



# Annual Plan Quarterly Report

July 2023



[\*knoxschools.org/annualplan\*](https://knoxschools.org/annualplan)

# KCS Quarterly Report

The Annual Action Plan serves as a one-year road map for the work of Knox County Schools. Approved by the Knox County Board of Education in October of 2022, the Annual Action Plan is structured around the district’s four key priorities:

- Excellence in Foundational Skills
- Great Educators in Every School
- Career Empowerment and Preparation
- Success for Every Student

The KCS Annual Plan Quarterly Report provides regular updates of the work being done and progress made toward the objectives outlined in the KCS Annual Action Plan. Certain data points, such as TCAP data, will be updated on an annual basis. Data points that are collected more regularly throughout the school year will be updated on a quarterly or bi-annual basis.



All data contained within the Quarterly Report reflects the 2022-2023 school year (SY2023).

We are grateful for this opportunity to share our work, and for the support of the Knox County community.



# Knox County Schools Updates



A \$660.7 million FY24 general purpose budget and county-wide Capital Improvement Plan for Knox County Schools have been set.

Investments include:

- 4% base salary increases for all certified and classified staff; an additional 8% base salary increase for custodians, school clerical, EA's, security officers and food service (for a total of 12%)
- 20 new FTE interventionists, 18 new pre-K positions
- An increase in playground investments, funding for growth solutions, and funding for school security

The U.S. Department of Defense announced that Knox County Schools is one of 15 recipients of the 2023 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest U.S. government honor to employers for support of National Guard and Reserve employees.



In receiving the award, Knox County Schools has been recognized for practices including:

- Human Resources policies that exceed federally-mandated USERRA requirements, including the recent policy revision to increase the accrued military leave for service members from 20 to 30 days;
- Student participation in events including the annual Veterans Day parade;
- School participation in the national Medal of Honor convention; and
- Recognition of veterans at athletic events and other gatherings.



Carter High and South-Doyle High will join The 865 Academies this Fall, with the launch of their Freshman Academy. Ninth-graders will take Freshman Seminar, a class that helps them identify aptitudes and interests, while also participating in college and career exploration activities. In the spring, these students will pick an Academy Pathway for Grades 10-12.



The 865 Academies initiative is working to prepare students for success after graduation, whether they are planning to enroll in college or trade school, enlist in service to their country, or find high-wage employment with an entrepreneurial mindset.

For more information, visit [knoxschools.org/academies](https://knoxschools.org/academies).



# Excellence in Foundational Skills

Students who are proficient in reading and in math are well-positioned to thrive academically. By helping students hit literacy milestones by 3rd grade and algebra milestones by 9th grade, we believe our district is preparing them to succeed in whatever college or career pathway they choose for high school and beyond.



## Corryton Elementary School

Corryton Elementary used AimsWeb literacy data gathered in the fall to identify students that needed additional support. Teachers used that data to build lessons specifically for those students, which could be implemented in small-group learning.

The school also created take-home readers for first-grade students, including “decodable” books that parents could read with their students which focused on phonics and word sounds.

Gayla Henderson, the school’s TPaCK coach, said they try not to have a “one-size-fits-all” approach to literacy instruction: “The way we discover that is through our data. Our data tell our whole story.”



### Leader Insight

*“We want kids to be successful in life, whatever path they choose. And they’ve got to be able to read to do that. Whether they choose to be a doctor or a mechanic or a lawyer or an electrician. You’ve got to be able to read.”*

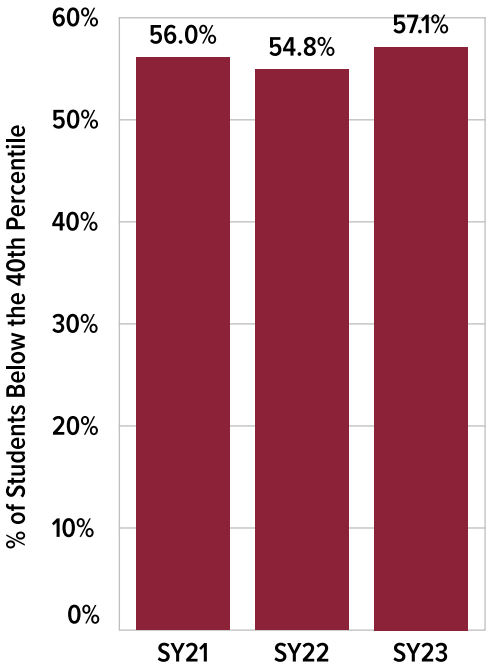
**Aaron Maddox**  
Principal - Corryton Elementary



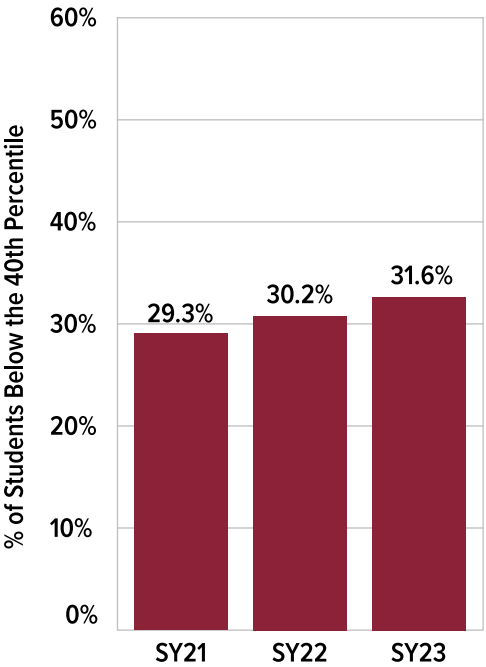
# Aimsweb+

Aimsweb+ assessments are designed to identify skills deficits in reading and math. They give teachers detailed information about skills gaps that prevent students from meeting grade-level standards, although they are not designed to predict performance on the TCAP. The data to the right provide a comparison of student reading skills attainment against students across the nation. Students take benchmarks three times each year, and the data for this year reflect the most recent benchmark.

## 3rd Grade Aimsweb+ Fall Reading Benchmark

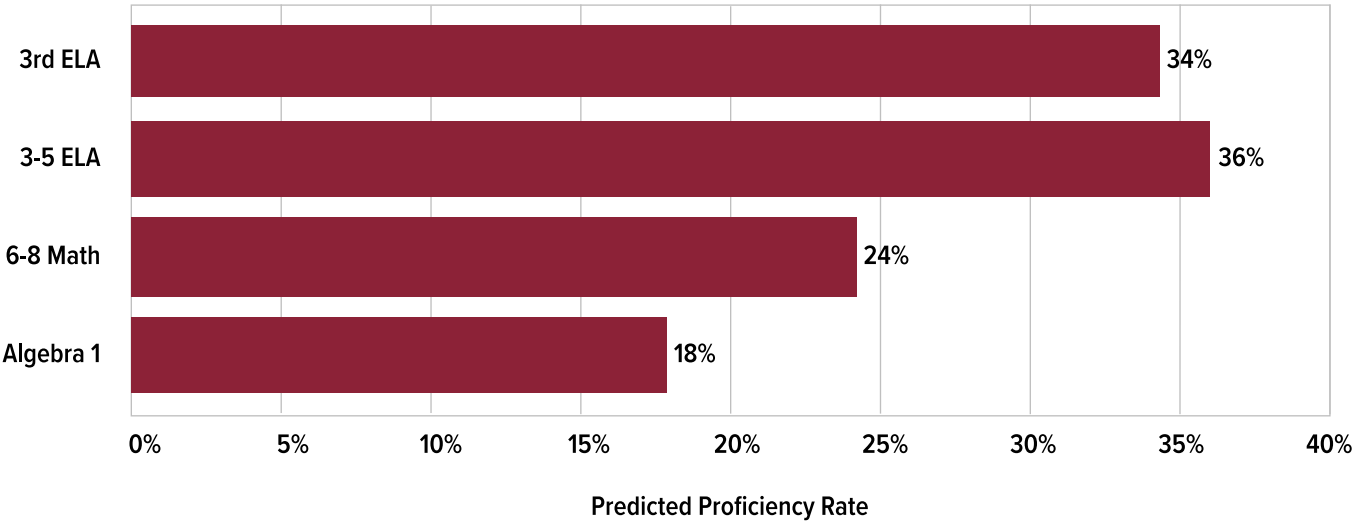


## Grades 3-8 Aimsweb+ Fall Reading Benchmark



## Mastery View Predictive Assessment

Mastery View predictive assessment, formerly known as Case 21, provides estimates of the proficiency level of students for a subject at different points during the school year. The data shown are the projected proficiencies for students on the most recent benchmarks.





# Great Educators in Every School

As Knox County continues to grow, the district's need for talented teachers is also growing. The KCS Talent Acquisition team is pursuing innovative strategies to identify and retain high-quality teachers who reflect the diversity of our community.



## Holston Middle School

David Gornto was an entrepreneur before he was an educator, but his calling to the classroom has paid dividends for students who are learning about science.

Gornto, one of three district-wide Teachers of the Year honored by KCS in 2023, said the key to success is finding a way to make learning engaging, whether that's through a hands-on activity or a lesson that prompts deeper thinking.

Equally important, he said, is to always be looking for new strategies. "You can't ever sit there and say, 'Well I did this last year and it's going to work this year.' You've got to constantly look to say, 'How can I tweak this, how can I make this better, what are other people doing?' ... Because what may work really well for me this year may not work next year.



### Leader Insight

*"Competition for great talent has always been high. In KCS we continue working to recruit and retain the highest-quality educators by expanding options, decreasing barriers, and offering increased supports for the teaching profession."*

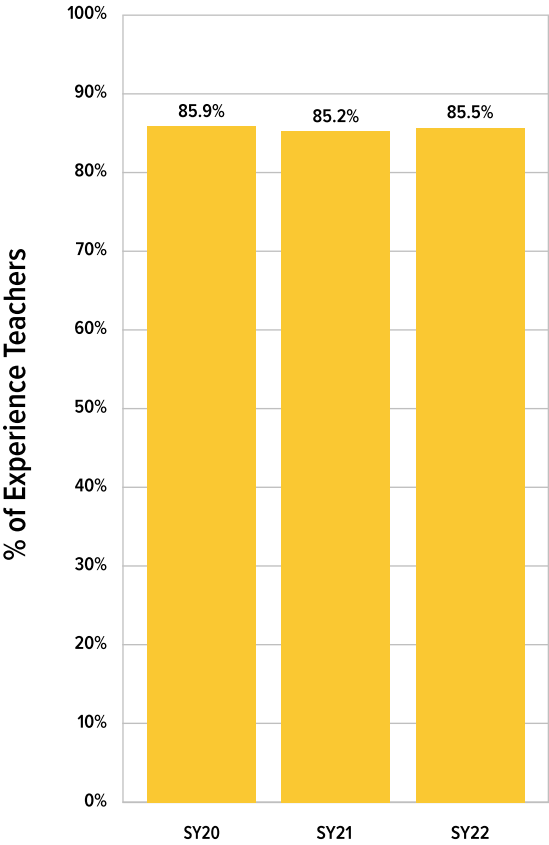
**Alex Moseman**

Executive Director of Talent Acquisition - KCS



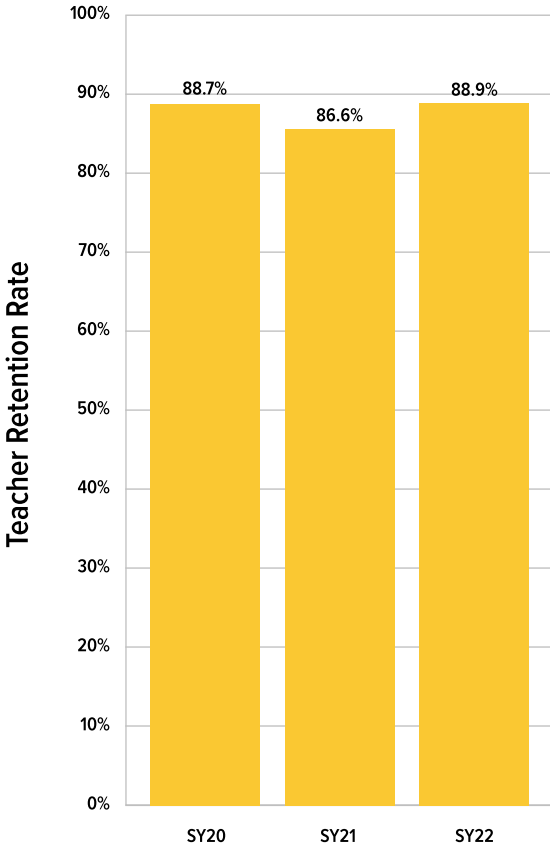
Percentage of Experienced Teachers

This chart displays the portion of our teaching staff that has more than two years of experience teaching within the state of Tennessee. If 85% of our teachers are experienced teachers, then the remaining 15% are either new teachers or are teachers with one or two years experience in the classroom.



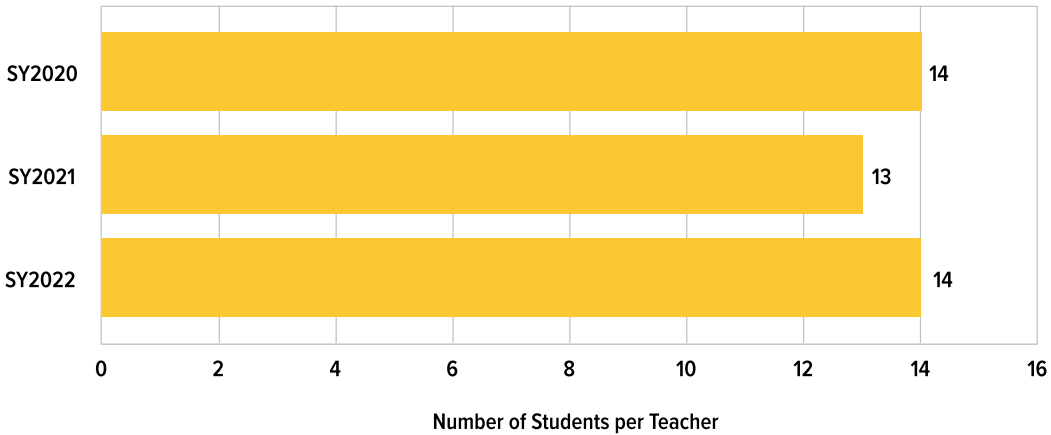
Teacher Retention Rate

Teacher retention rate is a measure of teacher turnover within KCS. It is defined as the percentage of teachers that remain employed from one year to the next. Given that KCS employs roughly 4,300 teachers and has a retention rate of about 89%, the district needs to hire more than 450 teachers each year.



Student-Teacher Ratio

The student-teacher ratio indicates how many students are enrolled for each teacher that is employed by the district and is a broad indication of teacher workload. There is no one optimal ratio for every school but, in general, lower ratios allow for more individualized attention, personalized instruction, and a greater opportunity for students to actively engage in the learning process.





# Career Empowerment and Preparation

Walking across the graduation stage is a huge milestone – and we also want students to be prepared for what comes next. Whether students are in elementary, middle or high school, we provide exposure to college, career and service options, and help them create strong connections between classroom knowledge and future success.

## West High School

KCS offers many opportunities for high-school students to experience “Early Postsecondary Opportunities.” EPSOs include dual enrollment courses, Advanced Placement courses, and industry certifications, and are designed to equip students for success in college or trade school, or prepare them for a high-wage career immediately after high school.

At West High School, EPSO offerings also include the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, which emphasizes critical thinking and global engagement. Valerie Schmidt-Gardner, coordinator of the IB program at West, said the school’s counselors work proactively to find the right place for students.

“We like for freshmen to come in, get acclimated to West, focus on their academics, focus on their behavior. And then by their sophomore year, we feel like we can have some really good conversations with them moving forward about how best to place them so that those EPSOs are available to them.”



### Leader Insight

“Our **OneWest** culture unites our staff and students to work towards a common goal—making sure students are prepared to succeed after high school in all postsecondary paths. Students have access to numerous EPSO opportunities at West, and students work with counselors and teachers to choose EPSO’s that meet their personal and career goals.”

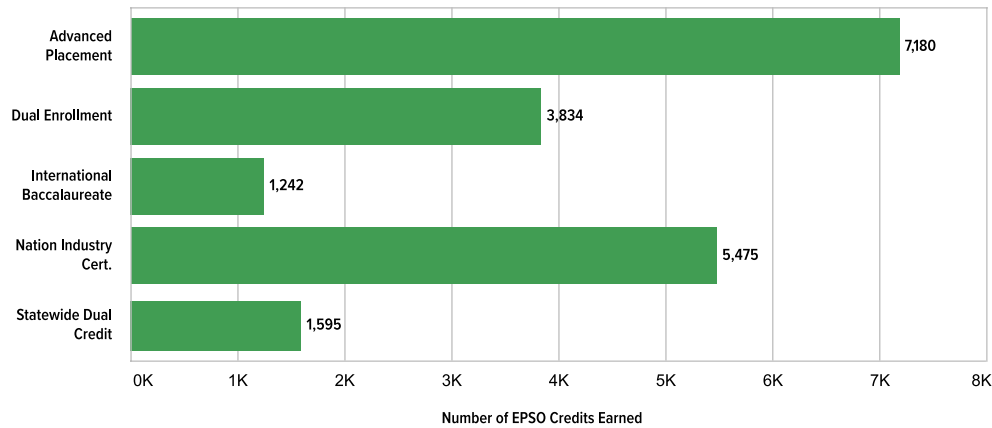
**Dr. Ashley Spears**  
Principal - West High





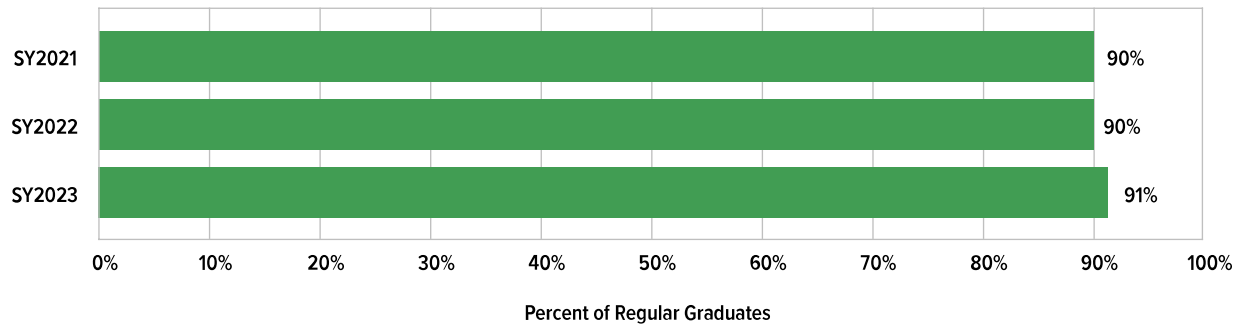
**EPSO Credits Earned in SY2022**

Early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) include college-level courses offered to high school students both on and off the high school campus and CTE courses in which students can earn a nationally recognized industry credential aligned to their CTE pathway and industry demands. Many of these EPSO offerings allow students to earn college credit that can be applied to their future education and career pathways after high school graduation. Industry Credentials are nationally recognized certifications that are incorporated into some CTE courses and pathways allowing students to demonstrate beginning levels of competency in that discipline and/or earn postsecondary credit. Recognized industry credentials are approved by state advisory councils and professional organizations based upon their value to students and alignment to secondary and postsecondary technical pathways.



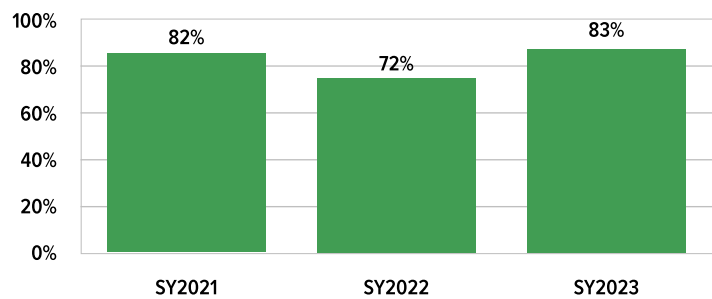
**Regular Graduates**

The Graduation Rate reflects the percentage of Knox County students in the graduating cohort who earned a regular high school diploma or an alternate academic diploma (AAD) within four years plus one summer after starting in the ninth grade.



**Eligible Seniors w/ FAFSA Submission**

The FAFSA, short for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, serves as the authorized document for requesting federal financial assistance to cover college expenses. It is widely employed by states, colleges, and universities to evaluate and determine eligibility for financial aid. By gathering pertinent details from applicants, the FAFSA enables the allocation of aid, including loans, scholarships, and grants, to deserving individuals.



# Success for Every Student

For our district to be reach its goals, we must build structures that ensure every student is able to succeed – no matter where they live, what cultural background they come from, or what financial resources are available to them.



## South Knox Elementary & Kelley Volunteer Academy

The path to graduation is sometimes bumpy, but KCS is committed to helping students overcome their obstacles.

The Dr. Paul L. Kelley Volunteer Academy is a nontraditional school that supports students who have fallen behind on their coursework, helping them gain the credits they need. In April, the school celebrated its 2,000<sup>th</sup> graduate, as Rebeca Lesan earned her diploma and signed her name to the school's graduate board.

But proactive support isn't limited to high school. KCS also offers robust tutoring for students in all grades, including high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring provided by the TN All Corps tutoring program. KCS has hired more than 200 daytime tutors, along with certified staff who provide tutoring before and after school, and has served more than 4,000 students during the 2022-23 school year.



### Leader Insight

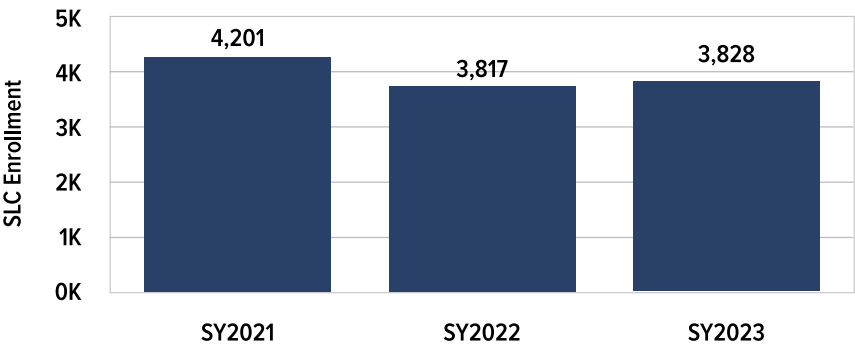
*"The TN All Corps tutoring program has provided outstanding support for students at South Knoxville Elementary. By using data to provide targeted assistance, KCS is building a foundation of literacy for students at South Knox and across our community."*

**Dr. Tanna Nicely**  
Principal - South Knox Elementary



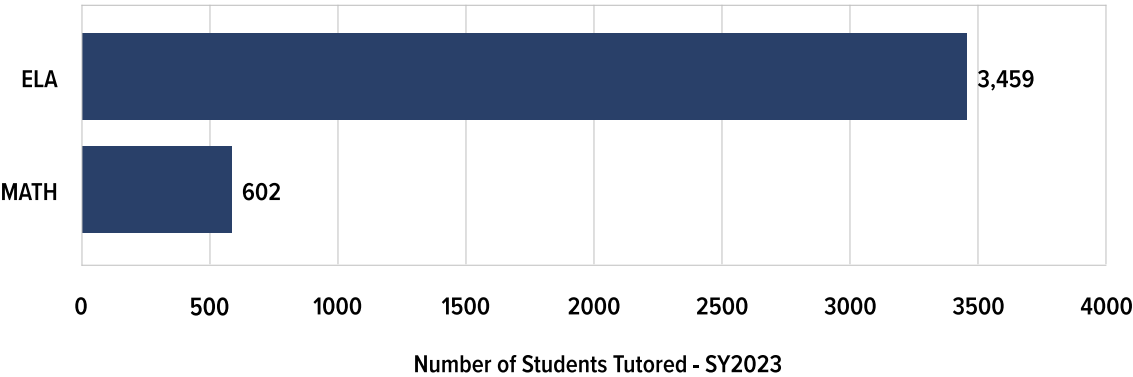
Summer Learning Camp Enrollment

KCS elementary summer learning camps began during the summer of 2021 and are designed for students that need additional academic support outside of the school year. The camps are located across the county at 29 elementary schools and include instruction focused on English Language Arts and Mathematics. In addition, each camp has encore programming focused on science, technology, reading, engineering, arts, and math.

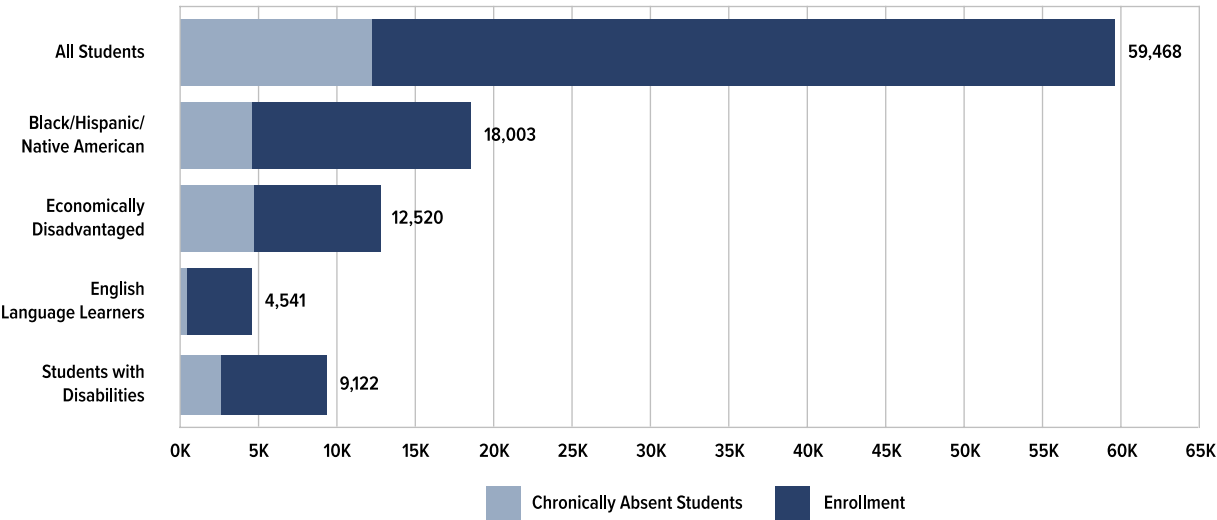


Tutoring SY2023

Knox County Schools was one of many districts across the state of Tennessee that implemented tutoring in SY2023. The tutoring program is designed to provide extra support for students struggling in ELA and math who do not qualify for other interventions. In Knox County, tutoring in the elementary school grades focused on ELA and was conducted during the school day while tutoring the middle school grades focused on mathematics and was conducted after school.



Enrollment and Percentage of Chronic Absenteeism by Student Group





## Board of Education

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**Dr. Jon Rysewyk**

*Superintendent*

### **Vision Statement**

To grow lifelong learners who contribute their talents, strengths and skills to build a stronger community

### **Mission Statement**

To provide excellent and accessible learning opportunities that empower all students to realize their full potential