



Nashville Public Education FOUNDATION

What we do: This Project

Advocating for Change	●
Promoting Excellence & Innovation	●
Supporting MNPS	●
Convening Stakeholders	●

What We Did:

NPEF created the Thriving Schools framework through a thorough research analysis into what ensures students achieve academically and develop agency. NPEF drafted a white paper to explain the components of the framework, why they are important, and how they work independently and together to positively impact schools, teachers, students, and families.

NPEF examined data from across the district to identify schools that were showing evidence of thriving schools conditions. Through a series of interviews and site visits, we created narratives about these schools to show what the conditions look like in action and to provide real-life examples of innovative solutions to enhancing thriving schools conditions in our district.

To date, school profiles have highlighted Whitsitt Elementary, Warner Elementary, Head Magnet Middle School, and LEAD Cameron College Prep.

To accompany the framework NPEF created a Thriving Schools Advocacy Guide to drive community action. This advocacy guide provides stakeholders with a shared language and set of priorities that pave the way for student success, guided by the conditions that must be present in schools for students to thrive. It also includes a checklist to help stakeholders identify whether a school is thriving and take action

Thriving Schools

What it is:

The [Thriving Schools](#) framework was created to explore the conditions necessary to create thriving schools - schools in which students are not just achieving academically, but are happy, emotionally supported, and developing holistically in ways that support their life beyond the classroom.

The six conditions included in the framework are: 1) Ambitious Instruction, 2) Culture of Collaboration, 3) Effective School Leadership, 4) Engaging Educational Experiences, 5) Inclusive and Supportive Cultures, and 6) Resource Alignment. The research-based framework explains how the presence of these conditions leads to both increased student performance and student agency. The Thriving Schools framework gives us a way to talk about what is happening in our schools, what needs to be strengthened, and why it is important for academic success and holistic development of our students.

In addition to the framework, NPEF also has created a set of Climbing to Thriving profiles, which spotlight schools in Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) demonstrating significant growth or performance in one or more areas of the Thriving Schools framework.

NPEF believes that all students can thrive in school, and that all MNPS schools can be a thriving school. The framework is intended to change the conversation about what we want for our students and how we can work together to get there, focusing on both existing strengths and possibility for improvement.

for needed changes to policies and practices. The guide also includes 18 things community members can do to help create schools where all kids thrive, as well as instructions on how to access relevant school data.

NPEF also partnered with the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) to identify a set of metrics for assessing the presence and impact of the Thriving Schools framework's conditions. This work is intended to help MNPS and schools understand the strengths and opportunities in relation to each condition to help chart a path forward in a way that prioritizes both academic achievement and student agency, while also informing how and why we collect, prioritize, and analyze data. For example, metrics that indicate a school's measure of Effective School Leadership in the Thriving Schools framework include teacher retention data, principal evaluation scores, and certain categories on the bi-annual educator survey that relate to the school's principal. Not only can these metrics provide a picture of the school's strengths and opportunities for improvement related to each condition of the Thriving Schools framework, but it can also provide insight into leading indicators that may demonstrate improvement or early evidence of success in ways that traditional data collection may not. This allows us to think differently and more holistically about what school success looks like and how to leverage strengths early on to maximize potential.



Thriving Schools

The Impact:



Through a strategic communications plan, NPEF has been able to share the Thriving Schools framework, profiles, and advocacy guide to spark conversations and encourage action around ways all schools and students can thrive.



The Climbing to Thriving profiles have informed and leveraged stakeholders to initiate conversations around what thriving schools look like, and how to best support schools to continue to thrive. This included a front-page article in the Tennessean highlighting one of our profiled schools and how it works to ensure all students thrive, bringing well-deserved attention to a former priority school that is showing tremendous student growth.



NPEF worked with the Tennessee Education Research Alliance (TERA) to identify metrics to help provide concrete analysis and solutions for supporting all MNPS schools in data collection and analysis and student and school supports.



Building Thriving Schools for all Nashville Students:
Our Collective Responsibility for Equity in Education



Why it Matters:

NPEF believes that student success is multifaceted and is greater than, but inclusive of, annual accountability measures. We believe that conversations around student success should, in addition to mastering content standards, include more discussion of student growth and the development of student agency and self-sufficiency. We believe discussing these outcomes as interrelated is the type of nuanced conversation that more accurately reflects what we hope for our students—that they are learning how to access and apply information while pursuing their goals with confidence. The framework not only sparks a new and more encompassing way to think about success in our public schools, but informs the critical steps forward to ensuring all students are thriving each day.

How to Get Involved:

Download the Thriving Schools white paper, available at thrivingschoolsnashville.org.

Download the [Thriving Schools Advocacy Guide](#) to learn more about how you can help ensure all students thrive in school.

