

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metro Nashville Public Schools Educators Selected for Third Annual Teacherpreneur Cohort

*Program sponsored by Amazon awards educators' solutions addressing
barriers to student success*

NASHVILLE, TENN. – Dec. 13, 2023 –The Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) announced its newest [Teacherpreneur cohort](#), with continued support from the program's founding partner, Amazon. Now in its third year, the Teacherpreneur program is a professional learning and leadership development opportunity for Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) educators providing guidance and resources for developing innovative solutions for real-world challenges in public education.

Over 12 weeks, the cohort of 10 MNPS educators will identify a key issue affecting student outcomes, research the root cause of the issue and design a solution that helps ensure all students thrive. Some of the issues being considered by cohort members include improving teacher retention, increasing resources for social-emotional learning, and providing supports for educators to deliver engaging and rigorous instruction in their classrooms. The cohort experience will culminate in a pitch event in February 2024, where educators will present their ideas to a panel of community judges for a chance to win cash prizes totaling \$25,000, as well as funding to support the implementation of their ideas.

This year's cohort includes:

- Angela Allen, Murrell School
- Jamie Bonkowski, Nashville Big Picture High School
- Kelly Carey, Tusculum Elementary School
- Sarah Casada, Ross Early Learning Center
- Ashley Giddens, East Nashville Magnet High School
- April Greene, Alex Green Elementary School
- Molly Handler, Ida B. Wells Elementary School
- Mary Jane Manley, Harris-Hillman School
- Natalie Nikitas, Valor College Prep
- Kathleen Shepherd, Haywood Elementary School

“Teacherpreneur represents the brilliant expertise and talent in our public schools, and we look forward to channeling their ideas to maximize impact for students both in and out of their classrooms,” said **Katie Cour, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of NPEF**. “This year's cohort possesses the type of innovation that can help students reach their full potential and inspire productive conversations about addressing tough challenges together.”

The Teacherpreneur program is based on successful models across the country that bring entrepreneurialism into the education space to give educators the opportunity to pitch and potentially scale their creative ideas.

The new cohort builds on last year's Teacherpreneur class, which included winning ideas focused on a social-emotional learning curriculum to increase access to mental health supports in student athletics; an interactive, challenge-based program to grow interest and achievement in science curriculum; and a program to increase access to advanced academic pathways for English Learner students. These concepts, along with a Community Favorite Award winner, received \$25,000 in prize money.

“Amazon is proud to invest in the Nashville Public Education Foundation through Teacherpreneur, a program that empowers teachers to create change in their classrooms and schools,” said **Courtney Ross, Amazon's senior manager of community engagement in Nashville**. “We are honored to support leadership opportunities for educators that make a lasting impact on Nashville's public schools.”

NPEF encourages the community to follow along with the cohort's experience [online](#) and through social media, as participants develop their concepts in preparation for the pitch event. The community will have a chance to vote for their favorite educator-developed solution online and in-person at the pitch event.

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About the Nashville Public Education Foundation

The Nashville Public Education Foundation (NPEF) is a nonprofit organization committed to ensuring every child can thrive in Nashville's public schools. NPEF works to improve student outcomes in Nashville's public schools by identifying challenges and advancing evidence-based solutions. Since 2002, NPEF's role as a catalyst for transformation has yielded tangible results in areas such as teacher professional development, teacher compensation, principal quality and college access. Learn more at nashvillepef.org.

Media Contact: Sydney Goggans / sgoggans@tinymightyco.com