educator diversity is not proportional to the number of students of color.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2016-17
Often, schools with a greater concentration of students experiencing poverty are less likely to have highly-effective teachers. In Knox County Schools, schools serving the fewest and most low-income students have about the same portion of strong teachers.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18

*The State Board of Education considers a strong teacher to receive a 4 or 5 on Tennessee’s Value-Added Assessment Score (TVAAS).
In Knox County Schools, 4 in 10 students were deemed proficient across all grades for the 2017-18 school year – greater than the state average. But even these proficiency rates were not shared by all students, especially historically underserved students.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
In the 2017-2018 school year, **26 percent of Knox County School 8th graders were proficient in math.** Gaps widen, however, when looking at success rates for students of color, English Learners, and low-income populations.

**SOURCE:** Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Almost one-third of Knox County Schools 8th graders are proficient in English/Language Arts. But students of color, low-income students, and English Learners are more than two times less likely to reach proficiency than White students.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Literacy gaps persist for students into high school. 4 in 10 KCS students were proficient in English II last year, but students of color, English Learners, and low-income students remained 2 times less likely to reach this proficiency compared to their White peers.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
High school graduation rates provide a measure of how well schools are providing individuals with a diploma. While almost 9 in 10 KCS students graduate in four years, this success is not shared across student groups. Black or African-American, Latino, and low-income students, and students experiencing homelessness, graduate high school at lower rates.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
When it comes to school funding, Knox County Schools spends less per pupil than the State of Tennessee at large, as well as the national average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knox County Schools</th>
<th>$9,555.56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Average</td>
<td>$10,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td>$12,526</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-2018
Education Week, 2018
On average, all Tennessee students are suspended in-school at a rate of about 7 percent, and out-of-school at a rate of 5 percent. But Black or African-American students, low-income students, and Students with Disabilities are suspended in and out-of-school at higher rates within their respective student groups.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Students are suspended at a rate of 8 percent in-school, and almost 10 percent out-of-school. But Black or African-American students, low-income students, and Students with Disabilities are suspended in and out-of-school at higher rates than the state average.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Student groups experience chronic absence at different rates. **Low-income students, students with disabilities, Black or African-American students, and American Indian students are all more likely to be chronically absent than the state’s average chronic absence rate.**

**SOURCE:** Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Compared to state averages, many KCS students experience higher rates of chronic absence. About 1 in 3 low-income KCS students experience chronic absence. American Indian and Black or African-American students, as well as students with disabilities, are more likely to experience chronic absence as well.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
American Indian, Black or African-American, Latino, and Native Hawaiian students, English Learners, and students with disabilities are all overrepresented in chronic absenteeism rates compared to the district’s overall demography.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
About 3 in 10 students in the East Tennessee region deemed proficient in 8th grade attempted any EPSO course. Students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities, and English Learners – even if deemed proficient – were less likely to enroll.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017
Prior academic proficiency is, however, a strong predictor of EPSO success. More than half of 8th grade proficient students attempting an EPSO earned credit in the East Tennessee region, although some students groups lag behind the average.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017
Earning credit for an EPSO, whether through AP testing, industry certification, or another credit, shows promise to increasing the chance that a student enrolls in a postsecondary institution after high school graduation. Below, the chart shows 8th grade proficient students earning an EPSO credit that enrolled in college.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017
Beyond earning EPSO credit, simple exposure to any EPSO increases the chance a student enrolls in college. **At least 7 in 10 East Tennessee students across all student groups attempting an EPSO enrolled in college upon graduation.**

**SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017**
The number of students that enrolls in a postsecondary institution immediately follow high school graduates varies for KCS graduates. On average, White and Asian KCS graduates are more likely to enroll in college. African-American graduates are somewhat less likely, and only about half of Latino graduates enroll in college.

Enrollment in this region’s public community colleges* varies for student groups over five years. Between 2013 and 2015, enrollment increased by 22.1 percent for Latino students, and 19.4 percent for Asian students. For Black or African-American and White students, enrollment declined overall by 6 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

*Pellissippi State, Roane State, and Walters State
For the region’s community colleges, three-year graduation rates remain concerningly low. Many students of color, and particularly Black or African-American students, Latino students and Pell-Recipients are the least likely to obtain a credential.

SOURCE: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2017
In this region’s four-year institutions*, enrollment for White students has **decreased** by 1 percent, and for Black or African-American students by 1 percent in the last five years. Latino enrollment has increased by 44 percent, and Asian enrollment 29.5 percent.

**SOURCE:** Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2013-2017

*East Tennessee State University and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville*
Colleges and universities differ in their capacity to succeed students, and historically underserved students in particular. Below is a chart demonstrating 6-year graduation rates for this region’s four-year institutions. **Black or African-American students and Pell-Recipients experience the lowest completion rates at these institutions.**

SOURCE: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2017
Postsecondary credentials matter, especially for Tennessee’s most underserved populations. Wage data shows that the impact of a postsecondary degree on an individual earnings is greatest for Asian, Black or African-American, and Latino students, and women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment and Median Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Income ($), Ages 25-34 (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Increase (Bachelor’s vs. High School Degree)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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