



# Tennessee Schools for the Deaf

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DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS PROSPECTUS



## MISSION

Empowering students, families, and stakeholders through education, advocacy, and community.



## VISION

Students will be linguistically and culturally competent. They will exhibit a mastery of both American Sign Language (ASL) and English and possess self-knowledge and skills necessary to succeed academically and socially as a productive member of society.



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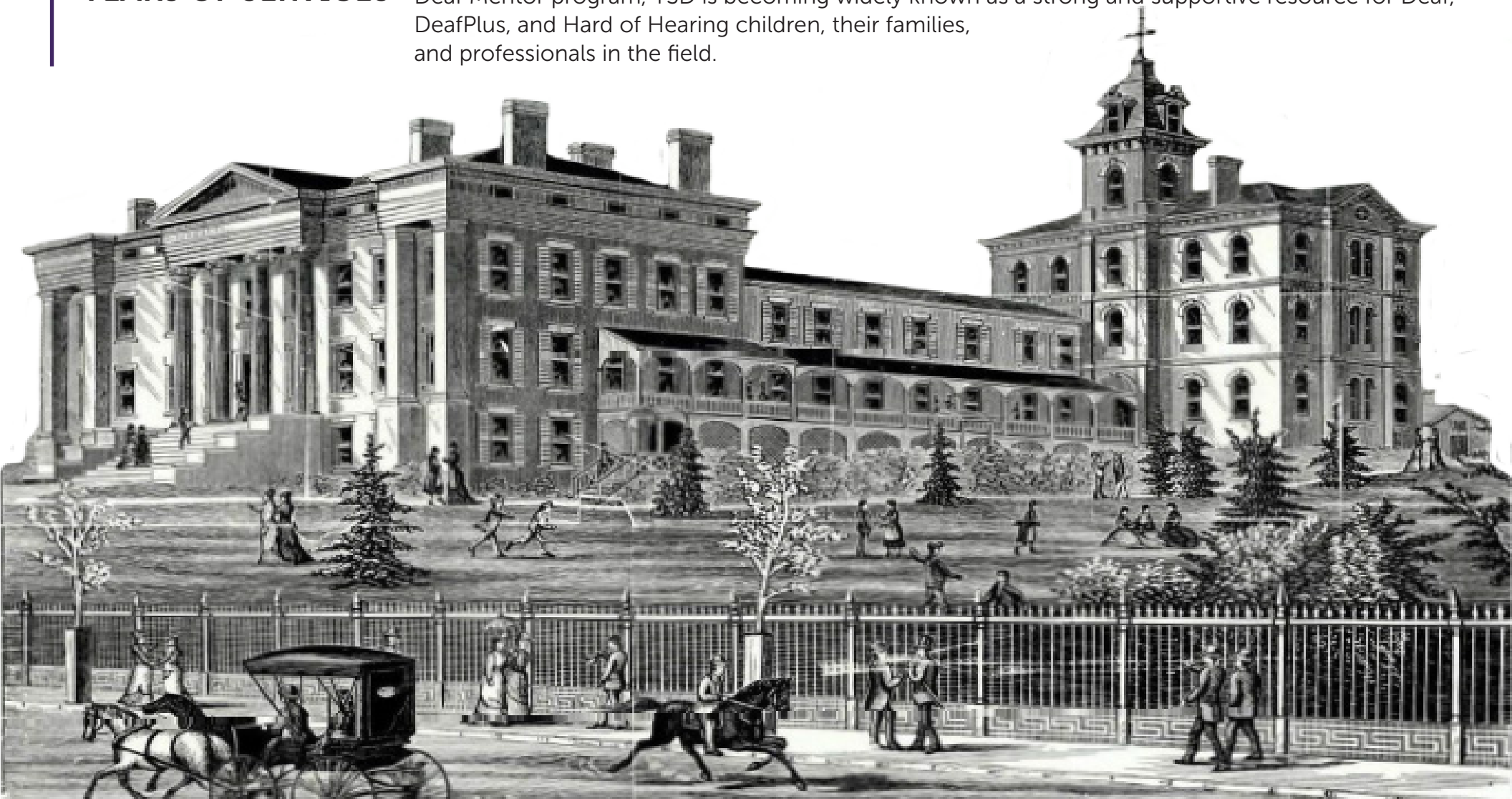
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# 180

**YEARS OF SERVICES**

The school opened in June 1845 under the leadership of Mr. Thomas MacIntire with six students in the heart of downtown Knoxville. 80 years later in 1924, the school moved to the beautiful Island Home Park area, where it still resides today. The Tennessee Department of Education has responded to the need to serve more Deaf, DeafPlus, and Hard of Hearing students in the state of Tennessee by establishing two additional campuses in the state: Jackson and Nashville. The district, which includes all three campuses/schools, is known as Tennessee Schools for the Deaf (TSD). At the district level, there are various outreach programs available to stakeholders across the state. These programs guide and encourage families with Deaf, DeafPlus, or Hard of Hearing children and support local education agencies in serving these children. Through the of outreach programs that TSD provides, including the Deaf Mentor program, TSD is becoming widely known as a strong and supportive resource for Deaf, DeafPlus, and Hard of Hearing children, their families, and professionals in the field.



# BILINGUAL EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Here at TSD, we believe in bilingualism, educating our students through both American Sign Language (ASL) and English. We communicate primarily through ASL while also emphasizing the importance of reading and writing English. Together, ASL and English grant the most accessible education to students.

Bilingual education is a research-backed philosophy, supported by multiple sources. Altogether, research has evidenced that the more fluent deaf people are in ASL, the higher their academic achievement will be, the more sociable they will be, and the happier and more successful they will be.

TSD maintains a philosophy of bilingual education because it's the proven path to success for Deaf, DeafPlus, and Hard of Hearing students.

In keeping with a bilingual philosophy that values both ASL and English, TSD has been working to establish expectations that ensure the use of ASL and English are separate, reducing linguistic and communication confusion.

## **Goals of the bilingual education program are to:**

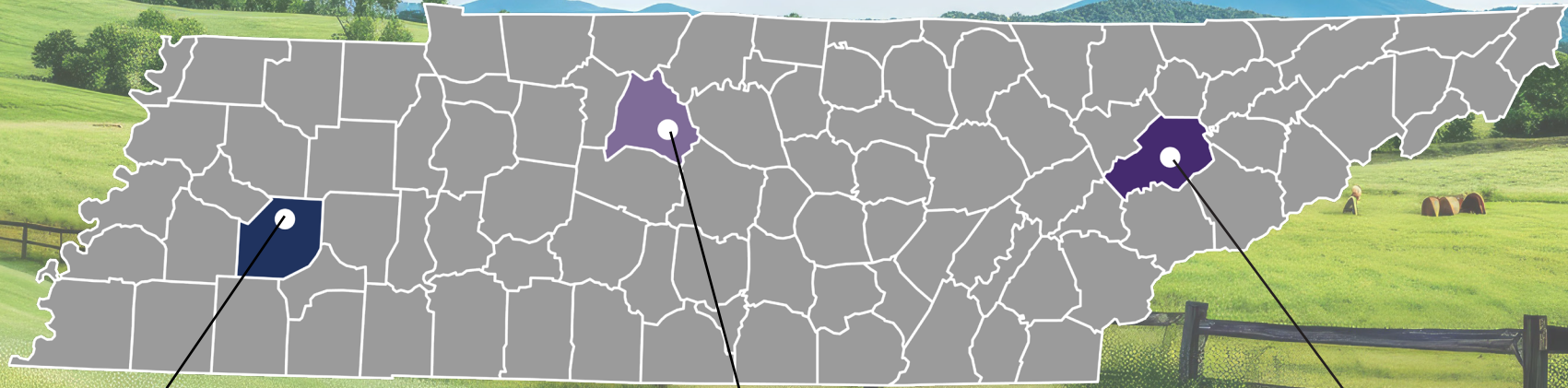
- Support TSD students in developing proficiency in both languages.
- Demonstrate respect for both languages by modeling appropriate use of the languages.
- Provide training and promote awareness related to bilingual instruction and practices in other programs that serve our Deaf, DeafPlus, and Hard of Hearing students.

By establishing this research-based language philosophy, TSD expects an impact on student achievement as students have full access to language and communication throughout the school, providing greater opportunity for growth in academic, linguistic, cognitive, and social skills.





# THE VOLUNTEER STATE



**West Tennessee  
School for the Deaf**

WTSD was established in 1986 and currently has 31 students enrolled, ranging from Pre-K – 5th grade. WTSD was rewarded twice in recent school years as a Model of Demonstration School, Bronze Level, for Response to Instruction and Intervention-Behavior (RTI2-B). To continue growing, WTSD has implemented renovations for their buildings, linking them so students can transit between buildings safely. Improvements have also been made to services, maintaining their high quality so students can get what they need.



**Tennessee**  
School for the Deaf  
— Nashville —

TSDN is the most recent campus, established in 2018, and is located within the campus of the Tennessee School for the Blind. TSDN currently has an enrollment of 28 students, ranging from Pre-K – 5th grade. Enrollment has been steadily growing since the first year. TSDN addresses academic and social growth through shared resources, such as the playground, gym, cafeteria services, and the clinic. There are also three cottages for residential students as needed. Plans are being developed to relocate TSDN to its own campus.



**Tennessee**  
School for the Deaf  
— Knoxville —

TSDK is a residential campus with a current enrollment of 117 students in the Toddler Learning Center and grades Pre-K - 12th grade. In addition, there's a program entitled the Comprehensive Adult Program (CAP) for graduating students through age 22 to build on their life skills to be productive members of society. TSDK has recently completed construction of a 144-bed residence hall for residential students and others as needed. Those students have the opportunity to develop living skills. Today, students are enjoying the brand new residence hall as if it was their own homes.



# ABOUT TENNESSEE

Tennessee, known as “The Volunteer State,” is a culturally rich and geographically diverse state. Its nickname comes from the strong tradition of citizens volunteering for military service, especially during the War of 1812. Today, Tennessee is known for its music heritage, scenic landscapes, historic landmarks, and welcoming communities.

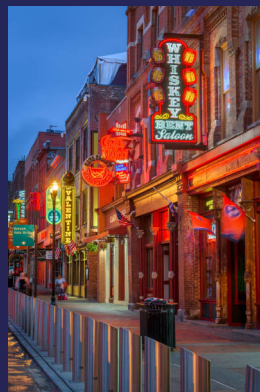
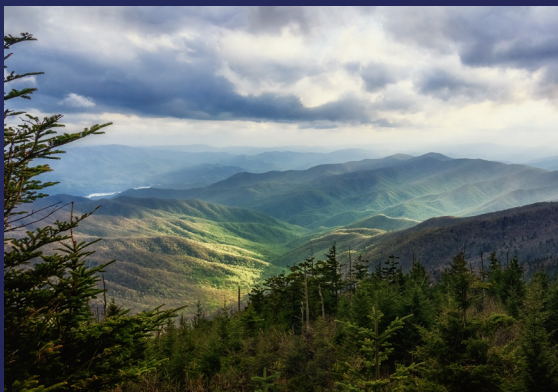
One of the state’s most well-known cities is Nashville, the capital of Tennessee and a global center for country music. Nashville is home to famous attractions such as the Grand Ole Opry, the Country Music Hall of Fame, and lively Broadway streets filled with live music venues. Beyond music, the city also offers museums, professional sports, and a growing food scene.

In West Tennessee, Memphis plays a major role in American history and culture. The city is closely associated with blues music, rock ‘n’ roll, and soul. Visitors often tour Graceland, the former home of Elvis Presley, and visit the National Civil Rights Museum, which preserves the history of the civil rights movement. Memphis is also well known for its unique and flavorful barbecue.

In East Tennessee, Knoxville serves as an important educational and cultural hub. It is home to the University of Tennessee and features a vibrant downtown area with Market Square, local restaurants, and historic buildings. Knoxville is especially appealing to outdoor enthusiasts because of its close proximity to rivers, lakes, and mountain trails.

One of Tennessee’s greatest natural attractions is Great Smoky Mountains National Park, located along the eastern border of the state. As the most visited national park in the United States, it offers breathtaking views, hiking trails, waterfalls, and diverse wildlife. Nearby towns such as Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge are popular tourist destinations, offering attractions like Dollywood, family entertainment, and mountain resorts.

In addition to its cities and parks, Tennessee has many historic sites, charming small towns, and scenic drives. With its blend of music, history, outdoor beauty, and community spirit, Tennessee is a state that offers something meaningful and memorable for everyone.





# DEAF COMMUNITIES

## IN TENNESSEE

Jackson offers a unique blend of small-city comfort and rural charm, featuring modern shopping centers and locally owned restaurants as well as open countryside with horse ranches and farms. This balance allows everyone to enjoy both convenience and a peaceful lifestyle. Jackson also provides unique experiences such as Rusty's Car Museum and the Carnegie Center for Arts and History.

Jackson's central location means it's within reach of several surrounding towns with Deaf residents, including Memphis, each one offering additional opportunities for social events, advocacy, interpreting services, and cultural connections.

Nashville is the heart and capital city of Tennessee, nicknamed "Music City". Many avenues of socialization and entertainment exist here, from professional sports to Civil War battlefields to music venues with songs that everyone will love, deaf or not.

Deaf people have many options to choose from during their time here, and they will not have any lack of accessibility with the Tennessee government committing to the Council for the Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing, which ensures equal access to everything for everyone. This includes Library Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, which compiles local events such as signing stories nights and deaf events among other services.

Knoxville is considered the "capital city of East Tennessee". Knoxville has the largest Deaf community in the state, full of local Deaf organizations like the Knoxville Center of the Deaf and Tennessee Association for the Deaf, all of them focused on improving accessibility for the Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafPlus, and Hard of Hearing.

Knoxville and nearby cities offer many options, such as attending the University of Tennessee's sports games, joining in seasonal festivals, riding roller coasters in theme park like Dollywood, among many others. Other attractions include Pigeon Forge, Gatlinburg, and the Smoky Mountains, making Knoxville the perfect center for people to explore various things within a small radius.



# ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

The Instruction department is an outstanding group of faculty and staff across the state that includes principals, assistant principals, teachers, teaching assistants, clerical staff, ASL specialists, transitional counselors, speech and language pathologists, school counselors, psychologists, and instructional coaches. These educators ensure that our students learn both inside and outside the classroom through extracurricular activities such as clubs and athletics. TSDK welcomes all students, from grades Pre-K to 12th. Toddlers are also welcome in the Toddler Learning Center (TLC) program, and eligible graduating students can remain in the Comprehensive Adult Program until they're 22 to obtain more life skills if necessary or wanted. TSDN and WTSD both only serve students grades Pre-K to 5th, although those students are welcome to transfer to TSDK after the end of their 5th grade education.

We believe in "whatever it takes", and this is demonstrated in the classroom. Our teachers follow curriculum based on the Tennessee State Standards, and we support strong language development using a bilingual approach. We use a number of resources to complement what we teach and the way the students learn. We encourage our students to explore their talents so they are empowered by choosing their future, be it a career or post-secondary opportunities.

## CURRICULUM

### Credits Required to Graduate:

- 4 credits of English
- 2 credits of World Language (ASL)
- 1 credit of fine arts
- 2 credits of science and 1 credits of science lab
- 4 credits of math
- 1 credit of computer science\*
- 3 credits of Social Studies
- 0.5 credits of Physical Education
- 1 credit of Wellness
- 0.5 credits of Personal Finance
- 3 credits of elective courses.

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Comprehensive Adult Program
- Toddler Learning Class
- Tutoring
- Summer Academic Programs
- Speech Language Services
- Audiology Services
- Counseling Services
- Transition Services
- TN Promise

### College, Career & Technical Education

- Culinary Arts
- Robotics & Automated Systems
- Work-Based Learning
- Digital Art & Design

## CLUBS

- Academic Bowl
- BETA
- Theatre
- Jr. NAD
- Game
- Chess
- VEX Robotics
- Viking
- Math
- Craft
- FCCLA
- Art
- Yearbook
- Battle of the Books

\* Only for students who enrolled in 9th grade on or after the 2024-25 school year.



## **RESIDENTIAL STUDENTS**

Student Life's primary responsibility is to provide a safe and comfortable living environment for all residential students. Our programs are specifically designed to provide a supportive environment. One that is free of language barriers and one that offers opportunities for student growth, development, and achievement. The residential program emphasizes integration, collaboration, and equality by fostering opportunities and experiences in self-education and self-improvement. We follow an Independent Living Curriculum that promotes different topics and tasks to guide students to become self-sufficient individuals.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITY CENTER**

The Student Life department is responsible for Recreation and Summer Camps. Recreation involves after-school / evening activities along with elementary and middle school sports. Evening activities may include open gym, swimming, movie night, arts & crafts, and more for all ages. Recreation staff are responsible for organizing teams for the elementary and middle school students. The sports are flag football, volleyball, basketball, and soccer. All teams play in a city-sanctioned league and often play at TSD or travel to local schools. Recreation is fully funded by a grant from Variety of East Tennessee.

Clubs and activities are viewed as equally valued opportunities for social interaction and character building. Activities include Three Bears for the younger ages; older students can join the Chess Club, Junior NAD, and Residential Student Council. There are also tutors to help students continue learning after school as needed or desired.

There are two gyms, outdoor basketball courts, and playgrounds for students to enjoy after school. Our 95-acre campus provides space for Disc Golf. Nearby parks provide hiking and bicycle trails. Recreation is also responsible for running the Student Union (SUB). This is a place where students socialize, play games, and purchase snacks and/or drinks. SUB holds a pool table, board games, TVs, books, and on-campus snack bar.

Additionally, field trips in Knoxville and surrounding areas are provided for students to enjoy and experience learning opportunities.

## **ATHLETICS**

The rich history of varsity athletics at the Tennessee School for the Deaf began in 1886 with our first baseball team and was soon followed by football in 1892, boys basketball in 1905 and girls basketball in 1907. Since those early days, we have added cheerleading, swimming, girls and boys volleyball, and coed flag football.

TSD is proud of our 15 Deaf Prep National Championships, 20 Mason Dixon Championships and 7 TSSAA State Championships. We continue to compete annually in the Mason Dixon Conference and the TSSAA District 1A. Our track and field team in particular has grown a lot with the University of Tennessee offering a scholarship to one student and many others qualifying for the Deaflympics. TSD Athletics is committed to the pursuit of excellence and embody the spirit of continuous improvement. We are "Always Improving, Never Satisfied." Join us in our quest to build on our legacy and empower the next generation of champions.

## HOME - FOCUSED SERVICES

### ***Family Centered Outreach***

Families' introduction to the services offered by TSD's Outreach & Admissions department including resources, direct services, and referrals. Outreach can make a home visit to find out what families need and start them on their journey. However, no further commitment is required.

### ***Deaf Mentor & Parent Advisor Program***

A program for families with children from birth to age 5 where a Deaf Mentor and a Parent Advisor make weekly visits to provide information and skills for the journey of raising a Deaf child including: ASL; Deaf Culture; speaking & listening development; literacy; transition; and more!

### ***Supplementary Programs***

- **Shared Reading Project:** Families learn to read in ASL & English with their child using the 15 principles.
- **Snapshots:** Families meet Deaf, DeafPlus, and Hard of Hearing adults to get a "snapshot" into their lives and ask questions that they may have.

## SCHOOL - FOCUSED SERVICES

### ***Statewide Schools Outreach***

Outreach provides consultation services for any school at the request of school or district leadership. Support includes classroom, audiological, assessment, educational interpreting, professional development, and more!

### ***Family & Community Engagement***

Outreach brings families, faculty, and community members together across the state through events, workshops, and resources. Programs are open to families with children of all ages and communities from across the state.





# OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES

TSDK's current site is an 95-acre campus on the banks of the Tennessee River. Construction on five buildings including the administration building (Ward Building) began in 1923 with the official dedication being held in November, 1924. The Director of Schools's residence, originally the Perez Dickinson Italianate mansion, situated adjacent to the Ward Building, was built in the 1870's (<https://knoxvillehistoryproject.org/island-home/>). The new high school and dining hall were completed in 2017 and a new residential facility is completed, making TSDK a more pedestrian-friendly campus with 19 buildings.

WTSD was established in 1986 as an elementary school for deaf and hard of hearing students, serving student's Pre-K through 5th grade. There are five buildings on this campus, two of which were former residential cottages that were later converted for other state office use.

In 2018, TSDN opened on the campus of Tennessee School for the Blind, serving grades Pre-K through 5th grade.

## CAPITAL PROJECTS

### Recently Completed:

#### TSDK

- 420/421 Edmunds Building: HVAC, Windows, and Doors
- Akin Gym: HVAC and New Basketball Court
- Residence Hall
- Old Gym: New Basketball Court
- Chamber Field: New Turf Field and Scoreboard

#### WTSD

- SAVE ACT Upgrades
- Essential Maintenance
- Exterior Building Improvements (corridor between buildings)

### Upcoming:

#### TSDK

- SAVE ACT Upgrades (design phase)

#### WTSD

- Fire Alarm Upgrades (programming phase)



# CENTRAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Central Leadership Team (CLT) for Tennessee Schools for the Deaf is comprised of the Director of Schools and Directors of Instruction, Human Resources, Outreach & Operations, Student Life, Support Services, and Technology & Communications. Each CLT member provides direct oversight of their respective department and staff.

## KEY DATA

**175**

Students  
District-wide

**207**

Employees  
District-wide

**29%**

TSBK Residential  
Students

**45**

Teachers  
District-wide

**100%**

Graduation  
Rate

**4:1**

TSBK Students to  
Teachers Ratio

**5:1**

WTSD Students to  
Teachers Ratio

**4:1**

TSBN Students to  
Teachers Ratio

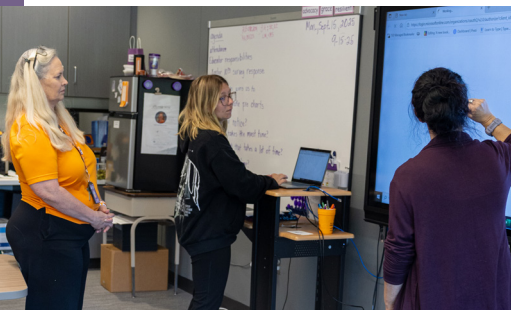
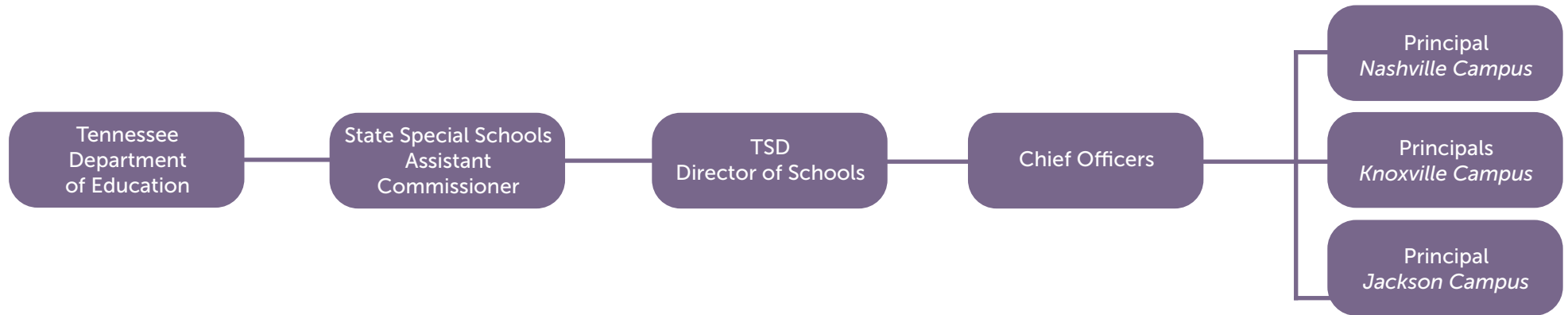






## STATE SPECIAL SCHOOLS GOVERNANCE

TSD schools are state funded, and rather than a school board, the director of schools reports to the State Special Schools (SSS) assistant commissioner at the Tennessee Department of Education. The Director of Schools has the autonomy to make school and organizational decisions to maintain effective and efficient operations of the school system. The assistant commissioner serves as accountability partner in the work to serve students providing support in critical thinking processes. The assistant commissioner is responsible for evaluating the Director of Schools, a process that includes self-evaluation, observation, staff input, and SMART goal progress. In addition to the assistant commissioner, TDOE supports TSD with procurement, finance, legal, operations, research, and technology services.





# TSDK/TSND AND WTSD BUDGETS

As a state agency within the Tennessee Department of Education, Tennessee Schools for the Deaf receives its funding from the state of Tennessee. TSD (Knoxville and Nashville) and WTSD budget information including federal revenue is represented in the following charts:

## FISCAL YEAR 2026 - STATE BUDGETS

SPENDING CATEGORY	TSDK/TSND	WTSD	TOTAL
PERSONNEL	\$20,873,300	\$3,467,100	\$24,340,400
OPERATIONAL	\$5,802,900	\$905,700	\$6,708,600
TOTAL	\$26,676,200	\$4,372,800	\$31,049,000

## TSDK/TSND FISCAL YEAR 2026 - FEDERAL BUDGET

FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCE	CARRYOVER	FY 26 ALLOCATIONS	TOTAL BUDGET
TITLE I	\$500.00	-	\$500.00
TITLE II	-	-	-
TITLE IV	-	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
IDEA B	\$200.00	\$112,234.00	\$112,434.00
IDEA PK	-	\$7,125.00	\$7,125.00
PERKINS	-	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
ISM GRANT	\$175,916.27	-	\$175,916.27
TOTAL			\$320,975.27

## WTSD FISCAL YEAR 2026 - FEDERAL BUDGET

FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCE	CARRYOVER	FY 26 ALLOCATIONS	TOTAL BUDGET
TITLE I	\$9,148.37	\$7,002.25	\$16,150.62
TITLE II	-	-	-
TITLE IV	-	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
IDEA B	\$9,148.09	\$30,719.00	\$39,867.09
IDEA PK	\$4,137.07	\$4,937.00	\$9,074.07
TOTAL			\$75,091.78



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030

Outreach

Language  
& Literacy

Ready  
Graduate

Whole  
Child

Talent Management (Recruit/ Develop/ Retain)

Stewardship (Fiscal Responsibility/ Budget/ Facilities/ Operations)

Technology and Communications

Tennessee Schools for the Deaf (TSD) 2025-2030 Strategic Plan was developed by the Central Leadership Team (CLT) to align with the Tennessee Department of Education's Vision and Priorities for Education for students in the state of Tennessee. TSD's strategic plan focuses on language acquisition for deaf and hard of hearing students that will support life-long learning and assure that students are afforded every opportunity for success in life. Education for students in the schools is supported through strong fiscal and operational oversight of resources that are also addressed through the strategic plan.

## Outreach

By 2030 TSD will be viewed as the primary resource for parents who give birth to a deaf or hard of hearing child. Tennessee school systems will regard TSD as their resource for decision making and service delivery for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Students who enroll in TSD's PreK programs will have a foundational language base and will be ready to learn.

## Language & Literacy

By 2030 all students know their next step at graduation and are perfectly prepared to take it. Students will demonstrate proficiency in both ASL and English.

## Ready Graduate

By 2030 all students know their next step at graduation and are perfectly prepared to take it. This will require a post-secondary and career plan for each student.

## Whole Child

By 2030 all students know their next step at graduation and are perfectly prepared to take it. Students will demonstrate self-regulation, positive identity, and self-care and self-advocacy skills. Students will take an active role in leadership at TSD.





## TSD's Operational Goals

Effective and efficient operations are a necessary component to ensure overall school success. The purpose of the operational goals is to maximize efficiency and effectiveness while mitigating risk.

### Talent Management

By 2030 TSD will recruit and retain highly qualified employees for every job position on campus. TSD employees will demonstrate a high degree of job satisfaction and will understand their role in supporting the success of our students.

### Stewardship

By 2030 TSD will operate with efficiency and effectiveness, mitigating risk and meeting the needs of stakeholders.

### Technology and Communications

By 2030 TSD will provide fully filtered and monitored content for the purposes of business and instruction. Devices will be provided to all staff and students, providing the capability of working and learning remotely should the need arise. TSD will provide communications that are clear and reliable through a variety of platforms including social media and the school website.



# **DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS JOB DESCRIPTION**

## **ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND MINIMUM RESPONSIBILITIES**

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- Foster and maintain strong working relationships and high expectations across all three campuses;
- Demonstrate a passion for and commitment to providing excellent learning opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing students;
- Foster and maintain effective communication and relationships with students, staff, parents, community members, and state and national organizations;
- Execute strategies to improve student achievement for all students;
- Identify critical needs and effectively lead change to improve outcomes;
- Analyze performance data to identify trends and insights leading to actionable strategies and/or tactics;
- Raise community and district awareness of services provided across the three campuses to provide services as early as possible;
- Regularly visit schools and classrooms to gauge progress and provide actionable feedback;
- Hold regular, effective leadership meetings;
- Provide regular feedback to direct reports and monitor progress toward goals.

## **PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS**

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- Exhibit personal characteristics enabling effective interaction with important constituencies and possess a genuine commitment to the advancement of student achievement;
- Demonstrate a track record of driving organizations towards excellence that can be sustained over time;
- Possess knowledge of current and future policy issues;
- Exhibit strong negotiating strategies and the ability to work effectively with local and national leadership counterparts;
- Proficiency in American Sign Language
- Possess excellent organizational skills, presentation and written communications skills, and the ability to articulate the needs, interests, and accomplishments of the schools to a wide range of audiences;
- Demonstrate the ability to work independently, take initiative, manage multiple projects simultaneously, meet deadlines, and adapt to ever-changing priorities;
- Exhibit dedication to cultivating a positive workplace culture;
- Show commitment to communicating regularly with parents and other community stakeholders, seeking their support and advice, to create a cooperative relationship for student support.

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- Master's degree in education, educational administration, curriculum/instruction or a related area from an accredited college or university is required with a strong emphasis on data-informed instruction that raises student achievement as measured by standardized test scores;
- Five years of successful teaching experience with students on Individualized Education Programs (IEP); deaf education experience preferred;
- Three years of demonstrated successful administrative/supervisory experience in a school setting required; deaf and/or residential schools preferred;
- Experience at the district level leading in roles like an instructional supervisor or instructional coach preferred.







# TSD DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS LEADER PROFILE

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## **BUILD TRUST, TRANSPARENCY, & PARTNERSHIPS**

The TSD community seeks a Director of Schools whose active listening skills ensure that all community members feel included and heard. Students, families, teachers, and staff are eager to work with a compassionate and authentic leader who will earn and maintain trust while also advocating locally and statewide. In addition to building trust among community members, the Director of Schools will also empower the TSD community by cultivating relationships with families, schools, and organizations throughout the state of Tennessee and nationwide. The leader is expected to source best practices from schools and institutes of higher education within the state and throughout the country.

Students wish to see a new Director of Schools who is eager to become directly involved with student matters and issues including enhanced opportunities for community service and enabling new and unique clubs and organizations. Furthermore, when concerns and issues come up, TSD stakeholders wish to have a leader who is approachable and invested in listening to each person.

## **RECRUIT AND RETAIN A HIGHLY QUALIFIED WORKFORCE**

TSD is always growing. As such, the Director of Schools is expected to recruit talented individuals and hire them to maintain TSD's quality of education and community. The Director of Schools will need to work with faculty and staff to screen for highly qualified individuals, and to retain them.

Maintaining the workforce is another important part expected of the Director of Schools; the Director of Schools will be expected to work with faculty and staff to ensure their retention in TSD. Retention of the workforce is important for stability and consistency, not only for the Director of Schools but also for the students and the other faculty and staff members.

## **UNITE TSD CAMPUSES**

With campuses in Knoxville, Nashville, and Jackson, the Director of Schools plays a critical role in uniting all campuses behind meeting students' needs regardless of where they live in Tennessee. The Director of Schools will work closely with the TSD community so that all campuses have adequate resources and access to the Director of Schools and be visibly present on each campus and in their classrooms. Each campus has different trajectories. The new leader will play an important role in aligning all three campuses in uniformly upholding the TSD mission and vision described on page 2 in this prospectus.

## **UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSE DEAF EXPERIENCES**

TSD's students, families, faculty, and staff share the strong preference of a Director of Schools who is familiar with Deaf Education and Deaf Culture, yet also understanding and respectful of the many ways of being deaf or hard of hearing. This includes supporting the continued expansion of the recently-established Deaf Mentor Program which is currently an interim program that is under review to be approved as a permanent program in the state legislature. The new Director of Schools is expected to continue to make robust technology support available to students with assistive devices such as hearing aids and cochlear implants.

In addition, the Director of Schools must be acutely aware of the importance of traditional gatherings at Deaf spaces such as the Mason-Dixon tournament, homecoming, robotics competitions, and actively seek out opportunities for the school and Deaf community to get together. The community shared that these gatherings instill a sense of school and cultural pride as well as networking opportunities for student personal and academic growth.

The new leader will value and support a wide range of staff from those who maintain and clean the school to those who teach the students. The Director of Schools will be a role model who demonstrates and instills a sense of school and cultural pride in all of TSD's students, families, faculty, and staff regardless of educational background or communication methodology.

## **SHEPHERD GROWTH THAT INCORPORATES A DEAF LENS**

TSD is experiencing exciting growth as a school in many areas and is looking for a leader experienced in sustaining and guiding this growth with a Deaf-centric philosophy. This includes the expansion of the Nashville school which was established eight years ago. Furthermore, the Knoxville school is replacing its cottages with dorms which provides an opportunity for the staff and students to redefine the Deaf community and culture experience on campus. Stakeholders and students see TSD's growth as a potential brand and model to build on and refine best practices in deaf and hard of hearing education nationally. The new Director of Schools will be eager to publicly spotlight all of the progress TSD has made to be a vibrant program that deserves to be widely respected throughout the nation.

## **ADVANCE HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS**

Many TSD stakeholders want a Director of Schools who will drive students to excel academically while recognizing the importance of developing a well-rounded student. The development of well-rounded students is possible through empowered staff and faculty who benefit from ongoing professional development. The ideal Director of Schools will have experience both in the classroom as well as high-level strategy and budgeting, enabling TSD to successfully liaise with local and state officials to meet student needs.

Students have expressed the desire to see a leader who consistently challenges them, their teachers, and the school's stakeholders in raising the bar for academic excellence, standards, and expectations. Additionally, they wish to see a leader who will expand and enhance the career and technical education (CTE), science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and work-based learning (WBL) programs that they believe will help them prepare them for their future careers.



## INSTALL SHARED VISION, CULTURE, AND SUCCESS

The TSD community is incredibly passionate about TSD's legacy, and many also eagerly anticipate its future. The Director of Schools will be a visionary who rallies the TSD community behind a shared vision while ensuring a tangible, pragmatic strategy is in place. The Director of Schools is someone who recognizes that meaningful change does not occur overnight, but is a result of collaboration and dedication to the work that needs to be done to ensure a student-centric school.

The new Director of Schools is expected to adopt a student-centric and instruction-specific decision-making process. This process must engage the Deaf community, parents, and staff in key discussions and decisions about major changes to the school in order to ensure transparency and buy-in from these stakeholder groups.

Ultimately, the Director of Schools communicates to inspire, connects the school with a shared purpose, and reminds everyone of the outcomes that the TSD community aspires to achieve. The vision, culture, and success largely depend on the ability of the Director of Schools to provide frequent and transparent communication with all stakeholders including students, parents, alumni, and the Deaf community.

### THE IDEAL TSD DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS WILL:

- Develop a climate of trust throughout the community
- Retain and recruit qualified faculty and staff to TSD
- Invest in faculty/staff relations and development
- Center student learning and well-being throughout all decision-making processes
- Engage families in their student's education
- Improve the relationship between TSD and local and state decision-makers
- Bring extensive experience in financial and operational management
- Foster a positive learning environment for all TSD community members
- Excel in communicating frequently, clearly, and authentically





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## HOW TO APPLY

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**PLEASE SEND ALL QUESTIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND APPLICATIONS TO:**

Shane Feldman, Chief Executive Officer  
Innivee Strategies, Inc.  
[apply@innivee.com](mailto:apply@innivee.com)

All applications submitted by Tuesday, February 10th, 2026 will receive full consideration. By TSD Search Committee code of conduct affirmation, all information from and about candidates will be kept in strict confidence. Application materials should include a cover letter, resume, and three references.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION**

*Pursuant to the State of Tennessee's policy of non-discrimination, the Tennessee Schools for the Deaf does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, or military services in its policies, or in the admission of, access to, treatment, or employment in its programs, services, or activities.*