While numerous studies show the academic benefits of teacher and leader diversity on achievement for students of color, **educators of color remain underrepresented in Nashville and Tennessee** more broadly.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2016-17
Educator diversity at MNPS is not proportional to the number of MNPS students of color

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2016-17
TENNESSEE EDUCATORS OF COLOR ALLIANCE (TECA)

TECA is a statewide organization focused on convening and amplifying the voices, presence, and supports for educators of color in Tennessee. Formed in 2016, TECA maintains teacher-led, student-centered solutions to addressing persisting issues of educator diversity across schools and districts in the state. With a quickly growing membership base, TECA hosts an annual educator diversity conference, provides networking opportunities for educators, and offers mentorship and fellowship opportunities for emerging leaders of color in Tennessee.
Schools with a greater concentration of students experiencing poverty are less likely to have highly-effective teachers. Last year, **MNPS schools with the greatest number of low-income students had less access to strong teachers.**

*The State Board of Education considers a strong teacher to receive a 4 or 5 on Tennessee’s Value-Added Assessment Score (TVAAS).*
At MNPS, 3 in 10 students were deemed proficient across all grades for the 2017-18 school year. But even these proficiency rates were not shared by all students, especially historically underserved students.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Student proficiency by subject-area also remains inequitable across student groups. In the 2017-2018 school year, a little over 20 percent of MNPS 8th graders were proficient in math. Gaps widen, however, when looking at success rates for students of color and low-income populations.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
About 20 percent of MNPS 8th graders are proficient in English/Language Arts. But students of color, low-income students, and English Learners all show lower chances of success than White students, and the district average.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Pre-existing gaps in student achievement often persistent into high school. Less than 2 in 10 Black and Latino students were on-track or mastering the English II assessment, compared to 4 in 10 White students.

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 an average 8 in 10 MNPS students graduate in four years, this success is not shared across student groups. *Latino students, English Learners, and students experiencing homelessness are less likely to graduate high school.*

**SOURCE:** Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
In 2018, approximately **34,000 students attended a Priority School**, which are schools performing in the bottom 5 percent of the state. Over $\frac{1}{4}$ of these students attended a school in Nashville.

*SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2018*
Of MNPS students attending a Priority School, more than ½ of these students are Black or African-American and low-income.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2018
INNOVATION ZONES

Started with funds from the Race to the Top grant, Tennessee’s iZone model is one approach to turning around the state’s most underperforming schools. The iZone structure allows local districts to have extensive autonomy in designing their school turnaround efforts. With this autonomy, iZone schools hire their own staff, provide teachers with instructional content coaches, create space for instructor feedback, and offer extensive supplemental programming for students. In Memphis, these schools have seen considerable success. A.B. Hill Elementary, a former iZone school serving mostly students of color, saw student achievement increase from 14 to 35 percent between 2017 and 2018.
When it comes to school funding, **Metro Nashville Public Schools** spends more per pupil than the **State of Tennessee** at large, as well as the national average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metro Nashville Public Schools</th>
<th>$13,376</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>$10,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Average</td>
<td></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 are suspended at much higher rates** as are low-income students and students with disabilities. And Native-American student groups are suspended out-of-school at a rate of 13.1 percent.

**SOURCE:** Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
OASIS CENTER

The Oasis Center, formed in 1969, has partnered with Metro Nashville Public Schools in the last decade to address school discipline disparities for historically underserved students. Through annual district, school, and student retreats, Oasis has empowered students to advocate for the implementation of restorative justice practices for school discipline, not punitive school discipline. These student-led efforts have seen great success, with suspensions and expulsions decreasing significantly in the last year.
129,704 students (13.3%) were chronically absent* in Tennessee during the 2017-2018 school year.

*Chronic absenteeism occurs when a student misses more than 18 days of school, or more than 10 percent of the school year.
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.

**State of Tennessee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Chronic Absence Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Income</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Learners</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Compared to state averages, many MNPS students experience much higher rates of chronic absence. **3 in 5 chronically absent MNPS students are low-income, and nearly half are Black or African-American.**

**SOURCE:** Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Black or African-American students, Low-Income students, and Students with Disabilities are over-represented in chronic absenteeism rates compared to the district’s overall demography.

SOURCE: Tennessee Department of Education, 2017-18
Beginning in the 2013-14 year, Coffee County Schools began to take concrete action to address chronic absenteeism and truancy in their schools. First, the district has made an effort to measuring and understanding the time spans and context in which students miss valuable classroom time. And in 2017, the district launched its “Get Your Selfie to School” campaign. When all classroom students are present, the whole class gathers with the teacher for a selfie. These targeted, district-wide efforts to reduce chronic absence have seen Coffee County Schools’ chronic absence numbers cut in half since 2013-14.
IN THE MIDDLE CUMBERLAND REGION, MORE THAN 18,000 STUDENTS GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL IN 2017. OF THESE STUDENTS, ONLY 46 PERCENT ATTEMPTED AN EPSO*.

*Early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs), such as Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment, or Career & Technical Education courses, provide students with exposure to college and career prior to high school graduation.
About 4 in 10 students in the Middle Cumberland 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 earned EPSO credit** in the Middle Cumberland region, although specific 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. **More than 6 in 10 Middle Cumberland students across all student groups that attempted 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 MNPS graduates. On average, White and Asian MNPS graduates are more likely to enroll in college. African-American graduates are somewhat less likely, and less than half of Latino graduates enroll in college.

**SOURCE:** Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2014-2018
Enrollment in this region’s public community colleges* varies for student groups over five years. Between 2013 and 2015, enrollment increased by 79 percent for Latino students, and 12.6 percent for Asian students, and 2.1 percent for White students. For Black or African-American students, however, enrollment declined overall by 7 percent.

*Nashville State, Volunteer State, Motlow State, & Columbia 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 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 10.2 percent, and for Black or African-American students by 3.7 percent. Latino enrollment and Asian enrollment has increased by 19.9 percent and 5 percent, respectively.


*Middle Tennessee State University, Austin Peay State University, Tennessee State University, and Tennessee Technological University
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.

SOURCE: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2017
NashvilleGRAD

To address persisting issues of college completion for communities of color and low-income students, NashvilleGRAD will commence in the spring of 2019. Based on a model with measured student success in New York, NashvilleGRAD is a partnership between the Metro Nashville Government, Nashville State Community College, and TCAT Nashville. The program provides targeted financial assistance beyond tuition and fees, supporting students in purchasing textbooks, covering transportation fees, and other key expenses. Program participants will also receive academic and personal success coaching. The program’s goal: 50 percent of students will complete in 3 years. For TCAT Nashville students, 66 percent of students will complete industry certifications.
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>
<th>Median Income ($), Ages 25-34 (2016)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Degree</td>
<td>31,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>38,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>49,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Increase (Bachelor’s vs. High School Degree)</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** National Center for Education Statistics, 2016