

TENNESSEE PRINCIPAL

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Tennessee Principals Association

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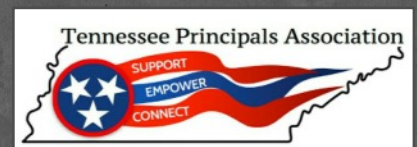


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...and more!

...The Tennessee Principals Association wishes you a 2021 that is **FULL** of
Promise, **R**esilience, **I**nnovation, **N**ormalcy, **C**ompassion, **I**nsight, **P**urpose, **A**ffirmation, **L**ove



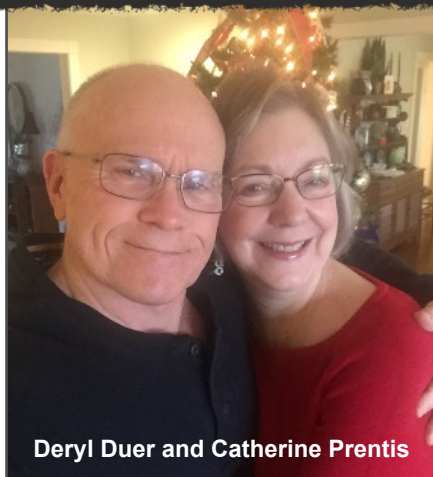
We are excited to announce the theme for this year is

INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP



P.O. Box 140227 | Nashville, TN 37214
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The Tennessee Principals Association (TPA) is a professional education association serving elementary and middle level principals, assistant principals, aspiring principals, and other education leaders throughout Tennessee. TPA is unified with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). The mission of the Tennessee Principals Association is to support, empower, and connect Tennessee Principals.



Deryl Duer and Catherine Prentis

EDITOR'S PAGE

What is it they say? Parting is such sweet sorrow...If you know me well, you're aware I've had many jobs over my career. Besides classroom teaching, I worked in two state departments of education, a department of mental health, MNPS central office and retired as a principal. When new opportunities presented themselves, I moved. Every move has felt like the right one because I began a new challenge. Leaving this editor's spot after 15 years feels very mixed. Being your editor tied with classroom teacher at 15 years.

It all began in 2006, when I happened to sit next to, then TPA Executive Director, Dr. Ernie Bentley at a luncheon for MNPS principals. During that lunch, Ernie floated the idea of my becoming the editor of the TPA's twice yearly members' magazine/journal: **Tennessee Principal**. But about a month into that school year, I broke my ankle and had to take some time off from school. I called Ernie and asked to be relieved from my obligation because I was "trying to heal." His response was, "Why should I do that? What else are you doing right now?" As usual, he was right, and so I began this 15-year journey. Dr. Nancy Flatt Meador, the current Executive Director, has also supported my efforts here and I'm very grateful for both of them.

While I was a sitting principal, I never saw this job as any kind of conflict with my "real" job. To me it was a fabulous opportunity to bolster my own professional development. Whenever I found some research or just an idea from another principal that made me stop and think, I'd know other Tennessee principals would find it helpful, too. I attended the state and national conferences, always looking for new ideas and research to bring to my fellow TPA-ers. There I heard and met some outstanding educators and picked up great ideas. At one national conference, the association periodical from the state of Texas caught my eye. I stole so many ideas from it! Only later did I learn that Texas has a full-time staff working on their magazine! At about that same time I "recruited" Deryl Duer, a retired photographer and graphic designer, to do the layout work. He and I worked side-by-side on some really beautiful issues while he allowed me to make sweeping, last minute changes that would have gotten us fired from a service that didn't feel the connection. Yes, he's my wonderful husband, pictured with me here.

In addition to including research and game-changing ideas in these journals, we've included recognitions of our principals who have gone above and beyond for our profession. We always included articles on Tennessee's National Distinguished Principal and many other individuals whom the association recognized for serving so selflessly. In the last 15 years, three of our principals have gone on to become President of NAESP, Dr. Brian Partin, Dr. Nancy Flatt Meador and the current president of NAESP is our own Kimbrelle Barbosa Lewis. It was a huge moment of pride to watch these outstanding leaders take our state to a new level. To know all of them personally and to feel that connection is something hard to describe, but no different from the honor of counting so many other current and former principals as friends. Each year at the state conference TPA presents awards for jobs well done. A few years ago, my roommate for the conference, Teresa Dennis, gave away their intention when she asked, "Are you sure you want to wear that outfit to the awards luncheon?" Naturally, I changed and looked more presentable for the pictures they took of me receiving the Meritorious Service award. I offer that recollection as proof that it's always good to have a friend by your side who understands what you're going through...sometimes before you do.

I hope that all who read this rambling goodbye understand that I have loved my time with TPA and this Journal. I also hope it inspires you to step forward and offer your time or thoughts to your colleagues. I've tried to use the Editor's Page as a way to connect and to show I understand what you're going through. A longtime colleague told me once that when he read my column, he felt like we'd just had a personal conversation. I loved that!

Now I say to you, keep your chins up! Things always change and I know we have better days ahead! Hang in there for your teachers and the kids and their families who are counting on you! And you haven't seen the last of me. I'll still show up at the state conferences; over the years I also learned how to stuff those goody bags!

Sincerely,
Catherine Prentis, Editor

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Nancy Flatt Meador, Ed.D.

INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP!

Welcome to the Tennessee Principals Association (TPA)! Since 1938, TPA has served and supported Tennessee Principals! TPA President, Dr. Julie Hopkins, Principal at Glenclyff STEAM Magnet Elementary School in Nashville, TN, set the theme for the year, Innovative Leadership. What a year for innovation! From virtual learning, hybrid learning models, to in-person learning, Principals and teachers are working harder than ever to meet the continual changing needs of learning communities. Innovative leadership is critical to keep student learning moving forward! No one knows what the "new normal" will look like in the days, weeks, and months to come. Regardless, Principals across our state stand ready to LEAD with innovation at the forefront!



Presidential Milestones

On July 1, 2020, TPA welcomed Dr. Julie Hopkins as the incoming President. As we think about annual leadership transitions, there have been "Presidential Milestones" that will be noted this year under Shay Siler's term as the 2019-2020 TPA President. Her "*legacy of leadership*" accomplishments include:

Theme: *Leadership Takes Heart*

- Membership increased from 370 to 390 members
- Led non-profit organization (TPA) through worldwide pandemic (fiscally stable!)
- Reached the Long-Term Reserve Fund Goal!!!
- Developed "Framework for the Future" – new initiatives in Advocacy and Professional Learning
- Promoted 2019 conference attendance achieved all-time high in Memphis
- Added Board positions to increase membership efforts, statewide advocacy efforts and connections with the State Department of Education
- TPA Constitution, By-Laws, and Policies were edited and approved by the TPA Board (will be voted on in November at the Annual Business Meeting by the members present at conference)

- Began electronic publication – TNPrin NEWS on TPA website
- Planned to lead Tennessee delegation at National Leaders Conference in Washington D.C.
- Conducted "first ever" virtual Executive Board Meeting in Spring 2020

Congratulations to Shay Siler and the 2019-2020 TPA Board of Directors! This group of leaders displayed bold leadership in making decisions on behalf of Tennessee Principals!

TPA Principals Leading at the National Level

Three Tennessee Principals are now serving on the NAESP Board of Directors – at the NATIONAL level! Kimbrelle Lewis, Principal at Cordova Elementary in Memphis, is serving as the President of NAESP; Dr. Ann-Marie Gleason, Principal at Harpeth Valley Elementary School in Nashville, is NAESP Zone 4 Director; Dr. Kevin Armstrong, Principal at DuPont-Hadley Middle School in Nashville, serves as the appointed Director at-Large, Middle Level position.

We are extremely proud of their success as they work to make our state and national organizations the best they can be!

TPA Website: www.tnprin.org

Be sure to visit the TPA website for updates and additional information!

Leadership Matters!

This year the TPA Board of Directors is comprised of twenty-seven Principals from across the state. The TPA Board provides leadership for Tennessee Principals through volunteer service. Thanks to the 2020-2021 TPA Board of Directors for the many hours that are given on behalf of Tennessee Principals!

New TPA Board Members:

- TPA Secretary
- Dr. Terrence Brittenum
- Membership Directors
- Stephanie Beach: District 1
- DeeAnne Miree: District 4
- Robert Busch: District 5
- Dr. Janice Irvin: District 9
- TPA Associate Director
- Sharon McNary

Get Involved!

Are you seeking a way to grow your leadership skills? Get involved with the Tennessee Principals Association! Opportunities for networking, collaborating, professional development, and leading are available through volunteer service.

Continued on next page >

Executive Director's Corner *(continued)*

Tennessee Principal Selected as TPA Associate Director

Sharon McNary, Principal at Richland Elementary School in Memphis, TN, has been selected as the Associate Director for TPA.



Sharon has been an active member of TPA/NAESP for many years. She served on the NAESP Board of Directors for four years,

has held every elected office in the Tennessee Principals Association, serves as a Nationally Certified Mentor Coach with NAESP and most recently, chaired the 2019 Tennessee Principals Conference in Memphis.

Sharon is a passionate leader who models what "servant leadership" is all about.

Welcome back Sharon!

Nominations for National Distinguished Principal

Do you know an outstanding principal? Nominations are being accepted for Tennessee's next "National Distinguished Principal." Visit www.tnprin.org for additional information and criteria.

Save the Date!

The **2021 Tennessee Principals Conference** will be held in Nashville, November 14-16, 2021 at the Nashville Airport Marriott. Registration information and conference details will be posted to the TPA website (www.tnprin.org) soon! Join colleagues from across the state for two **great** days of learning!

***Make a difference! Get involved!
It can be life changing!***

Chattanooga Principal Selected as 2020 National Distinguished Principal



Dr. Ashley Aldridge Wilson, Principal at Nolan Elementary School, in Signal Mountain, TN, has been selected as the 2020 National Distinguished Principal (NDP) from Tennessee. She has been the Principal at Nolan Elementary since 2018.

Dr. Wilson has focused on providing "shared leadership" at every level of school to balance the demands of leading operations and instruction. Through collaboration, a collective focus on student achievement, reflective dialogue and learning, exemplary operating principles, and open communication, she has established solid cornerstones of effective leadership.

Dr. Wilson is currently working on becoming a Nationally Certified Mentor through the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Mentoring Program. She embraces opportunities to help develop leadership talent across the state. Dr. Wilson received her doctorate degree in Learning and Leadership in 2009 from the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga.

Established in 1984, the National Distinguished Principals Program, recognizes excellence in elementary and middle level Principals' school leadership. Dr. Wilson will have the opportunity to attend the NAESP PreK-8 Principals Conference, in Chicago, July 8-10, 2021, where she will be recognized as Tennessee's 2020 National Distinguished Principal.

Congratulations Dr. Wilson! Tennessee Principals are proud of you!

“

If you are in school
administration right now,
you have one main job—
make it easier for teachers
to do their jobs well.

I mean... that's pretty much our jobs
all the time, but it's never been more
important or harder to figure out how
to do well. **CLEAR A PATH. THAT'S ALL.**

—Chris Lehmann
Principal

edutopia

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- Social Studies
- Science References
- Units & Measurements & much, more



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REFLECTION

This card was written for two brothers, both 2020 graduates ...one from high school and the other from college.

While kindergarten, elementary and middle school 'graduates' may not grasp its full meaning, they also missed out on a milestone and celebration. Students went home on spring break, not to return to school.

Opportunities for "closing a chapter" were missed...by students, teachers and parents.

Class of 2020

Congratulations on your graduation; you are to be commended!
For who on earth could have guessed how this school year ended?

As a member of this special class you've won the nation's heart,
and found new ways to celebrate in the midst of staying apart.

You've also learned some lessons that never were assigned.
Like, "life isn't always fair," wasn't in any course outline.

'Essential' became a household word, those whose jobs are vital.
So be reminded in your career, it's more than just a title.

Now on to the next chapter, make it a great start;
and keep close the Proverb, "Above all guard your heart."

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Proverbs 4:23 NIV

by Joy Sonn McCandless

sanitize
empty classes
hybrid schedule
COVID-19^{fear}
wash hands
isolation virus contagious
social distance
virtual learning

The Before and After Principal: Leading through Uncertain and Difficult Times

By Kimbrelle Lewis, Principal, Cordova Elementary School (Cordova, TN), NAESP President, TPA Board Member



Every Tennessee principal and principals across the country deserve a pat on the back and standing ovation! Daily, you are accomplishing feats and traversing uncharted paths to map out new ways of learning and access for your students, teachers and community in the time of COVID-19, racial inequality and social unrest. As principals,

none of us chose a career path solely based on interest, compensation or acknowledgement. We realistically face consistently changing curricula, policies, expectations and accountability in the midst of charting our days filled with observations, emails and meetings. We accept that change is a part of our profession because we see leading schools as much more than a profession. We know it is our calling to make a difference in the lives of children. However, we could have in no way anticipated the level of change and the renewed spirit and dedication we would have to embody in our calling as school leaders to overcome and steer through change this year.

You Have an Arsenal

Much of what we know about “Doing School” flew out the window in March of 2020 when many of us shuttered our schools with a few hours’ notice due to rising coronavirus levels. We quickly found relevant platforms and useful websites to support online learning, made learning packets for those without access, updated teachers, students and parents and kept your school running virtually for months. There was no road map for instruction and learning without preplanning and what had been organized virtual schools in the past, could not lend an advisable model through the end of the school year and moving forward.

However, school leaders are uniquely equipped with a skill set of continuously researching, adjusting and applying new programs and improvement methodology to bolster our schools into the learning environment our students most need. Between August and the current time, you have changed your school reentry plan and ways of learning numerous times based on how COVID-19 has affected your school and community and the increase needs of social and emotional supports for students. Whether your school has met in person, had

distance learning or a blended model, you are now into a new modality. Through this, you are becoming a different type of leader by using your ability to always forge ahead with innovation and adaptability. It is by no means easy. It is in fact, extraordinarily challenging. Nevertheless, this is a challenge for which you are made as you continue to become better at ensuring that your school is still the central place of discovery, safety, and nurturing—whether in person or virtual. And you are overcoming the challenges each hour of each day. Don’t discount the arsenal of resources, flexibility, abilities and collegial networks you have that have kept you and your school going as you have sculpted learning environments in the past and build a new landscape now.

It’s Okay to Not Be Okay for a While

One thing we as principals don’t always prioritize is taking time for ourselves, acknowledging our own mental and physical health needs and balancing work demands with our personal sense of community. The lines of personal and professional dimensions and space are even more blurred with continual virtual access and operations. Allow yourself to have stints of shutting everything off and to not be okay. It’s okay to not be okay in light of the hurt of family illness and loss, racial injustice that mirrors polarizing times of the past and a divided country that struggles to come together in spite of differences to help meet the basic needs of individuals, families and schools. Our schools are microcosms and mirrors of our communities. As a leader of schools, you have a right to wallow for a time in your hurt, disappointed and struggle to find a new normal. Set some time daily, even if its only a few minutes, to let go of it all through tears, laughter, reading a chapter in a book you’ve had on the shelf or sitting in silence. You’re physical and mental rest and recovery are essential for you to continue to build strength to lead.

Continued on next page >

“Whether your school has met in person, had distance learning or a blended model, you are now into a new modality. Through this, you are becoming a different type of leader by using your ability to always forge ahead with innovation and adaptability.”

The Before and After Principal *(continued)*

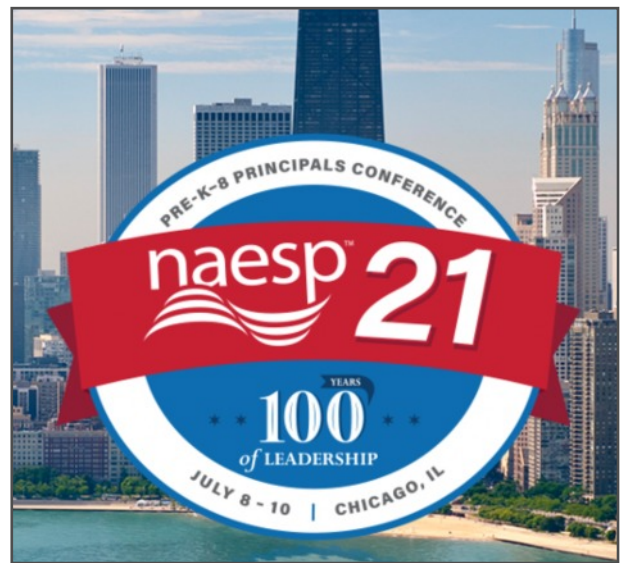
You Have Shaped the Future of Educational Policy and Practice and the Principalship

In the near future, you will look back on your 2020 principalship in miraculous awe and disbelief. Just as importantly, the history books and educational policy will reflect an educational system that you have helped to reconstruct, shape and engineer. Already this year, NAESP's policy and advocacy has been advised by how you are doing school differently. NAESP's coronavirus response has been guided by the NAESP National Coronavirus Task Force, a principal-led advisory board formed to advise NAESP on the state of affairs in school communities and reveal common challenges and solutions. NAESP has used the task force's advice and recommendations to create resources and supports for NAESP members and the nation's school leaders, as well as to inform NAESP's advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill. NAESP also formed its National Task force on Race and Equity, which is also principal-led, to advise NAESP on issues related to racial equity in school communities; reveal schools' common challenges and solutions; and support a peer-to-peer network for school leaders. As members of NAESP and school leaders, you will continue to recreate schools, districts, practice and policies that support schools through the most difficult times.

For more information on NAESP's Coronavirus Task force recommendations and resources and NAESP's Task force on Race and Equity, go to www.naesp.org.

To connect with NAESP President Kimbrelle Barbosa Lewis, follow her on Twitter at @k2blewis.

Celebrating 100 Years of Leadership



Join us in Chicago, July 8-10, 2021, to help celebrate NAESP's 100th anniversary of offering professional learning experiences designed to inspire bold thinking and innovative leadership.

The annual NAESP National Conference provides the strongest unified voice for pre-k-8 educators. The 2021 Conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, nestled along the Riverwalk, just steps away from Michigan Avenue.

NAESP Selects Principal Fellows in New Centers for Advancing Leadership

Tennessee Principal, Dr. Kevin Armstrong, Selected as NAESP Fellow

In November, 2020, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) announced the selection of nine principal leaders to facilitate the work of the newly formed Centers for Advancing Leadership. The work of the Centers is grounded in the belief that continuous and focused learning is the hallmark of every school leader. The NAESP Centers for Advancing Leadership develop professional learning experiences around the following topics:

- Center for Innovative Leadership
- Center for Women in Leadership
- Center for Middle-Level Leadership
- Center for Diversity in Leadership

Each Center is led by fellows who are well-respected NAESP members, experienced leaders with a track record of connecting with colleagues and creating powerful professional networks. **Congratulations to Dr. Kevin Armstrong for being selected As Fellow for the Center of Middle-Level Leadership!**

Beginning with this issue, "Leading in the Middle" will be a regular feature in the **Tennessee Principal**, where Dr. Armstrong will share insights and news from the Center for Middle Level Leadership. See page 12 for his first article, Culture > COVID.





Innovative Leadership In Challenging Times

By Dr. Julie A. Hopkins, TPA President

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It has often been said that in order to be an effective leader; you must be able to lead when situations are difficult and challenging. Although, the year of 2020 was full of questionable academic outcomes, we managed to prevail as leaders across this state with a resilience that proved we are willing to do whatever it takes to ensure that teachers are valued and student's academic growth is our priority.

Yes, many thought it could not be done... but we did it. We manage dual learning environments: virtual and in-person. All three divisions of principals worked collaboratively to support and empower each other, which resulted in an overwhelming increase in membership. Tennessee Principal Association membership increased by 15%, we have over 470 members.

This will not be a year of excuses; it will be a year of choices. The choices we make will be evident in our schools' success. Yes, we did it in 2020! Now, we are equipped with the knowledge and insight to make this year better than last year.

Special thanks for all that you do and looking forward to a productive and prosperous 2021.

It Couldn't Be Done

Somebody said that it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!

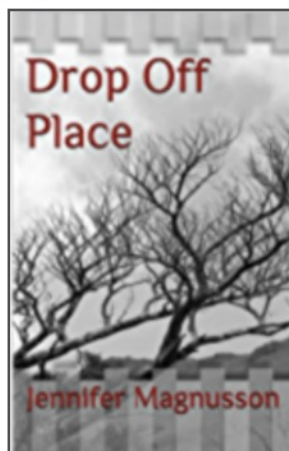
Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

By Edgar Albert Guest

Amazon Hot New Releases

Our best-selling new and future releases. Updated hourly.



...to Dr. Jennifer Magnusson, TPA Board Member and Membership Director for District 6. Jennifer received her doctorate AND published her first children's book in October, 2020!!

At the time of its release, the **Drop Off Place** ranked #2 on Amazon's Hot New Releases and #17 on Amazon's Best Sellers! **Congratulations Dr. Magnusson!**

Drop Off Place
Jennifer Magnusson
★★★★★ 4
Kindle Edition
\$3.99

*Dr. Jennifer Magnusson is principal
of North Cumberland Elementary
School in Crossville, TN.*



Congratulations are in order...

Culture > COVID

by Kevin Armstrong, Ed.D.



In March of 2020, school districts all over the country were hit with an unprecedented blow, COVID-19. Immediately schools were shut down and families were shut up in their homes. Parents were in a panic, and students went months without a consistent education.

As school districts began to recoil from this pandemic, school leaders were hit with trying to reach students and their families virtually. As school leaders, we take pride in building relationships with students, teachers, and community stakeholders. But how were we supposed to pull it off using virtual conferencing sites such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams?

Our campus began planning in March 2020 for the message that we wanted to send to our faculty and families as we prepared for the start of the 2020-21 school year. We decided to push through and continue with our journey to create a House system on campus. For months in the Spring, our "House Party" subcommittee met and planned for the return of our Students.

Our first mission was to instill teacher buy in on our campus. We had a House draft where our faculty and staff were selected by school administration to be a part of one of our four houses. We then celebrated their selection by having a photo opportunity and providing a t-shirt in the color of their respective House. Things took off.

Immediately there was a newfound sense of pride and ownership on our campus. Teachers and staff members from all different disciplines on campus were now a part of a House with a mission. Grade level and team meetings were now injected with enthusiasm and drive as we did what was necessary to educate our students in spite of a pandemic.

The last phase involved dividing our students into our four Houses. When the students saw the excitement on the faces of our teachers, administration, and staff, they also became excited. We immediately saw an increase in attendance and participation during synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. All of this excitement stemmed from a vision captured by school leaders strategically introduced and planned by faculty and staff which was then rolled out in an exciting manner to students with buy in at all three levels.

Schools can still have success, even through some of the darkest times in American history. Culture is the driver in ensuring that there is a unified front in educating our students through a pandemic. A wise educator once said that "culture eats instruction for breakfast." Not only is that true, but ...

...culture also eats COVID for dinner.

*"We delight in
the beauty of the
butterfly, but
rarely admit the
changes it has
gone through to
achieve that
beauty."*

Maya Angelou



TPA Dues Increase for 2021-2022

The TPA Board of Directors has approved a dues increase of 5% for the upcoming membership year. Please note the following rate changes as you plan forward:

Active "A"	\$475
- Line Administrators	
Institutional/Active "B"	\$520
- Line Administrators	
Active Assistant Principal "AAP"	\$430
- Assistant Principals	
Aspiring Principal "G"	\$195
- Teachers, Counselors	
Associate "P"	\$290
- Professors, Central Office	
Emeritus "E"	\$210
- Retired, Voting Privileges, Insurance Coverage	
TPA/Secondary	\$225
- Grades 9-12, Active Individual	

Where Do We Go From Here?

How do we address the gap in Kindergarten in 2021?

By Catherine Prentis, Retired Principal, TPA Board Member, Editor

A few days ago, I saw a news report that talked about the low numbers of Kindergarten students enrolled in school year 2020. This reporter stated that many parents, due to the pandemic, had chosen to “hold back” their kindergarten-age children for one more year.

As you know, in the state of Tennessee, the Kindergarten “experience” is required, but students are not required to attend school until they are 6 years old. The law does give principals some discretion as to what that experience looks like.

The news piece went on to ask parents what they were doing with their 5-year-olds this year. Some parents, of course, had their children enrolled in either in-person or virtual classes that were on-track with the required standards, although, we realize this will vary. Parents who did not officially enroll their children had chosen a variety of experiences from remaining in their pre-schools for another year, being home schooled as kindergartners, and some were participating in educational “pods” with other students in their neighborhoods, churches or even virtually.

Some were participating in virtual learning at places like the Y or *Boys and Girls Clubs*, allowing their parents to work, while other children were just continuing to be at home with a parent or babysitter as

they were as 4-year-olds. This made me think about the enormous gap among these children that was going to be evident next fall. It made me ask myself: If I was still serving as a principal, how would I address it?

In the late 80s, when I first became a MNPS teacher, there was a program called *Pre-First*. It was usually one classroom of students who had been enrolled for all or part of their kindergarten year, but at the end of that year, that teacher didn’t judge them to have “failed” kindergarten and needed to repeat the whole experience. It was more that they just weren’t ready for the rigors of first grade and could potentially serve as a distraction for those students who were “ready.”

Granted, Kindergarten had vastly different expectations back then. More emphasis was placed on the social aspects of school, the skills were less rigorous, and nap time was mandatory. Still we found that at the end of that year some students weren’t prepared to learn to read and do math at a first-grade level. In other words, then we recognized that there is nothing magical or consistent in the readiness of 5-year-olds. We understood that exposure to teaching isn’t all that is necessary for a learner to achieve.

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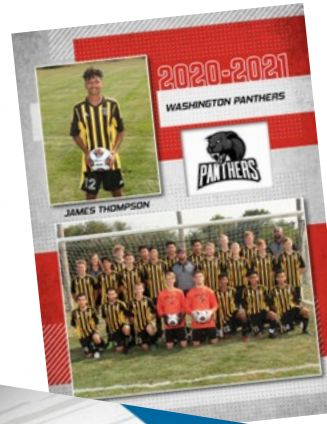
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Reflection of COVID and the New School Normal

By Dr. Jennifer Magnusson, TPA Board Member



As educators, we can't help but reflect on the impact COVID-19 has had on the students and staff members in our schools. For months, children were isolated from each other, quarantined inside their own homes, finishing school without official closure. The distance between us grew, not only physically, but also emotionally. Social distancing became a common phrase. School as we knew it had changed.

In many districts, students returned to class in person at the start of this new school year. Some students chose the option of virtual learning. Others began with a hybrid model of attending school only a few scheduled days each week, while other students opted for complete home schooling this year.

With the numerous changes in place, we must pause and give ourselves credit for the flexibility required to successfully have school each day. We have worn our masks, separated our desks, created special schedules, designed hybrid options, learned from home, provided computers for online learning, and stopped sharing materials. We have taken temperatures, held virtual meetings, posted signage, adjusted sports, and socially distanced to the best of our abilities.

The kindergarten students now walk down the hall, evenly spaced and trained not to touch the walls, each other, or their masks. They have never experienced school seeing the smiles of their new friends. They have learned to listen to their teachers who teach from behind a mask or shield or from the other side of the screen. Everything they ever needed to know and learn in kindergarten has now been adjusted to include recommendations and requirements that a year ago, none of us would have ever expected a five year old would need to know.

We see fourth graders working independently in the hall, expertly distanced while creating catapults for science.

Our eighth graders are intentionally distanced during lunch, taking turns eating in the classroom or the cafeteria—a critical social time for teenagers.

Even the teachers' lunch area has fewer chairs to ensure we do not gather as we once did during lunch time. We have a socially distanced workplace.

- Signs in the hallways remind children and staff of socially distanced space.
- We have no volunteers assisting in the classrooms.
- There are no grandparents stopping by to have lunch with their grandchildren.
- There are no scheduled assemblies.

We have complied with the new rules that have come with COVID safety. School is difficult, but it goes on.

It is hard for our students.

It is hard for our families.

It is hard for our teachers.

It is hard for our principals.

However, somehow, we are making it work.

For the health and safety of everyone, we will work within these special parameters and under these conditions. As a team, we CAN do this. Together, we ARE doing this, and we look forward to the upcoming months, hoping that we will return to "normal" sooner than later.



TENNESSEE PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

TPA Board Directory

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Shay Siler	Past President	shay.siler@knoxschools.org
Dr. Holly Flora	NAESP State Rep.	florah@jcschools.org
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Sharon McNary	Associate Director	mcnarysk@scsk12.org
Dr. Nancy Flatt Meador	Executive Director	nancy.meador@tnprin.org

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Linda Deberry	Northwest - District 2	ldeberry@dyersburgcityschools.org
Amy Wooley	Southwest - District 3	amy.wooley@chestercountyschools.org
Deanne Miree	North Central - District 4	deeanne.miree@mnps.org
Dr. Ricki Gibbs	North Central - District 4	ricki.gibbs@mnps.org
Robert Busch	South Central - District 5	rbusch@mauryk12.org
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Dr. Ashley Aldridge Wilson	Southeast - District 7	wilson_ashley@hcde.org
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Heather Wolf	Director of State Relations / Advocacy	hwolf@k12k.com
Selena Sparkman	Director of Professional Learning	sparkmanst@scsk12.org
Dr. Amy Downey	Retired Principals / Higher Education	amy.downey@comcast.net

NAESP Board Members

Kimbrelle Barbosa Lewis	NAESP President	lewiskb@scsk12.org
Dr. Ann-Marie Gleason	NAESP Zone 4 Director	ann-marie.gleason@mnps.org
Dr. Kevin Armstrong	NAESP Middle Level Director	kevin.armstrong@mnps.org

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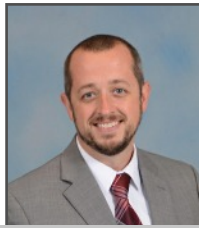
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Kimbrelle Barbosa-Lewis



Anne-Marie Gleason



Kevin Armstrong

There's More Going on in Schools than COVID-19

By Tyler Salyer, Principal, Collierville Elementary (Collierville, TN), TPA Vice President



Instead of the excitement and anticipation teachers and administrators usually feel leading up to August, for many the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year was filled with fear, tension, and anxiety. There seemed to be more questions than answers and more fears than comforts about how school would look.

As leaders, we struggled with how to lead during unprecedented times without the data or research-based best practices that frequently drives decision making for a school leader. We met with our school and district teams and did our best to establish a baseline of where we would start the school year. Then slowly, and I mean SLOWLY, things started to change. Teachers began to embrace the challenges of a new school year, coming up with creative solutions to unexpected problems for the good of the students who are in their classrooms. While we in no way have everything figured out, we are persevering together. I wanted to share three things I am seeing and learning as the year goes along.

#1 - Leadership Takes Heart

This was the Tennessee Principals Association's theme for last school year, and as a leader, I am living this every day. It's not just the hard work of what are we doing, but the heart work of being a leader that is needed the most right now. While the "what" of school is extremely important, it is critical that everyone remembers the why. So many children need a safe place to learn and every single one of them are worth making the needed changes this year has required.



#2 - Family Means No One Gets Left Behind or Forgotten

While this was originally a quote from the Disney movie, *Lilo and Stitch*, it has never been truer than it is today. It's important to note that our district allowed students to return at the elementary level for five full days of in-person instruction or choose to be part of our newly formed virtual academy. Families made a decision about where to send their child that some felt confident about while others did so with hesitation. What I have seen is how personal touches and reassuring families that their child will not be left behind has made all the difference. At the school level, we have adopted the theme of, "Dragons Support Dragons" (our school mascot). We have talked about how Dragons are our faculty and staff as well as our students and families. We know that support is going to look different for different people at different times, and that's fine. It's our job to be there for one another as we would like for others to be there for us.

#3 - Focus on the Essentials

In Mike Schmoker's book, *Focus* he says, "Clarity is the antidote to anxiety...if you do nothing else as a leader, be clear." With so many things going on in our world that clamor for our attention, focus at the school level is needed so our hard-working faculty and staff don't get burned out chasing the next worry that appears. At our school, we have worked to clarify safety precautions and instructional expectations while holding some things with an open hand, adjusting as needed, and others in a closed fist, staying vigilant. We do our best in these areas at all times, but when we know better, we do better.

As the year continues to evolve, I know there will be more lessons to learn and more adjustments to be made. May we all show a little more grace and give a little more love.

Why Membership Matters More Now Than Ever!

By Holly Flora, Ed.D., Principal, Liberty Middle School (Johnson City, TN),
TPA/NAESP State Representative for Membership

TPA SUPPORTS PRINCIPALS

The Tennessee Principals Association (TPA) is the sole organization in our state designed to support the professional and personal needs of Tennessee Principals. TPA provides both liability and job protection insurance programs as an integral support for the principal. The investment of human and financial resources in activities/ events is focused on principals' priorities.

The Tennessee Principals Association partners with other professional organizations to support leaders' pursuits of student success. Advocacy for Tennessee Principals and schools is also a priority for TPA. Members of the TPA board work at both the state and the national level to ensure that legislators are well informed about issues that are close to the hearts of Tennessee principals and support our Tennessee schools.

TPA EMPOWERS PRINCIPALS

TPA empowers principals to lead successful schools in local settings and communities. TPA members are kept ahead of the professional learning curve through professional development resources and opportunities. The TPA Journal, the TNPRIN newsletter and our website services (www.tnprin.org) are produced and written by principals for principals.

TPA members also receive regular publications through NAESP (National Association of Elementary School Principals) Tennessee principals are empowered through an annual conference each year that provides top notch, internationally recognized speakers who provide both insight and inspiration. Additionally, principals and practitioners from Tennessee speak to issues and trends unique to our state. TPA members receive a discount to the TPA conference, but also receive a discount to the annual NAESP Conference.

TPA CONNECTS PRINCIPALS

Imagine being part of a network of 20,000 colleagues across the United States to discover best practices! Being a member of TPA means that TPA members are also members of our National Association of Elementary School Principals. Tennessee Principals are immediately connected to principals across the state and nation through publications.

Relationships and connections made through the experiences provided through TPA and NAESP provide extensive knowledge and connection about what is happening in education from places near and far. Developing and employing relationships with influential groups and individuals make it possible for TPA members to help shape educational decisions that matter.



*Dr. Holly Flora (FloraH@jcschools.org) is the TPA/NAESP State Representative who leads the way with membership! Working with Dr. Flora are eight District Membership Directors who work diligently year-round. **THANK YOU** your hard work and commitment to increase membership statewide! **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!***

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

TPA membership recently crossed the 470 mark with Principals, Assistant Principals and district leaders joining almost daily!
Contact your District Membership Director for to join or request information.

[Membership Application Form / Directory / District Map >](#)

Tennessee Principals Association: K-8 Membership Enrollment Form

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- ☐ \$450.00 Active “A” (Line Administrators)
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☐ \$410.00 Active Assistant Principal “AAP” (Assistant Principals)
☐ \$185.00 Aspiring Principal “G” (Teachers, Counselors)
☐ \$275.00 Associate “P” (Professors, Central Office)
☐ \$200.00 Emeritus “E” (Retired, Voting Privileges, Insurance Coverage)



TPA / Secondary Membership - Grades 9-12

- ☐ \$215.00 Active Individual
 - Requires membership in national association, excludes legal benefits

Payment Method

- ☐ Check (payable to TPA) ☐ Purchase Order (attach copy)
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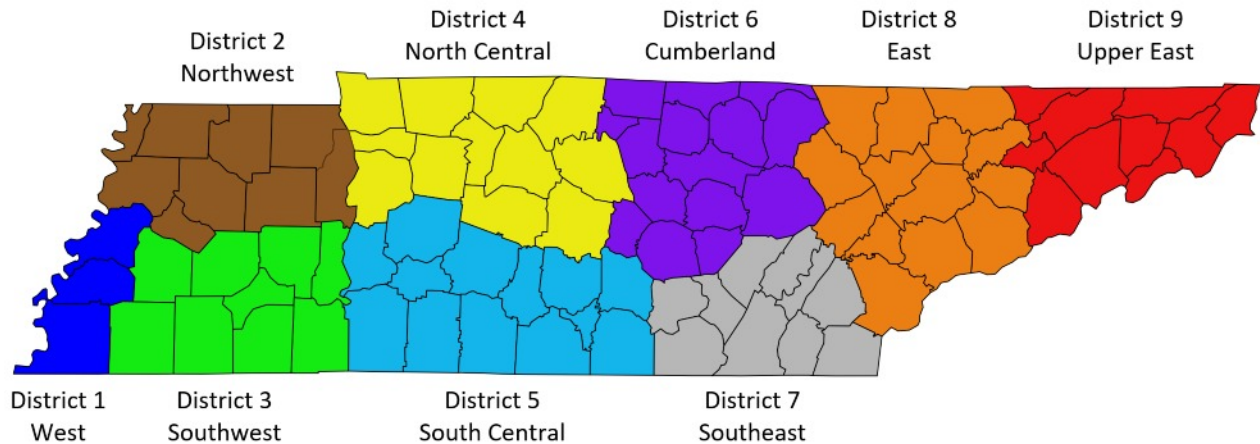
Questions? Email
membership@tnprin.org

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Thanks to the following Principals who are serving as Membership Directors this year:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--|
| • West, District 1 | Patrick Certion | certionpl@scsk12.org |
| • West, District 1 | Stephanie Beach | sbeach@bartlettschools.org |
| • Northwest, District 2 | Linda DeBerry | ldeberry@dyersburgcityschools.org |
| • Southwest, District 3 | Amy Wooley | amy.wooley@chestercountyschools.org |
| • North Central, District 4 | DeeAnne Miree | deeanne.miree@mnps.org |
| • North Central, District 4 | Dr. Ricki Gibbs | ricki.gibbs@mnps.org |
| • South Central, District 5 | Robert Busch | rbusch@mauryk12.org |
| • Cumberland, District 6 | Dr. Jennifer Magnusson | magnussonj1@ccschools.k12tn.net |
| • Southeast, District 7 | Dr. Ashley Wilson | wilson_ashley@hcde.org |
| • East, District 8 | Alisha Hinton | alisha.hinton@knoxschools.org |
| • Upper East, District 9 | Dr. Janice Irvin | jirvin@k12k.com |

Dr. Kevin Armstrong Featured in NAESP Webinar Series

Available to Stream on NAESP YouTube Channel

NAESP Fellows, Dr. Kevin Armstrong and Jessica Cabeen, were featured in an NAESP webinar series last Fall. Dr. Armstrong is the Principal at DuPont-Hadley Middle School, in Nashville, Tennessee. Jessica Cabeen is the Principal at Ellis Middle School in Austin, Minnesota. Both Kevin and Jessica are NAESP National Distinguished Principals.



The NAESP Center for Middle Level Leadership focuses on providing the exceptional skills and support that middle level administrators need to run outstanding schools with high levels of student achievement. The goal of the center is to connect middle level principals with pertinent information and resources that promote their work with young adolescents as they help them to develop into strong, productive and moral citizens.

Congratulations, Dr. Armstrong!

TPA Annual Business Meeting

Thursday, November 5, 2020
ZOOM Meeting with TPA Executive Board

Dr. Julie Hopkins, Presiding

Welcome

Words of Inspiration

Introduction of Dr. Terrence Brittenum (newly appointed TPA Secretary)

TPA By-Laws

Language has been updated and approved by the TPA Board of Directors
- TPA Members will have the opportunity to provide input

Membership Update

2019-2020 / 390 members

2020-2021 / 372 members to date

- Membership registrations still coming in

Budget Information

2020 Budget - \$98,934

2021 Budget - \$101,054

- Proposed and approved by the TPA Executive Board

TPA has met the financial goal for the Long Term Reserve Fund which will help protect the Association if the economy takes a downward turn; no funds have been accessed at this time.

Nominating Committee Selection

As reported in the Statement of Policies for the Tennessee Principals Association

2021 Nominating Committee:

- Chairperson – Shay Siler (past President)
- Ex-Officio – Dr. Julie Hopkins (President)
- East TN – Dr. Stacy Edwards
- Middle TN - Dr. Ann-Marie Gleason
- West TN - Eric Harris

All members have agreed to serve on the 2021 Nominating Committee which will meet virtually in 2021 (January/February)

New Business

Announcements

National Distinguished Principal Award – nominations are now open

National Outstanding Asst. Principal Award – nominations are now open

TPA Involvement: Room to participate – Membership Ambassador for your region of the state, Conference Committee, writing an article for Tennessee Principal Magazine, TPA Board of Directors . . .

see a current Board Member!

Visit the TPA Website for Updates – www.tnprin.org

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SAVE THE DATE! Registration information will be posted soon to the TPA website: www.tnprin.org.

Our mission is to support, empower and connect Tennessee Principals.





Tears, Trials and Triumphs: Leading Through a Pandemic

By Amy Wooley, TPA Board Member

On March 16, 2020 with news of school closure, we raced to gather materials for students to take with them as they left...not knowing when we would see them again.

Spring break lead right into summer break and the virus showed no sign of making an exit. As a school leader, I lost a lot of sleep and shed many tears while planning for all the unknowns that we would face. My first realization is that none of us can navigate these trials alone. It is vital that we, as leaders, surround ourselves with those who can be problem solvers, resist negativity, and are not afraid to risk failure.

As August inched closer, we learned that students would be returning. We began to forge a plan around pods of students. Every class roster was divided into pods. Those pods of students would be grouped in the classroom, in specials classes, in the cafeteria, and in physical education class. We developed "GO Boxes" for students who would be quarantined.

By mid-September, we had completed 6 weeks of school. At that time, there were no active cases of COVID-19 for students or staff in our building. Our "Go Boxes" and classroom arrangements were working! We wore masks, kept students and staff distanced, executed an after-school program three days per week, and did what we love...teaching kids!

Fellow leaders, principalship can be lonely at times. Be encouraged by this rural Tennessee principal, you can manage whatever comes your way—just do not do it alone. Surround yourself with those who can endure the tears, face the trials, and experience the triumphs with you!

Do not hesitate to reach out to others. ***I am here for you!***



Where Do We Go From Here? *(continued)*

Still, I have never taught Kindergarten, so I had questions. Before I stepped out there to offer my "expertise," I did what I always did as a principal: I sought the knowledge and opinions of teachers. As luck would have it, I've made a new friend recently, Melinda Reese, who has 28/32 years of experience as a Kindergarten teacher, has formerly served as Tennessee Education Association District 2 Director. She currently serves on TEA's Committee-Contact Team to the State Board of Education and as Hamblen County Education Association's Recording Secretary/Chief PECCA Spokesperson. Below is her response:

"I teach at Union Heights Elementary, which is a small school with an enrollment of 280-300 students in Hamblen County. My Kindergarten class normally contains 16-18 students. My two teaching partners also average 16-18 students in their classes for a total of 50-55 Kindergartners. Due to COVID, our enrollment drastically decreased to 31 students.

My school is very concerned with the following issues:

- **Where are our students?**
- **Are they enrolled in any programs?**
- **Will another year without formal Pre-K education put our students behind?**
- **What kinds of gaps will our students have?**
- **How will our school address their gaps?**
- **How will our school address the larger class size for the 2021-2022 school year?**

"I discussed these questions with my principal, Mr. James Patrick. He believes that all of our students will be placed into our Kindergarten Program, where we will have to address any gaps, caused by the 2020-2021 pandemic. In my opinion, our local school systems are overwhelmed with this school year and have not begun to address next year's gap problems.

Ccontinued on next page >

Remote Learning

By Bobby Busch, Principal, Joseph Brown Elementary School (Columbia, TN), TPA Board Member



Education is an awesome and challenging profession. I try to simplify as much as I can when discussing the topic, but there is so much complexity to the process. Now we add this pandemic to the equation and it grows even more complex. We already know our materials (students) all have different abilities and now we need manage the inequalities in a remote environment.

At the end of last year at my school we moved at a frantic pace to assist students when schools were shut down. Our county prepared grade level packets for each student. The downside is they were not graded and no feedback or expectations. This year we have many new programs we learned to assist those in school, and those learning remotely. Here is the simplistic layout of our process of learning. The keys are:

- 1. Know where you are going!** We must all know our expectations, so we know where to focus our efforts. A clear mission and vision are needed so we all understand where we are going. All decisions made must align to these two statements. Students need to be aware of the skills/standards expected for their grade level. Knowing those expectations will reinforce the “Why” and their purpose of the activity assigned. The knowledge of “Why” will reinforce both remote and face-to-face students.
- 2. Know where you are!** Benchmark testing or C.F.A.’s help us to measure where we are. After this pandemic we know there will be many challenges and variances for each student. Once we identify the areas of need, we then create a plan of action to improve. What gets measured gets improved!

The measurement of where students are is much easier when we are live and in-person. The remote students is much more challenging. For remote students we are having them come to school just long enough to take the assessments. We are only having remote students complete our quarterly benchmarks. (AIMSweb, iReady) The data from those two assessments will help guide our instruction just like it does in the classroom. For our remote student we will provide instruction Asynchronously and Synchronously (When possible)
- 3. Celebrate your success!**

Where Do We Go... *(continued from page 24)*

“I have been around education for a long time and can remember when programs, such as PreFirst, Transition, and Dr. Bain’s Project Star (Small Class Size) were used to help students pass from Kindergarten into First Grade. These programs needed funding. Without the funding, they were disregarded.

“We continue to have a perception problem, concerning Kindergarten. The community and parents still view Kindergarten as a social Interaction for students, instead of a rigorous program, full of pushed down curricula. **Therefore, Kindergarten teachers will be responsible for ‘filling in the gaps.’**”

In your spare time, it’s a great idea to think about what needs to happen in order to address this gap. What changes to rules and regulations might the State Board of Education need to address in order to make the needed changes? As I said, in your spare time.....

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Catherine Prentis has served as Editor of the Tennessee Principal magazine for the past 15 years. She has worked diligently to produce a high quality journal for principals across our state. Catherine is retiring from this position with this issue. The TPA Board of Directors is grateful for her service and contributions to the Tennessee Principals Association.

Thank You, Catherine!



Making a Difference to Those in Need

Deb Jordan, Inter-State Studio & Publishing Company TPA Sponsor

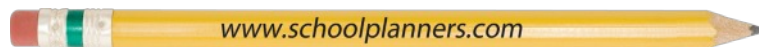
Inter-State Studio & Publishing, a partner to many middle Tennessee schools for student photography, traded their photo equipment for emergency supplies and moving equipment during the first week of March, 2020. The morning of March 3rd started out the same as most in early spring...until all of their phones alerted them of the chaos happening in Nashville and Mount Juliet. A deadly tornado had been on the ground, and left destruction for miles.

The ISS team has many friends in Metro Nashville, and soon they were on the phone with Dr. Natalyn Gibbs, asking how they could help. The team rallied together at Robert Churchwell Elementary and got to work, delivering supplies and moving anything they could to assist in securing the building.

All of the volunteers felt the sense of community in middle Tennessee was astounding. The organization and sheer determination of those leading Metro's efforts was very impressive. "Partnering with educators on a whole new level was wonderful was an experience which will not be forgotten."



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