Standards for Family-School Partnerships Webinar Series

Standard Two:
Communicating Effectively

March 22, 2019

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Objectives

- Identify characteristics of effective communication with families

- Explore strategies for communicating with families

Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Standards for Family-School Partnerships

- Tennessee's Family Engagement Standards were enacted by Senate Bill No. 293 in 2009.

- These standards are based on the [PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships](#) and were formally adopted by the State Board of Education beginning in the 2010-11 school year.

Monthly Webinar Series

- TDOE will host monthly webinars focused on the standards.
  - **Feb. 25, 2019; 11:00 a.m. CST** - Introduction and Standard One: Welcoming All Families
  - **March 22, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Two: Communicating Effectively
  - **April 30, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Three: Supporting Student Success
  - **May 30, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Four: Speaking Up for Every Child
  - **June 27, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Five: Sharing Power
  - **July 31, 2019; 10:00 a.m. CST** - Standard Six: Collaborating with Community

- All webinars will be recorded and posted in the "Parent and Family Engagement" folder in TDOE Resources.

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Standard Two: Communicating Effectively

Communicating Effectively

- Families and school staff engage in **regular, two-way, and meaningful** communication about student learning.

Communicating Effectively

- **Goal: Sharing information between school and families**
  - Ask yourself:
    - Does the school keep all families informed about important issues and events <u>and</u> make it easy for families to communicate with the school?
  - Indicators:
    - Using multiple communication paths
    - Surveying families to identify issues and concerns
    - Having access to teachers and the principal
    - Providing information on current issues
    - Facilitating connections among families

Communicating **Effectively** STANDARD 2

Keys to Effective Communication

- Clear Expectations

- Timely

- Linked to Learning

Communicating Effectively

- Families are more likely to be involved when they:
  - Understand why they should be involved.
  - Have confidence in making contributions.
 - Feel invited by the school and/or their children.

Source: Hoover-Dempsey, K., & Sandler, H. M. (1997). Why do parents become involved in their children's education? Review of Educational Research, 67(1), 3-42. Retrieved from: https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/499194?seq=6#metadata_info_tab_contents
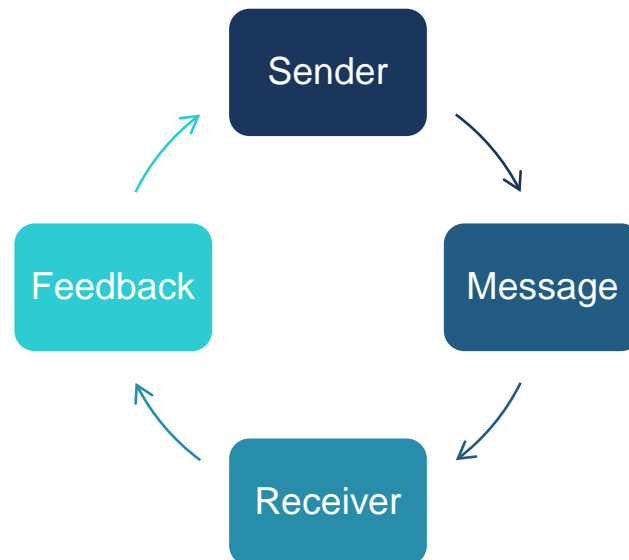
Characteristics of a Effective Communication

- Effective communication is **two-way:**
  - One-way communication occurs in a straight line from sender to receiver.

  | Sender | → | Message | → | Receiver |
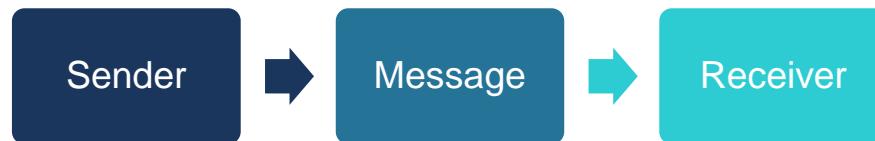
  - Two-way communication is initiated either by the school or by families and the receiver of the message is always able to send back a response, so communication can be extended and continued.

  Sender → Message → Receiver → Feedback → Sender

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Characteristics of a Effective Communication

- Specific and targeted

- Strength-based

- Solution-focused

- Ongoing

- Accessible to all

- Responsive to needs

- Culturally responsive

Communicating Effectively

- Communication is a skill!

- Consider investing in training on effective modes of communication:
  - Verbal communication
  - Written communication
  - Visual communication

Communicating Effectively

- Use Technology to Support Communication
  - Train teachers on new technology
  - Ensure parents have access
 - Provide parents with technology training

Strategies for Effective Communication

Questions for Reflection

- What kinds of supports do schools and teachers need to communicate effectively with families?

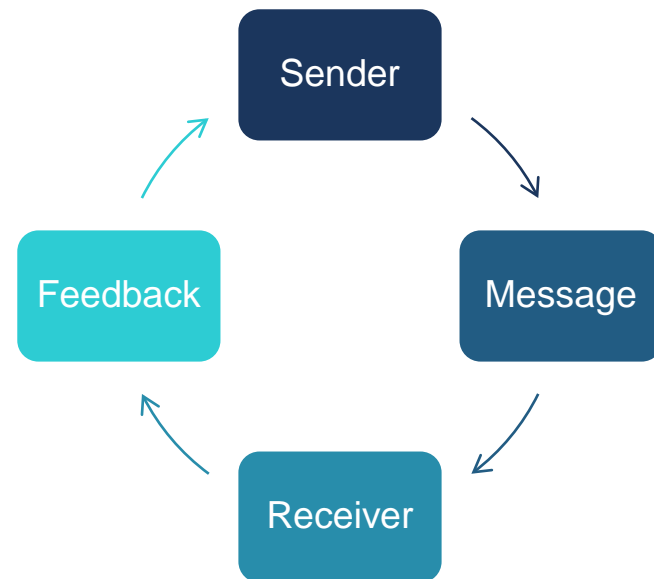- What are some effective ways to communicate students' academic progress to families?

One-Way Communication Strategies

- Newsletters
- Flyers
- Brochures
- Robocalls/texts
- Student progress reports/report cards
- E-mails
- Website
- Speeches/announcements

Sender → Message → Receiver
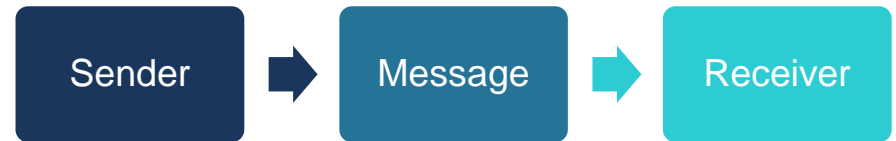
Two-Way Communication Strategies

- Parent-teacher conferences
- Student-led parent–teacher conferences
- Phone calls
- Video conferencing
- Meetings
- Workshops
- Home visits
- E-mail
- Surveys
- Social Media
- Informal conversations at students' out-of-school activities

Sender

Message

Receiver

Feedback

Moving Beyond One-Way to Two-Way Communication

| One-Way	Two-Way
Newsletter: Send monthly newsletter to families on a range of topics.	Newsletter: Add a section for families to write their comments. This section can then be placed in a commonly known location in the front office. Also include important contact information (phone numbers, email addresses) in the newsletter.
Emails: Send emails with school updates.	Emails: Create a school blog for continuous dialogue with family and community members. When appropriate, make sure emails come from an email address that accepts replies
Parent Conference: Teachers provide brief update on students academic progress.	Parent Conference: Teachers AND parents discuss the child's current academic data, and strategize on how to improve the child's performance. Also allow parents to help set academic goals.

Moving Beyond One-Way to Two-Way Communication

One-Way	Two-Way
Art Show: Students display art projects.	Art Show: School provides specific, grade level appropriate, art projects that families can do with their children and explains how the projects relate back to grade level standards.
Social Media: School posts highlights of school events and important announcements	Social Media: Post a question of the week, encouraging families to provide input and feedback on important topics. Host monthly [Twitter chats](#) with the principal, counselor, reading coach and/or other school staff.
Scheduling of Events: School sets event calendar with no family input.	Scheduling of Events: Survey parents on topics that are of high interest and the best days and times before setting the calendar. Provide evaluation forms at each parent event to measure effectiveness and make changes to future events.

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Moving Beyond One-Way to Two-Way Communication

FIGURE 3.

Percentage of second-graders, by parents' reported level of involvement and reported barriers to participation: School year 2012–13
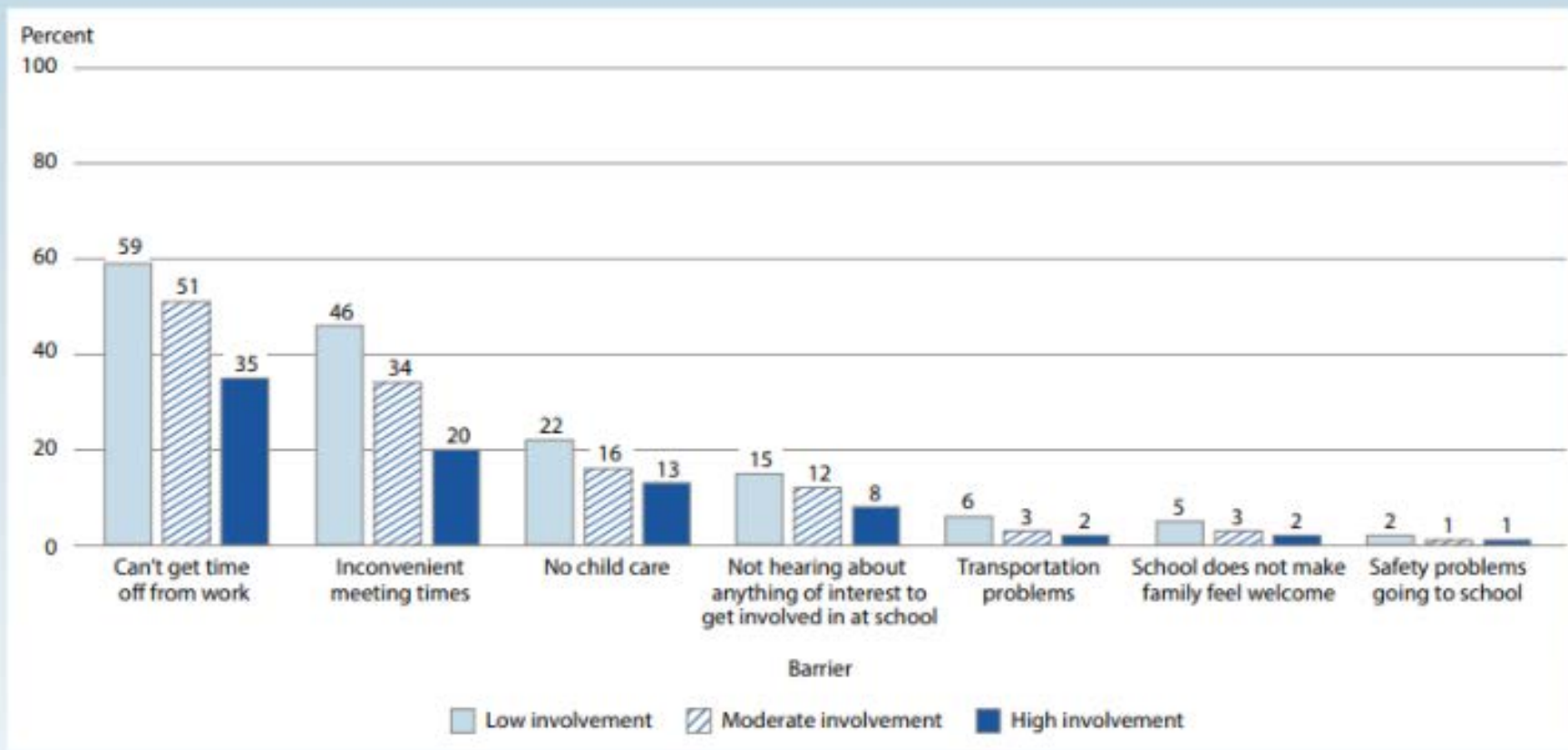
NOTE: Parents' reported level of school involvement is created from the question, "During this school year, how many times have you or other adults in your household gone to meetings or participated in activities at [CHILD]'s school?" The question was open-ended, and the response categories were created based on the distribution of the responses. Respondents who participated in 0–3 activities are categorized as having "low" involvement. Respondents who participated in 4–6 activities are categorized as having "moderate" involvement. Respondents who participated in 7 or more activities are categorized as having "high" involvement. Estimates represent all children in the kindergarten class of 2010–11 in the 2012–13 school year, when 94 percent of 2010–11 kindergartners were in second grade. Estimates are weighted by W6CS6P_6A0. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding and/or missing data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Class of 2010–11 (ECLS-K:2011), Kindergarten-Second Grade Restricted-Use Data File.

Moving Beyond One-Way to Two-Way Communication

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Two-way Communication in Family Engagement
Reflection Activity

List all of the communication methods used in the district/school. Mark one-way with a O and two-way with a T.	Look at the methods listed as one-way. Is there a way to make some of these methods more two-way?	Look at the methods listed as two-way. Is the communication *truly* two-way? • How are families given a chance to respond? • What happens with the feedback/questions that families provide?	Do these communication methods (both one-way and two-way) require families to utilize technology to receive the message? • Do families have access to the technology and training they need to fully take advantage of this communication?

- A reflection activity focused on two-way communication can be found in the "Parent and Family Engagement Resources" folder in TDOE Resources.

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Meeting the Needs of Families

- Survey families to identify needs and concerns.

- Use survey information and work <u>with</u> families to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

- Use family recommendations to create a plan each year for communicating information about school programs and student progress.

Meeting the Needs of Families

- Ensure families know their opinions and contributions matter.
- Highlight solutions or improvements made based on survey data and family feedback.
- Be transparent by posting survey results.

Ways to Communicate Effectively

- Develop a communication plan.
    - Create a plan that keeps families informed of their child's academic progress and development and…
        - Goes beyond parent-teacher conferences and report cards.
        - Includes a structure for sending home information about what students are learning on a regular basis.
        - Provides a way to make grades and teacher feedback easily available to families.

Ways to Communicate Effectively

- Your communication plan should:
  - Utilize a variety of strategies to reach your audience
  - Include strategies for follow up to ensure information is being distributed or presented effectively.
  - Track which strategies work and which strategies don't.
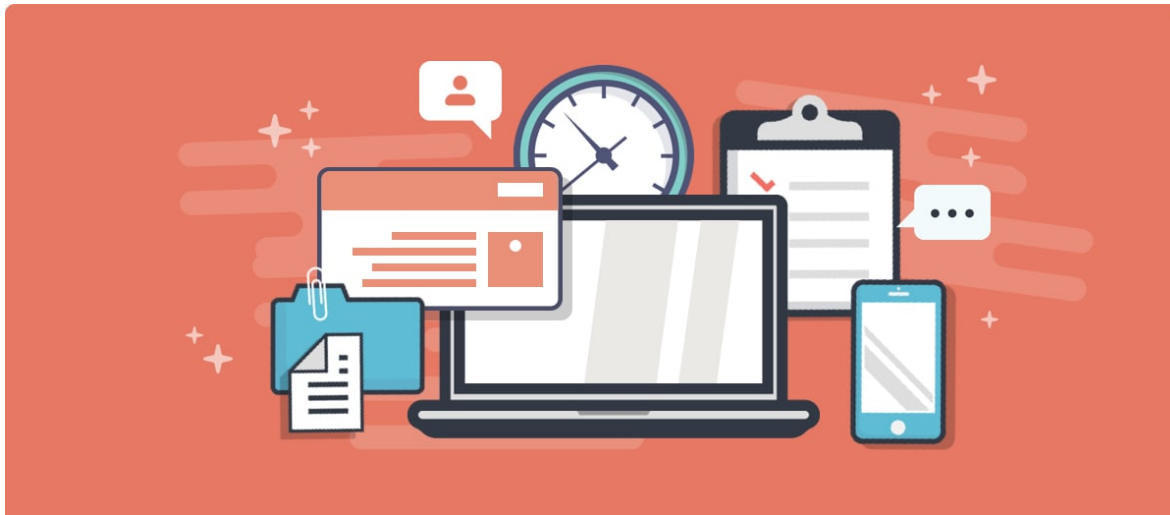
Ways to Communicate Effectively

- Ensure communications are **strength-based**:
  - Reach out at the beginning of the year and establish positive contact with every family.
  - Regularly send positive notes, e-mails, or place phone calls to families.
  - Develop an easy system for teachers to regularly report student achievements.
- Establish communication **guidelines** to be utilized by all staff.
  - How to greet families and visitors
  - Response time expectations
  - Expectations for regular communication
  - Expectations for positive communication
  - Provide training on how to have difficult conversations

Ways to Communicate Effectively

- Ensure all communication is **understandable** by families.
  - Provide communications in all **languages** representative of your school community.
  - Check the **reading level** of all documents, keeping language at a 6th grade reading level.
  - If legal or education jargon in required, attach a cheat sheet with **family-friendly language**.
- Have EL families teach **basic foreign language** to school staff.
- Be **inclusive** of all types of family structures.
- Determine whether families have easy access to the Internet and other **technology**.
- **Survey** families at least annually to see how they feel about the school.

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Ways to Communicate Effectively

- Use **multiple modes** of communication consistently and repeat messages **frequently**.

  - Ensure expectations for communication are developed and conveyed through the school-parent compact.

- **Publicize** the hours when administrators and teachers are available for family visits and any **procedures** for contacting teachers.

- Hold **smaller meetings** or create small discussion groups within larger settings.

- When possible, hold **class- or grade-level meetings**.

Ways to Communicate Effectively

- **Record school events** and post them online.

- Create opportunities for families to **dialogue** with each other.

- Create a **suggestion box** and place it in a highly visible area in the school.

- Use **home-school folders/journals**.

- Send out **personal invitations** for school events.

Ways to Communicate Effectively

- Make sure you have strong communication focused on **content standards** and **classroom instruction.**
    - Explain what students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level in reading, language arts, science, mathematics, social studies, and other academic content areas.
    - Help families know what questions to ask at parent-teacher conferences and other events when teachers talk about learning expectations.
    - Connect home activities, such as nature walks or a trip to the grocery store, to content being taught in their child's classrooms.
    - Help families understand student progress reports, report cards, and benchmark data reports.

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Ways to Communicate Effectively

- **Document** formal and informal communications to help identify families who may be falling through the cracks
  - [Parent-School Communication Log](#)
  - [Communication Log](#)

Questions for Reflection

- What kinds of supports do schools and teachers need to communicate effectively with families?

- What are some effective ways to communicate students' academic progress to families?

Reflection

What are some ways that your school or district communicates effectively with families?

Please send your promising practices to Brinn.Obermiller@tn.gov

Resources

General Resources

- [PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide](#)
- [PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide](#)
- [Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships](#)
- [Why Do Parents Become Involved in Their Children's Education? Research Finding and Implications](#)
- [Barriers to Parent-School Involvement for Early Elementary Students](#)
- [Beyond the Building: A Facilitation Guide for School, Family, and Community Connections](#)

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General Communication Resources

- [Engaging and Communicating with Parents: A Teacher Guide](#)
- [The Power of the Positive Phone Call Home](#)
- [Community Walks Create Bonds of Understanding](#)
- [Is Your Newsletter The Best It Can Be?](#)
- [How to Create a Great YouTube Channel for Your School](#)
- [Los Alamintos HS YouTube Channel](#)
- [How Two-Way Communication Can Boost Parent Engagement](#)
- [Ideas for Positive Two-Way Communication](#)
- [Two-way Communication Reflection Activity](#)
- [A Principal's Top 10 List for Successful Communications](#)
- [School Communication Planning Guide](#)
- [Sample Elementary School Communication Plan](#)

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Resources: Surveys

- [The Secret to Building an Effective Parent Survey](#)

- [Family-School Relationships Survey](#)

- [Sample Parent Survey](#)

- [Parent-School Partnership Survey](#)

- [The Power of Partnerships Family Survey](#)

- [Getting to Know our Students and Their Family Survey](#)

- [Ohio Department of Education: Parent and Family Involvement Survey](#) (begin on page 5)

- [PTO Surveys](#)

Family Engagement in Action: Video Resources

- [Power Up Your Parent Communication](#)

- [Good Parent/School Communication](#)

- [Parent-Teacher Conference Tips for Teachers](#)

- [An Introduction to Student Led Conferences](#)

- [Student-Led Conferences: Empowerment and Ownership](#)

- [How One Urban HS Connects to the Community Through Community Walks](#)

- [Parent Teacher Home Visits](#)

Webinar Series

- Our next webinar will be held **April 30 at 10:00 CST**.

- Log-in information for all of the webinars can be found [here](#) or you may sign up for reminder emails [here](#).

- Recordings of all webinars will be posted in the "Parent and Family Engagement Resources" folder in [TDOE Resources](#) in ePlan.
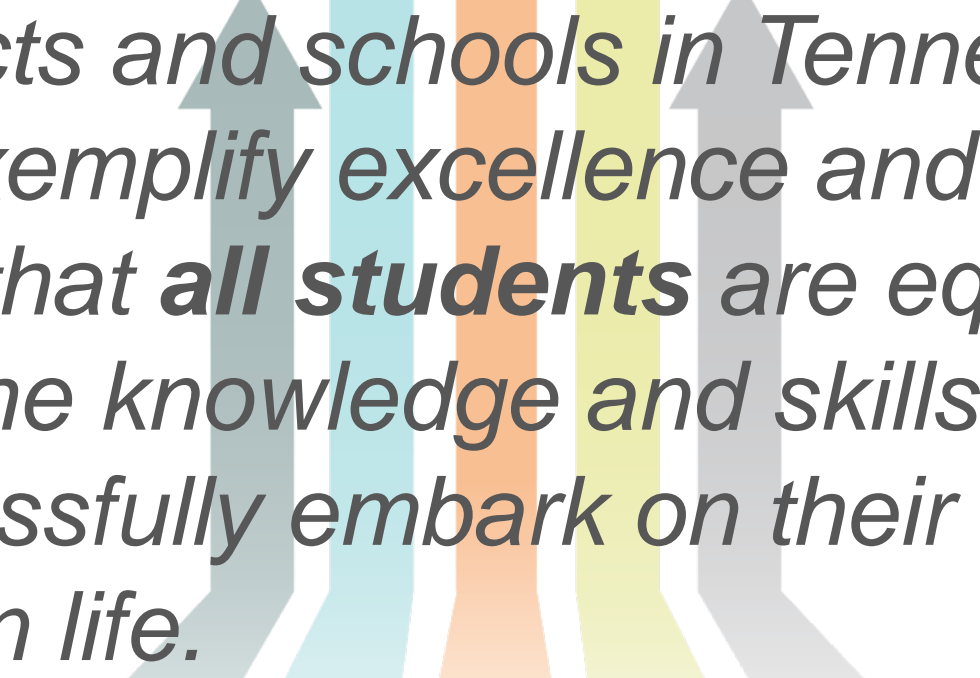
Questions? Feedback?

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Our Vision

*Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that **all students** are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life.*

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