

A YEAR IN REVIEW

2025



Nashville
Public Education
FOUNDATION

HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE SINCE 2002

TOGETHER, WE ARE SHAPING THE FUTURE OF NASHVILLE'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DEAR FRIENDS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION,

2025 has been a year of transformation and momentum for the Nashville Public Education Foundation. Building on more than two decades of impact, NPEF continues to champion bold ideas and collaborative partnerships that advance excellence and equity across Metro Nashville Public Schools.

This year, we deepened our focus on teacher recruitment and retention, strengthened partnerships with district and community leaders, and amplified the voices of students, educators, and families across our city. Through research, convening, and advocacy, we worked to ensure that every student in Nashville's public schools is prepared to thrive—today and for generations to come.

As we reflect on our collective progress, we also look ahead with renewed purpose. The challenges before us require innovation, courage, and continued collaboration. Together—with your partnership and belief in this mission—we are creating the conditions where great teaching and learning flourish in every classroom.

On behalf of the NPEF Board of Directors and our team, thank you for standing with us, investing in our work, and believing in the power of public education to change lives and strengthen communities.

With gratitude and determination,

Ralph Davis
NPEF Board Chair

Dr. Diarese George
President and CEO



A YEAR IN REVIEW

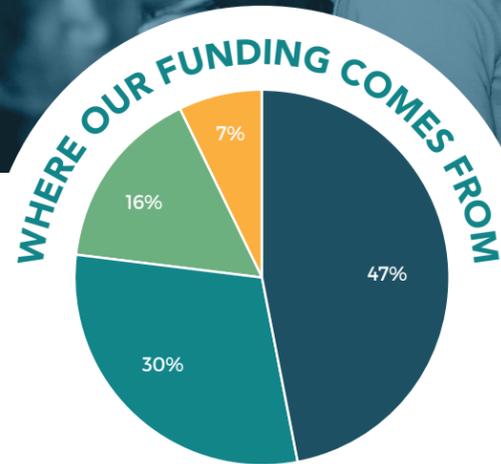
CHECK OUT SOME OF NPEF'S HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

WE INCREASE POSITIVE STUDENT OUTCOMES IN NASHVILLE'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES AND ADVANCING EVIDENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS.

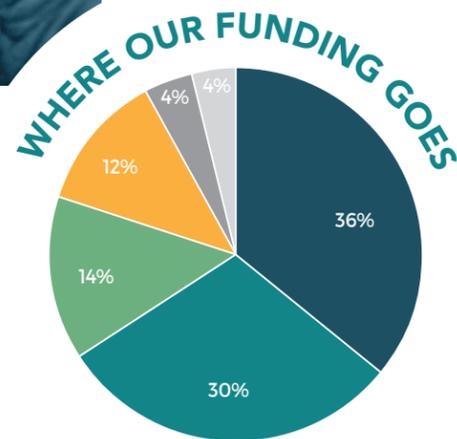


The Nashville Public Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization that removes barriers to student success by:

- 1) Increasing understanding of critical topics and support for research-based solutions
- 2) Increasing strategies for supporting student success in our schools



- Corporate Partners
- City Government
- Foundation Grants
- Individual Donors



- Supports for Students and Families
- Supports to Schools
- District Programs
- Grants to Educators
- Educator Development and Supports
- Raising Awareness

1] JANUARY

NPEF releases two infographics: "2025 Update on Tennessee's Education Savings Account/Voucher Program" and "2023-24 A-F Accountability Ratings"

NPEF launches the 2025 Leadership Public Education cohort in partnership with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce

2] FEBRUARY

NPEF's Teacherpreneur cohort of 10 educators develop and refine their innovative ideas for improving student outcomes

3] MARCH

NPEF releases infographic: "Understanding the Federal Role in Education"

NPEF's fourth Teacherpreneur cohort pitch their ideas to a panel of judges for a chance at cash prizes and seed funding



4] APRIL

NPEF releases infographic: "Why Academic Standards are Critical to Student Success"

5] MAY

NPEF releases updated "Teach Nashville" online resource to help aspiring educators start their career with MNPS

6] JUNE

NPEF publishes Thriving Schools profiles informing families and stakeholders about data tied to NPEF's Thriving Schools Framework

NPEF and the Nashville Chamber celebrate the graduation of the 2025 Leadership Public Education cohort



7] JULY

NPEF welcomes new President and CEO Dr. Diarese George



8] AUGUST

NPEF participates in the ribbon cutting for Shwab Elementary's new playground, in partnership with MNPS and the Lennar Foundation



NPEF hosts two Tech Goes Home sessions with Schrader Lane Church of Christ and Youth Encouragement Services

9] SEPTEMBER

NPEF honors nine leaders and organizations at the 21st annual Public Schools Hall of Fame at Music City Center



10] OCTOBER

NPEF awards 25 Blue Ribbon Teachers in partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools



11] NOVEMBER

NPEF hosts three Tech Goes Home sessions for MNPS families at Shwab Elementary, McGavock Elementary, and Schrader Lane Church of Christ

12] DECEMBER

NPEF announces 5th Teacherpreneur cohort

RAISING AWARENESS

About Critical Topics In Public Education

We believe that informed and productive community conversations about issues affecting our students are foundational to creating change. That's why we **share accessible and clear information** about public education in Nashville, breaking down often complex topics and illustrating their impact on Nashville's public school students. And that's why we **bring people together** to talk through important topics, collectively problem solve, and build political will to do bold things.

“NPEF's work is so important because our public schools shape the future of Nashville. By raising awareness about the challenges and opportunities within our school system, NPEF helps our community stay informed and engaged in supporting students and teachers. I'm passionate about being part of this work because I've seen how strong public schools strengthen families and communities. As a current MNPS parent and someone who works in public policy, I'm proud to help connect those perspectives and champion every child's opportunity to thrive.”

MICHELLE GASKIN BROWN | NPEF BOARD MEMBER AND SENIOR MANAGER, PUBLIC POLICY AT AMAZON

LEADERSHIP PUBLIC EDUCATION

This year, we convened the sixth annual Leadership Public Education cohort in partnership with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. This leadership development program equips participants with the skills and knowledge to grow as public schools advocates and serve in community leadership roles supporting Metro Nashville Public Schools. Cohort members learn from experts in a series of sessions that cover topics such as school funding, education policy and law, talent pipelines, and postsecondary outcomes and opportunities.

“Leadership Public Education deepened my understanding of the systems that shape decision-making and policy in our schools while connecting me with community members equally passionate about supporting Nashville's students. The experience renewed my sense of purpose as an advocate for equity and inclusion within our district and reinforced my belief that lasting change happens when educators, nonprofits, and community leaders work together to shape our students' futures.” — MARY MATTHEWS COFFEY, DIRECTOR OF PARTNERSHIPS, DIVERSE LEARNERS COOPERATIVE



POLICY INFOGRAPHICS

Our infographics break down complex topics and share research and data on policies and practices that impact Nashville's public schools. This year's infographics include understanding the federal role in public education, a 2025 update on Tennessee's voucher program, a report of the 2023-24 A-F school accountability ratings, and information on why academic standards are critical to student success.

“NPEF's infographics provide the data and research on key education topics that I need to be well informed in my decision-making. From the implementation of ESAs to basics of federal, state, and local funding to assessment policy, NPEF is a first stop for me as I look for how issues might impact MNPS.”

ERIN O'HARA BLOCK | MNPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS, DISTRICT 8



SCAN THE QR CODE HERE TO FIND ALL OF NPEF'S INFOGRAPHICS



THRIVING SCHOOLS

NPEF's Thriving Schools framework broadens the conversation on school success by exploring the conditions necessary for students to grow and achieve academically as well as be inspired and motivated, socially and civically engaged, and to become happy and confident learners. This year we created a new video breaking down the six Thriving Schools conditions and created school profiles highlighting data that public school families told us matter most to them.

SCAN THE QR CODE HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE FRAMEWORK AND VIEW THE SCHOOL PROFILES



“I've referred to NPEF's Thriving Schools profiles multiple times this year—they offer a quick, digestible snapshot of each school's unique character, going beyond one-dimensional stats like test scores and attendance. These profiles feel less like data and more like hearing from an engaged parent - with nuance, context, and categories of insight that help you better understand a school's story.”

JAMI OAKLEY | MNPS PARENT

RAISING AWARENESS

TEACH NASHVILLE

NPEF updated our Teach Nashville website, created in partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools, to serve as a recruitment tool and online resource for aspiring educators. On the Teach Nashville site, new and early career teachers can learn more about starting a career with MNPS and moving to Nashville, and hear directly from Nashville teachers on why our district is a special and supportive place to work.



SCAN THE QR CODE HERE TO VIEW THE SITE

“The Teach Nashville site is a powerful tool for strengthening our city’s teacher pipeline. By providing clear, accessible information about teaching in MNPS and living in Nashville, it removes barriers for aspiring educators and highlights the many reasons to build a career here. This resource helps connect talent with opportunity—and ultimately supports the students and communities we all serve.”

LESLIE COWELL,
DEAN, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,
LIPSCOMB UNIVERSITY

“Public education is a foundational building block of both personal and community development, and a great public school system ensures that all children have opportunities for success. As public school graduates, parents of public school children, and proud members of the Nashville community as a whole, we are thrilled to support the Nashville Public Education Foundation’s efforts to promote innovative ideas and evidence-based programs for our children, our teachers and all MNPS employees.”

JOHN GRAHAM | PRESIDENT OF J. GRAHAM, INC. AND NPEF MAJOR DONOR



NASHVILLE CHILD & YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

“The Nashville Child and Youth Collaborative is uniting organizations and leaders around a shared vision for Nashville’s future—one where every child has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. Together, we’re aligning our city’s resources and efforts to create lasting, systemic impact for young people and their families.”

STEPHEN SANTELLAN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TEACH FOR AMERICA
NASHVILLE-CHATTANOOGA

NASHVILLE CHILD AND YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

The Nashville Child and Youth Collaborative (NCYC), which launched in 2023 and now includes over 20 Nashville nonprofits, continued its work to increase investments in our city’s young people. This year, the collaborative engaged in strategic planning to identify critical next steps for furthering the NCYC’s mission.



SCAN THE QR CODE HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NCYC

INVESTING IN WHAT WORKS



We believe that research and data should drive our decisions about how to invest in solutions that help all students thrive. That’s why we design and **deliver research-based programs** for teachers and families and we strategically **partner with the district** to collaborate and maximize impact.

“Teacherpreneur gave me the tools to apply my creative ideas in my school. Learning how to engage and command an audience while presenting an idea not only strengthened my confidence but also helped refine my content to its fullest potential.” — RAYMOND BOYD | 2025 TEACHERPRENEUR COHORT MEMBER



TEACHERPRENEUR

This year, our 4th Teacherpreneur cohort pitched their ideas to a panel of judges for the chance at \$25,000 in cash prizes and seed funding to implement their idea. After two months of identifying a barrier to student success, analyzing the root causes, learning about change management theory, and using design thinking principles to develop a pilot program, ten Nashville educators shared their innovative ideas for improving student outcomes. First place winner Saul Calzadilla is now implementing his community gardening program; second place winner John Stayskal is working on providing more opportunities for teacher planning and collaboration; and third place winner Jamia Lockmiller is building her program for students to borrow and learn about sports and recreational equipment.



SCAN HERE TO LEARN ABOUT THIS YEAR’S WINNING IDEAS



INVESTING IN WHAT WORKS

BLUE RIBBON TEACHER AWARDS

This year's Blue Ribbon Teacher awards, in partnership with MNPS, honored 25 teachers for their excellence in leadership, instruction, and student success and opportunity. Each winner received a \$2,000 award along with two round-trip airline tickets provided by Southwest Airlines at a special celebration hosted by Vanderbilt University.



“Being chosen by the Blue Ribbon panel will be the pinnacle of my career because I can share with my family and peers' confirmation that my work as an art teacher is important and meaningful.”

MANDA HACKNEY | 2025 BLUE RIBBON TEACHER AWARD RECIPIENT

SCAN HERE TO MEET THIS YEAR'S WINNERS



DIRECT SUPPORTS TO SCHOOLS

NPEF helps provide direct supports to MNPS and individual schools through coordination and fiscal agency for a variety of programs and initiatives. This year, we were proud to help fund real time coaching for educators and to support the installation of a new playground at Shwab Elementary in partnership with the Lennar Foundation.



“Nonprofits are definitely a vital part of Shwab's Village! Our partnerships with nonprofits have opened doors to resources our school could not have accessed alone, ranging from academic support to essential services for students and families. These partnerships have truly strengthened our ability to help every child thrive and succeed in and out of the classroom.”

CHERYL BOWMAN, PH.D. | EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL, SHWAB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



TECH GOES HOME



Based on a statewide model, NPEF's Tech Goes Home program is a partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools and Tech Goes Home TN that provides digital literacy training and free laptops to MNPS families. Our Tech Goes Home programming grew in 2025, with support from local and state government grants that helped bridge the digital divide across our district. This year, NPEF operated 20 school-based classes and nine community-based classes for MNPS families, distributing 539 laptops and offering instruction interpreted into Spanish, Arabic, Burmese, Vietnamese, and American Sign Language.

“Tech Goes Home has helped us open more doors for families and staff in North Nashville. It's not just about technology – it is about access, connection, and confidence. The partnership with NPEF has made it possible for us to engage our community in new and meaningful ways.”

MONIQUE HODISON | DIRECTOR, SCHRADER LANE CHILDCARE CENTER

SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TECH GOES HOME



“The Nashville Public Education Foundation helps build partnerships, provide support, and amplify the great work our students, teachers, support staff, and community partners are doing. We are grateful for the role this organization plays in Nashville Public Schools and our city.”

DR. ADRIENNE BATTLE | SUPERINTENDENT, MNPS

SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

NPEF helped fund and facilitate a study conducted by the Urban Schools Human Capital Academy on strengthening teacher talent pipelines for some of the most in-demand roles in our district to provide insights and recommendations to Metro Nashville Public Schools.

“The Supply and Demand Study provides critical insights that help sharpen our strategic focus. NPEF's partnership ensures our priorities are grounded in data and aligned with the evolving needs of our schools and students.”

DR. LAQUITA STRIBLING | EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, MNPS

THE POWER OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE AT OUR 21ST PUBLIC SCHOOLS HALL OF FAME



On September 30, NPEF brought hundreds of Nashvillians together to celebrate our city's public school excellence and induct nine new honorees into the Public Schools Hall of Fame.

At this year's special event, we recognized one visionary business leader, three outstanding Metro Nashville Public Schools alumni, two transformational high school teachers, one inspiring school leader, and two local nonprofits improving opportunities and resources for students. This year's event, chaired by Candice Storey Lee, Vice Chancellor for Athletics and University Affairs and Athletic Director at Vanderbilt University, and Brandon Corbin, Regional Chief Information Officer at Ascension Saint Thomas, celebrated the power of public education and the role our schools play in a thriving city.

This year's event also marked the first Public Schools Hall of Fame for NPEF's new President and CEO Dr. Diarese George in this role. Dr. George spoke on the importance of investing in our students' futures, his personal connection to NPEF's work, and his excitement for the opportunities that lie ahead.



SCAN HERE
to watch highlights
from our 21st Hall
of Fame



Thank you to our incredible partners who make our work possible.

INNOVATORS

AllianceBernstein
Amazon
The Eskind Family in Memory of Mrs. Annette Eskind
The Jeffrey & Donna Eskind Family Foundation
The Steven & Laurie Eskind Family Foundation
J. Graham Inc.
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County
Scarlett Family Foundation
State of Tennessee
TN SCORE
Tennessee Valley Authority

COLLABORATORS

Ascension Saint Thomas
Belmont University
Boedecker Foundation
Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee
Dettwiller Foundation
Education Trust in Tennessee
The Enchiridion Foundation
Margaret and Tony Heard and the Heard Family Fund
First Horizon Foundation
GFiber
HCA Healthcare/TriStar Health
Ingram Charities
James Stephen Turner Family Foundation

Lipscomb University
Susan & Rick Mattson
MSB Cockayne Fund
Nissan North America
Pinnacle Financial Partners
Southwest Airlines
Tennessee Titans
UBS
Vanderbilt University

IGNITORS

Arbor Rouge Foundation
Brenda & Ron Corbin
Coffi & Brandon Corbin
Coca Cola Consolidated
Curb Records
Suann & Ralph Davis, Jr.

Delta Dental of TN
Dollar General Corporation
Enterprise Solutions
Carole & John Ferguson
Fisk University
Grace Design Studios
Gullett Sanford Robinson & Martin
Meg Harris
James R. Meadows, Jr. Foundation
Richard Johnston
Lennar Foundation
Lipman Brothers
Memorial Foundation
Marlene Eskind Moses
Juli Mosley

Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce
Orcutt Winslow PLLC
Piedmont Natural Gas Company
Regions Bank
Ryman Hospitality Properties Foundation
Carole & John Sergent
Keith B. Simmons
Shirley & Stuart Speyer
Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
Studio Bank
Teach for America Nashville-Chattanooga

Tiny Mighty Communications
Gail Williams
Wiseman | Ashworth | Trauger

TRAILBLAZERS

Aleta & Byron Trauger
Alfonzo Alexander
Harry Allen
Sallie Ballentine Bailey
Laura Baker
Mary Lee Bartlett
Erin Block
Michelle Gaskin Brown
Barbara & Greg Burns
Baker Tilly
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee

Martin Brown, Jr.
Sheila Calloway
Kate & Matthew Chinn
Judith & Joe C. Cook, Jr.
Deborah Farese
Robert Harris
Bill King
Madison Knowe
Leadership Nashville Foundation
Wanda Lyle
Conn M. McConnell
Michael McConnell
Caroline McNeilly in Memory of Rob McNeilly, III
Janet M. Miller
Marcus Pearson
MP&F Strategic Communications
Nashville Incubator
Dana & Tom Sherrard
Susan & Luke Simons
William Stead
Evette White
Thomas & Mamie Houser Foundation
Timothy Berry
West Family Foundation
Brenda Wynn
YWCA

And the hundreds of Friends of Public Education who have supported us this year.

NPEF

Board of Directors

Ralph Davis, *Chair*
 Wanda Lyle, *Vice Chair*
 Sheila Calloway, *Secretary*
 Alfonzo Alexander, *Treasurer*
 Harry Allen, *At-Large Member*
 Kate Chinn, *At-Large Member*

Michelle Gaskin Brown
 Diarese George
 Sheila Gibson
 Meg Harris
 Tony Heard
 Thomas J. Sherrard
 Byron Trauger
 Gail Williams
 Jerry B. Williams
 Brenda Wynn

EMERITUS BOARD MEMBER

Ron Corbin

IN MEMORIAM:



The Nashville Public Education Foundation would like to recognize and show great appreciation for two long-time board members who passed away this year. **Annette Eskind** served on Metro Nashville Public Schools' first school board, and was a founding NPEF board member and impactful philanthropist.



Rob McNeilly III was a respected banker and financial leader who served on NPEF's board and as the organization's treasurer for many years. We are grateful for their service and legacy as advocates for Nashville's public schools.



RALPH



WANDA



SHEILA



ALFONZO



HARRY



KATE

NPEF Team

Dr. Diarese George, *President and CEO*
Colleen Gilligan, *Director of Strategic Initiatives*
Melinda Judd, *Senior Vice President of Development and Outreach*
Regina Riley, *Vice President of Operations*
Tashaye Woods, *Director of Project Management*



A YEAR IN REVIEW

INFO@NASHVILLEPEF.ORG
NASHVILLEPEF.ORG

2025



Help support our work to ensure **EVERY CHILD**
can thrive in our public schools **EVERY DAY.**

HELPING CHILDREN THRIVE SINCE 2002