

*Tenn*AROS  
*community is everything*

# Tennessee Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools



PROGRESS REPORT SPRING 2017



# TennAROS EMERGING

## Overview

This is a report on the progress of Tennessee Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (TennAROS) to lead an alliance of community activists, organizations and public school supporters to win the expansion of Community Schools in Tennessee.

## TENNESSEE ALLIANCE TO RECLAIM OUR SCHOOLS ESTABLISHED CORE ALLIANCE

TennAROS has quickly organized under satellite alliances: Chattanooga, Nashville, Memphis & Knoxville with the State Alliance pushing rural scaling and sharing strategy between city satellites, and creating connections between organizations. Tennessee has many community schools efforts in play. The long-term goal is for these established efforts to connect with TennAROS and to integrate and scale their local implementation of community schools to include the transformational model while increasing the number of community schools across Tennessee. Each city AROS is setting its own distinct direction to recruit alliance members and identify schools to pilot the Transformational School model. And each of those city AROS Alliances will look different relative to district goals and school/community needs.

The initial core state-level alliance of SOCM, SPEAK, TEA, TnPTA and TREE has outlined our goals and our mission. This report is organized by city and rural progress towards those goals.

## OUR MISSION THAT UNITES US

The Tennessee Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools members: Statewide Organizing for Community Empowerment (SOCM), Students, Parents, Educators Across Knox County (SPEAK), Tennessee Education Association (TEA), Tennessee Parent Teacher Association (TnPTA), and Tennesseans Reclaiming Educational Excellence (TREE) are committed to focusing on the support and creation of transformational community schools. Working with community schools providers across the state of Tennessee in addition to growing our alliance voice.

- <https://socm.org>
- <http://speaktn.com>
- <http://www.teateachers.org>
- <http://www.tnpta.org>
- <https://treetn.org>

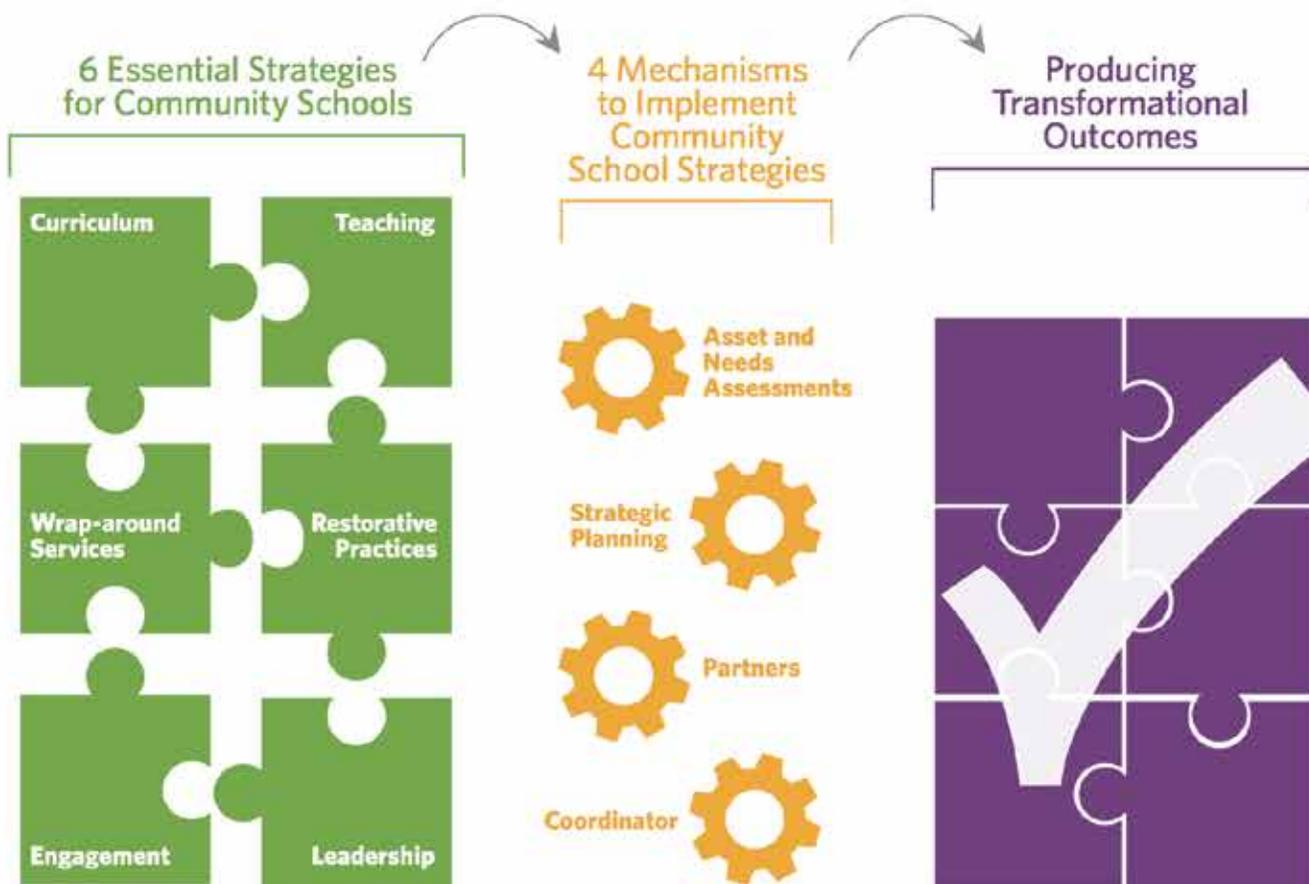


## What is a TRANSFORMATIONAL Community School?

### HIGH-PERFORMING COMMUNITY SCHOOLS HAVE THESE THINGS IN COMMON

The AROS model for Transformational Community Schools implements an **evidence-based framework** to bring together the resources of school, family, and community in order to make schools stronger and help young people thrive. The 2016 Southern Education Foundation report <sup>1</sup> found that while many schools are implementing Community Schools methods, such as wrap-around services or extended-day, schools achieving the most successful outcomes had ALL of these strategies and mechanisms in common.

#### Strategies and Mechanisms for Equity and Success



Transformational Community Schools require sustainable funding and resources. This can be realized through a combination of resource provisions leveraged through partnerships; investment at the federal, state, and local government levels; and foundation and ESSA federal grants. This report outlines our progress to secure state-wide support and funding.

Prepared by:  
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Advocacy funding provided by The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools, alliance members.

Graphic provided by National AROS.

## FOUR GOALS SET JANUARY 2017

### 1. Influence School Boards

Influence school boards to pass a motion/resolution to investigate the use of Transformation Community Schools model as a school intervention model for school improvement. As of this report we are four months into our timeline. Five districts are identified and four organized: Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville and Grundy County. Additional interested districts: Robertson County.

**A. Five districts adopt this motion by June 1, 2017**

**B. Five additional districts adopt by July 1, 2018**

#### NASHVILLE AROS

Amanda Kail of the Middle TN Coalition Advocating for Public Education (CAPE) (<https://www.facebook.com/MTCAPE>) spoke to the Metro Nashville School Board in March 2017, asking the MNPS board to support community schools in their strategic plan and budget. The district strategic plan outlines a commitment to “Student Support Services” which includes the MNPS “Community Achieves” community schools initiative that formally began two years ago, framed by the Coalition for Community Schools best practices. This initiative encompasses 23 schools in Metro Nashville.

The MNPS 2017-18 budget proposes funding of four new Community School Coordinators with the Community Achieves initiative through the Student Services Department at MNPS central office. MNPS supports the deepening of restorative discipline & social emotional supports using Community Achieves collective actions that serve Family Engagement, College & Career Readiness, Health & Wellness, Social Services and Adult/Parent Development through community and parent-level partnerships. As of this report, that budget was being considered by the City of Nashville with revisions and cuts possible.

TennAROS has joined the Community Achieves Alignment Nashville Committee (<http://www.alignmentnashville.org>) to help continue to scale CA in Nashville. This structure resembles a community board at the district level. Nashville AROS is also working to connect to support organizations, such as PTOs and PTAs to help them understand CA's initiatives, the community schools concept and the AROS model.

Our school board resolution action will focus on deepening Community Schools efforts around the AROS model of six strategies and four mechanisms/pillars to achieve transformation. MNPS Community Achieves is doing amazing work with a similar framework. TennAROS would like to get MNPS to commit to an AROS pilot for blending the entire transformational model. TennAROS and TEA would like to pursue a private donor to seed the pilot with transformational supports and that the school chosen is already a few years into scaling the CA model framework.



[HTTP://WWW.TENNAROS.ORG/BLOG/TALKING-COMMUNITY-SCHOOLS](http://www.tennaros.org/blog/talking-community-schools)

‘Dad Gone Wild’ interview with Alison McArthur of MNPS Community Achieves.

## CHATTANOOGA AROS

Dan Liner, President of Hamilton County Education Association, spoke to the school board at the Nov. 2016 meeting about Community Schools and the incredible success that is being experienced in other national districts that have used the community school model to transform priority schools. School board members were quite receptive and voiced their enthusiasm about the potential to experience the same kind of turnaround in one or more of the five iZone schools and 16 priority schools. Although the Board has not adopted a resolution per se, community schools is included as among the priorities in the school system's Strategic Plan.

## KNOXVILLE AROS

Model school board resolution language has been shared with Knoxville AROS to modify for local use. Knox County Schools currently has 14 community schools, 12 funded by the local non-profit organization, Great Schools Partnership. As success with these schools has mounted, other schools have been put on a waiting list to be a part of the initiative when funds and volunteers become available. Members of KCEA and SPEAK routinely and bring up the idea of community schools when visiting with legislators across the state, and this has had a positive impact on the mindset of school board members to see community schools as the local solution.

## MEMPHIS AROS

UEA of Shelby County attended the Milwaukee Institute for Community Schools and has included a presentation of the resolution in their six month plan. The UEA board has approved measures to pursue and support Community Schools in Memphis. They are working towards presenting a school board resolution to SCS, possibly as early as mid-May.

## RURAL AROS

Target conversations are happening in Grundy County. Grundy is scaling fast and is partnering with the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn., for their extended-day programs. Grundy currently has a patchwork of commitment and partner funding. The goal of Tennessee AROS is to continue to work with TEA and Grundy County Schools to achieve the AROS model scaling that includes working with Family Resource Centers and other partner providers such as CIS. Other rural districts are interested in hearing more and are looking to Grundy County as the rural model. Grundy County Superintendent Jesse Kinsey is leading the charge and is supported by Beth Brown, local educator and Vice President of TEA.

**GOALS A & B STATUS SUMMARY** > Tenn AROS and Local City AROS coalitions are established and scaling relationships, learning local routes to work with district leadership to identify schools as possible pilots for the transformational community schools model and passing the community schools school board resolution.



## 2. School District Commitment to Transformational Model

To secure commitments from school districts to invest in Transformational Community Schools (as defined by the AROS model).

**A. Three districts with three schools in a pilot program by June 2017**

**B. Three additional schools and/or districts by June 2018**

### TennAROS

Four districts are committing or have already committed to invest in community schools. They include Nashville (MNPS) district initiative, Knoxville's district initiative, Chattanooga with one pilot school: Red Bank High School, and Grundy County. Grundy County is expanding wrap-around supports with a grant that funds clinics in every school and expansion with ["Vistas", the University of the South civic engagement program](#) where the university provides volunteers for the schools to support after-school programming. Grundy has also hired a district coordinator to address absenteeism. They struggle to find funding to keep third-party services with Communities In Schools.

**GOAL STATUS. A** > Tenn AROS wants intentional pilots identified to carry out the AROS model. Each of these locations wants to implement, but only seems committed if we can get funding legislated, especially Grundy County. Funding to scale capacity is the challenge. In the meantime, the scaling is in pieces with community partners and hired services. MNPS and Knoxville are the only efforts that are scaling alignment with the Coalition for Community Schools model. There are a few pieces missing, such as shared leadership with a community board, deep 75% engagement with parents and a robust restorative practices implementation.

**GOAL STATUS. B** > UEA of Shelby County sent a team to the Milwaukee Community Schools Institute to learn more about how a community school comes together and to jump-start Memphis AROS. This leadership has engaged with the district. They have also met with Superintendent Hopson, CS district superintendent, to get his blessing to begin investigating community schools for the district through the Family and Community Engagement Department. Planning is in the works this summer to hold an "institute" meeting in Memphis to help identify their pilot schools and scale buy-in.



### 3. Legislate Community Schools

To pass a state law that establishes a grant-based program providing for Transformational Community Schools as an alternative to other state intervention on Priority Schools. Funding will be attached to the program for five state-funded Transformational Schools per year.

**A. Bill introduced by May 2017**

**B. Grant program expanded by June 2018**

#### TennAROS

Our bill **HB 1278 /SB 0805**, introduced in the 2017 legislative session establishes a competitive grant program and a framework based on the AROS model for transformation. More importantly, it establishes a mechanism to tap ESSA dollars dedicated to community schools.

Lyn Hoyt, a public school parent and TennAROS Alliance Coordinator, and the MNPS Student Services and Community Achieves Director, Dr. Tony Majors, testified before the House Education Subcommittee thanking them for hearing the bill and rolling it to take up next year. The bill was received well. TEA has been invaluable in crafting the legislation and lobbying for sponsors. Our two sponsors are Rep. Harold Love (D - Nashville) and Sen. Steve Dickerson (R - Nashville). Due to late filing and some questions about the bill's language, it was rolled to the beginning of next year's calendar in January of 2018. Testimony video link : [http://tnga.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=371&clip\\_id=13499&meta\\_id=289312](http://tnga.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=371&clip_id=13499&meta_id=289312)

It is important to understand Community Schools work has been taking place in Tennessee for many years. AROS is promoting the scaling of an emerging framework around these efforts, which builds upon evidence that shows students thrive when all of the framework is in place.

**STATUS A.** > We will meet with the Tennessee Department of Education to determine their concerns and possibly modify the bill to get their support. Plans are to meet with the State Commissioner of Education this summer, as well as to create an alliance of current community schools providers to speak for the bill. **Current Tennessee providers or districts engaged in organized community schools efforts:**

- **COMMUNITY ACHIEVES:** 23 schools  
District initiative in MNPS Nashville
- **COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS:** 27 schools  
National provider, third party serving both public and charter schools in Memphis and Nashville
- **GREAT SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS:** 14 Schools  
Independent provider, Knox County schools
- **UNIVERSITY ASSISTED / UT Knoxville Anchor partner:** two schools serving Pond Gap & Inskip Elementary and expanding into feeder schools and working in conjunction with Great Schools Partnerships
- **EFFORTS AROUND FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS**  
Family Resource Centers are among the key partners bringing wrap around services to many schools around the state. Tennessee has amazing FRCs, but many schools define a community schools effort as only the FRCs effort. (<https://www.tn.gov/education/topic/family-resource-centers>)

## 4. Engage Broad Coalition to Win Transformational Schools

Engage broad coalition to fight for the Transformational Community School model at the state level and in each district.

**A. TN AROS partners work together in each district action**

**B. TN AROS partners each double previous legislative efforts in fighting for the AROS legislation at the state level. (i.e. Days of Action; testimony in committees; consistent visibility in targeted committees --- with visible evidence that each partner group is working together with AROS.)**

### TennAROS

Our TennAROS Alliance members are committed to lifting up community schools work in Tennessee. We are also working to engage those already doing community schools work in the state. This report incorporates an informal audit to discover existing community schools work. Communities IN Schools (CIS) is a major player nationally in community schools implementation. In Tennessee, CIS serves a handful of regular zoned public schools and charter schools. They primarily operate as a service provider with the ASD in Memphis. It is worth mentioning that Alliance Coordinator Lyn Hoyt's traditional zoned public middle school in Nashville is a CIS school, where her 8th grader (2016-17 school year) attends. Lyn has seen first-hand what a great CIS site coordinator can do to meet the needs of a school population. JTMoore Middle ([jtmoore.org](http://jtmoore.org)) is scaling the transformational model in year two. And the school's success in closing the achievement gap, increasing attendance and significantly decreasing discipline referrals is paying off with the school's commitment to the Community Schools model. The CIS coordinator is made possible by the JTMoore PTO which privately raises funds to pay the coordinator's salary.

Much of TennAROS's motivation to promote community schools and to pass funding legislation is to provide equitable access to community schools funding and supports. Not all schools have PTOs or PTAs that can raise money for a coordinator's salary. School parent support groups struggle to maintain sustained donated support. They must work to connect to the community-at-large. The JTMoore PTO has made a deliberate decision based on the needs of the school population to direct PTO funds to help children who struggle to succeed due to issues of poverty, social-emotional struggles and absenteeism due to mobility, housing insecurity, drugs or abuse. The JTM needs assessment also targets solutions to increase access to enrichment and after school programs for children who would otherwise not have the opportunity to attend or afford participation. JT Moore Middle School's student population is 38% poverty (as of the 2015 formula) and does not qualify for Title 1 funding.

A school on the priority list that is serving a high-poverty population without a PTO or PTA needs access to the grant dollars to provide the school a coordinator to implement a successful community school framework and grow a sustainable solution. These efforts cannot be left to the administration and teachers. Current State Department push back makes claims that community schools are not a turnaround model. Yet, Glenclyff High School in Nashville used Community Schools strategies to move off the priority list, launching the Community Achieves effort in MNPS. The TDOE's own ASD is working with Communities In Schools to provide services for ASD takeover intervention.

The AROS model is grounded in research and provides an opportunity for contextual, appropriate enrichment and intervention vital to a child's success in school. The AROS model should be formally recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education as a framework for intervention. Also acknowledging that these solutions must be community created and led is key to sustained success. Public school parents more frequently must search for private funding outside of tax dollars to sustain the quality programming they believe their children deserve. Districts and the TDOE must be willing to seed the framework, guide solutions and network supports through shared

leadership and community stakeholder boards to shape sustained student success that leads to community buy-in that lasts beyond grant funding. Especially for poor and marginalized communities of color who do not have the social capital to constantly engage in fundraising efforts. The Learning Policy Institute is currently working on a policy brief (to be released summer 2017) that soundly confirms that Community Schools meet the evidence-based criteria for ESSA school improvement and encourages states to consider it as a school improvement strategy. Update July 2017 link to brief: [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community\\_Schools\\_Evidence\\_Based\\_Strategy\\_BRIEF.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community_Schools_Evidence_Based_Strategy_BRIEF.pdf)

#### STATUS A. > City-Level AROS Alliances are scaling as follows:

##### Chattanooga AROS

Dan Liner, president of the Hamilton County Education Association, is leading the charge in Chattanooga to set the Chattanooga AROS in place, working with civic and community groups that include:

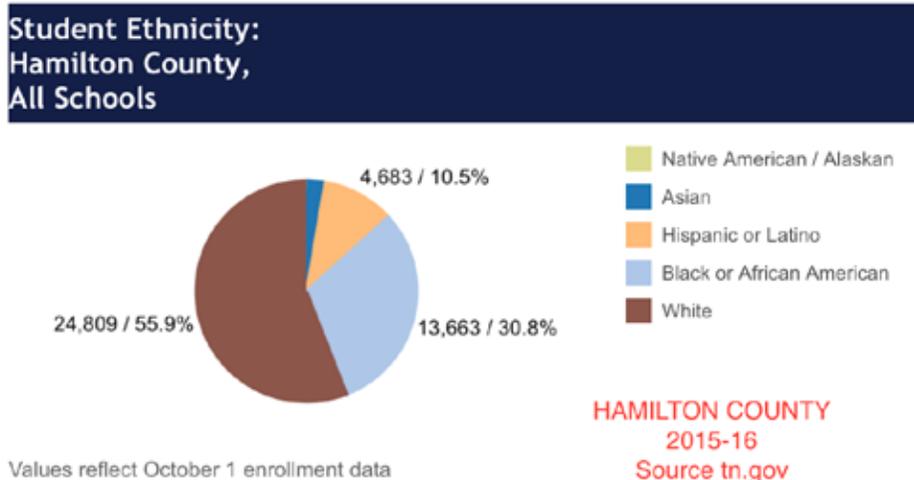
- Unifi-ED <http://unifi-ed.org/community-schools/>
- Chattanooga 2.0 <http://chatt2.org>
- PEF Chattanooga <http://pefchattanooga.org>
- Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce <http://chattanooga-chamber.com>

Chatt AROS has identified Red Bank High School as their pilot and is currently working with the Hamilton County school board to adopt the Community Schools resolution and commit to supporting Red Bank. They are going to scale with the community buy-in and support that is available to position Red Bank as a grant applicant to help

fund the deeper transformational

model. This seems to be the approach all community schools scaling is taking in Tennessee.

There is just not enough community support capacity yet to get to transformation. We emphasize transformation does take time. Just because a school can't have every need met and every strategy implemented, does not mean you stop trying to scale or find community support.



The Hamilton County team is currently engaged in conversations with more potential community partners. On Wednesday, April 26, the Community Schools team meet with representatives from two community groups who have platforms that include community schools. Trust and community-lead buy in will be key.

Hamilton County hopes to demonstrate to the TDOE that it has a plan for addressing the academic needs and responding to the socioeconomic factors that are related to iZone and priority schools that can deepen the community commitment to their schools. The Commissioner has recently softened her mandate that these schools must score fours and fives to a message that indicates the schools must show significant growth. And the TDOE is looking into "Partnership Zones" as a form of ESSA intervention. AROS hopes the TDOE will facilitate a real community-lead, trust-building direction that can be sustained and scale locally with little state over site.

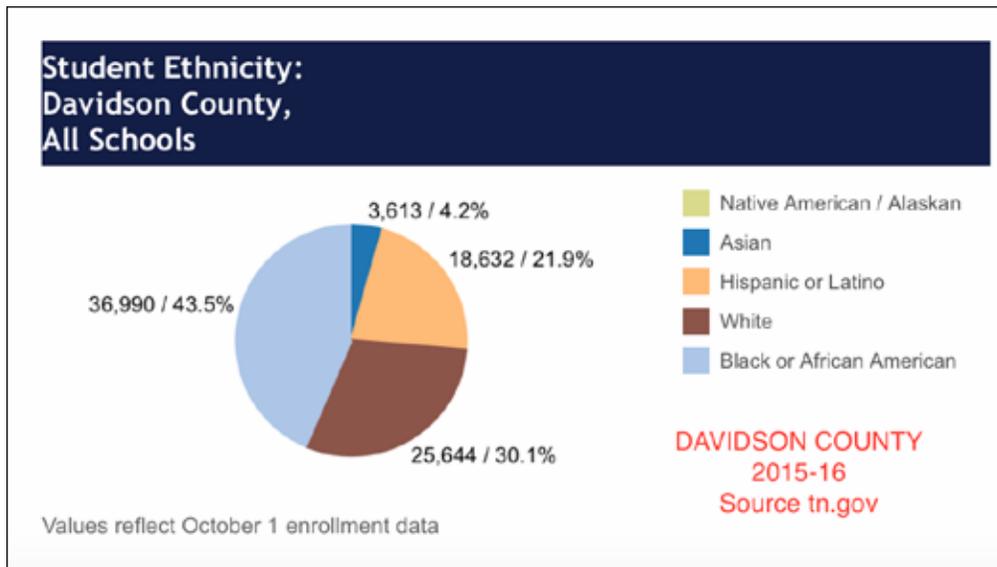
## Nashville AROS

CAPE: Coalition Advocating for Public Education is leading Nashville AROS. (<https://www.facebook.com/MTCAPE>)

The current CAPE Coalition consists of

- Metro Nashville Education Association <http://www.mnea.com>
- Nashville Organized for Action and Hope (NOAH) <http://www.noahtn.org>
- State Organizing for Community Empowerment <https://socm.org> Nashville delegation
- Tennesseans Reclaiming Educational Excellence (TREE) <https://treetn.org> Nashville delegation

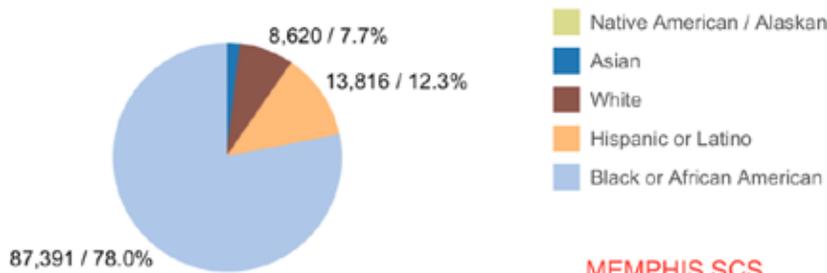
CAPE is a very active coalition and has been following AROS initiatives for several years. The CAPE coalition helped get the Metro Nashville Public School (MNPS) school board to pass the Annenberg Standards in 2015. They helped support NOAH and MNEA, taking sanctuary city measures to support immigrant children and their families. CAPE is currently working towards getting our school board to adopt the Community Schools resolution and continues to educate Nashville about what a successful community school looks like. The coalition operates to the needs of Nashville's public schools where over 100 languages are spoken and over 70% of children live in poverty (though a new state poverty formula now puts that number at 53%).



## Memphis AROS

Long-term goals (6 months) identified in the Milwaukee planning session listed coalition event planning and district buy-in meetings to ask alliance members and leadership to get behind the efforts of UEA of Shelby County and Shelby County Schools to fund and support pilot schools and policy supporting community schools growth. UEA also has a goal of presenting the AROS Black Lives Matter resolution to their school board.

### Student Ethnicity: Shelby County, All Schools



Values reflect October 1 enrollment data

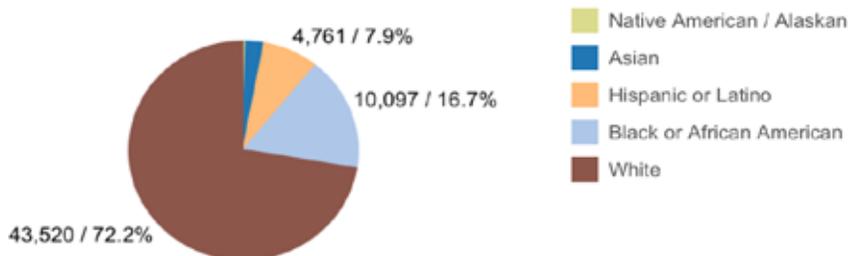
MEMPHIS SCS  
2015-16  
Data source Tn.gov

## Knoxville AROS

The Knoxville initiative around Community Schools is the longest running in the state. Dr. Bob Kronick has lead the Community Schools effort out of the University Of Tennessee at Knoxville. (<http://uacs.utk.edu>) Along with the University-anchored programs is a Knox County district effort lead by Great School Partnerships. (<http://www.greatschoolspartnership.com>). These Community Schools, much like the Nashville Community Achieves program, grew up around the Coalition for Community Schools efforts and they are embedded in that model.

The Alliance presence in Knoxville is lead by SPEAK: Students, Parents and Educators Across Knox County, as well

### Student Ethnicity: Knox County, All Schools



Values reflect October 1 enrollment data

as the Knox County Education Association. Goals for building presence in Knoxville would be to convene locally to agree to work together more closely and outline shared goals as well as support for the "Transformational Community Schools Bill". National support from the DC Coalition for Community Schools to leverage buy-in for AROS would be helpful in Knoxville. Dr. Kronick is considered the

local expert. He has been very supportive of TennAROS elevating the conversation around Community Schools in Tennessee.

- Knox County Education Association <http://www.teateachers.org/local-website/knox-county-education-association>
- Students, Parents, Educators Across Knox county <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SPEAKTN/>

**STATUS B. > TN AROS partners double previous legislative efforts in fighting for the AROS legislation at the state level. (i.e. Days of Action; testimony in committees; consistent visibility in targeted committees --- with visible evidence that each partner group is working together with AROS.)**

### TennAROS Marketing Approach

TennAROS will support efforts with SOCM, TREE, SPEAK, TNPTA and TEA leading local associations to build TennAROS capacity statewide to connect with interested parties and organizations. A social media strategy is being deployed through TennAROS. This ramp-up is ongoing.

- <https://www.facebook.com/TennAROS/>
- <http://www.tennaros.org>
- <https://twitter.com/TennAROS>

TennAROS branded material will be created to educate alliance members, lawmakers and school districts about community schools and the transformational model to use as 'leave behind pieces' (brochures & other material) to support our legislative efforts and local alliance scaling. This material will include a tri-fold brochure and one-pager inspired by Milwaukee's marketing efforts. Design and production will be executed by Lyn Hoyt, using her design, production and marketing skills. TennAROS is looking to TEA to donate the printing.

A TennAROS logo will be provided to all alliance members to include on their websites and a paragraph about what that means for the organization to be a member and a link back to [tennaros.org](http://www.tennaros.org).

TennAROS will continue to evaluate National AROS messaging and Days of Action as they relate to coalition building and increased visibility with appropriate partners. To build a Community Schools coalition in Tennessee we must take a non-partisan approach that focuses on the well-being and success of whole-child education, interventions and opportunities.

### Scaling TennAROS

- Keep commitments to action dates and follow through
- Understand trust takes time to create
- Work to include and connect all local stakeholders more deliberately
- Follow up and keep alliance members engaged with ways to help
- Focused steps and structured engagement and goals with local cohorts to include email, conference calls and city visits
- Create/maintain a data base and email list for contacting interested parties
- Help organizations understand that this is not something that can be easily explained in five minutes
- Schedule Summer TennAROS meeting and present a list of proposed actions

We ask schools for shared leadership in the AROS model. We must also create shared leadership for ourselves at TennAROS. The state-level lens sees clearly each city will be as unique as each school. And bottom-up decisions are most valued. Be willing to share status, results, best practices, ideas, and failures. Be ready to create your own community-based solution.

## Conclusion

This report incorporates an informal audit to connect existing community schools work in Tennessee as well as a mapping of progress to network local city efforts and expand alliances between organizations across the state. In a few short months, TennAROS has emerged as a point of collective alliance-building for the community schools work in Tennessee. With hope, TennAROS is seen as practicing what we advocate: a community-lead, sustainable approach to public education that any school can implement.

TennAROS is a “stakeholder model” advocating for and educating about creating ‘transformational’ community schools to help address academic and opportunity disparities and deepening community solutions for school improvement. TennAROS will continue to work with schools and districts and community groups to explore how a community school model might meet the needs of Tennessee’s children, working closely with organizations like the PTA, TREE, SOCM and TEA to shape an alliance that can partner with parents, teachers, and community members. We already have vibrant, proven community school efforts going on in Tennessee and we want to support and grows those efforts around the AROS framework.

By approaching the AROS Community Schools model with transformational steps, evidence shows <sup>2</sup> student outcomes are superior academically and socially. TennAROS wants to bring those results to Tennessee by deepening and expanding the amazing work that is being carried out right now by community schools providers. The **Transformational Community Schools Model** is the most sustainable approach to public education improvement centered on parent engagement and a whole-child framework to address the specific needs of students, schools, and communities.

*People support what they create.*

## Reference & OTHER READING

[1. PAGE 3]- <http://www.southerneducation.org/getattachment/471fe4d0-420b-46ce-bae2-b8453159bf76/Community-Schools-Transforming-Struggling-Schools.aspx> page 9

[2. PAGE 13 ]- <http://www.communityschools.org/assets/1/AssetManager/Community-Schools-A-Whole-Child-Approach-to-School-Improvement.pdf>

### Other Reading

Community Schools Standards: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2yO7Xw95sqNWLrOWhRxajFLcWs/view>

SC Site-Level Development Framework: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2yO7Xw95sqNZmJSUXEzUGU0SIE:/view>

Creating a Funding Plan <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2yO7Xw95sqNR1I3c0w0NXNMdDA/view>

Community and Parent Partnership Framework: [https://youtu.be/tmEk\\_TcVVuI](https://youtu.be/tmEk_TcVVuI)

