



MNPS, Nashville State Collaboration to Bring New Higher Education Opportunities to Historically Underserved Students

Funding from the PNC Foundation will create an Early College program at Whites Creek High School, enabling students to earn an associate degree along with a high school diploma

NASHVILLE, Tenn., (Oct. 4, 2021) – Nashville State Community College announced today that it has received a \$306,000 grant from the PNC Foundation to establish an Early College Partnership program at Metro Nashville Public Schools' (MNPS) Whites Creek High School.

The four-year grant will allow Nashville State and MNPS to create a pilot program that will launch this fall, enabling 40 students at Whites Creek High School to obtain college credits toward an associate degree at no cost while fulfilling requirements for a high school diploma. The classes will take place on the high school's campus. Notably, Whites Creek is one of three MNPS high schools with less than 30% of its students enrolling in college. A key component of PNC's grant will provide the participating students with financial literacy education tools and resources to help build a strong financial future and support the economic sustainability of the communities where they will one day live and work.

"This collaboration represents an important step toward closing the educational achievement gap in our community," said Mike Johnson, PNC regional president for Tennessee. "The goal is to create meaningful and sustainable opportunities for students most in need, along with providing a path to greater earning potential and a brighter economic future through higher education."

This grant is part of PNC's [\\$1 billion commitment to support the economic empowerment](#) of Black Americans and low- and moderate-income communities, announced last year.

"The Early College model is a proven method to help students advance to a four-year degree program or join the workforce early, with strong credentials in hand, so they can start building their careers in the Nashville economy," said Adrienne Battle, director of Metro Nashville Public Schools. "We are extremely grateful to the PNC Foundation and our longtime partners at Nashville State Community College for making new academic and career pathways available to Whites Creek students."

This will be the second Early College partnership between MNPS and Nashville State. The first is on Nashville State's White Bridge campus. In early 2020, Nashville State and MNPS launched 'Better Together,' a joint venture to help MNPS graduates prepare for, attend, and complete college.

"The opportunity for students to earn college credit while still in high school builds confidence, knowledge and skills," said Dr. Shanna L. Jackson, president of Nashville State Community College. "Early College provides a clear pathway to completing college with embedded student supports. The PNC Foundation's strategic investment removes barriers for students and strengthens

Nashville State's *Better Together* joint venture with Metro Schools to increase college readiness and completion."

About PNC Foundation

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through Grow Up Great, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual \$500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

About Metro Nashville Public Schools

Metro Nashville Public Schools is one of the nation's top 50 largest school districts, preparing more than 80,000 students for higher education, work and life. With the goal of being the premier large urban school district in Tennessee and beyond, MNPS wants to ensure Every Student is Known by meeting focused outcomes that will help each child achieve growth from an academic and social-emotional perspective. The governing body for Metro Schools is the Metropolitan Nashville Board of Public Education, a nine-member elected body. For more information, visit MNPS.org, or follow us on Twitter @MetroSchools or Facebook /MetroSchools.

About Nashville State Community College

Nashville State Community College provides comprehensive educational programs and partnerships, exemplary services, an accessible, progressive learning environment, and responsible leadership to improve the quality of life for the community it serves. With soon to be seven campuses and virtual and online options, the college serves a broad geographic area comprising Davidson, Cheatham, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery, and Stewart counties. Nashville State offers more than 80 associate degree and certificate programs of study, some of which can be completed in one year, that prepare students to enter the workforce or transfer to a university upon graduation.

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Photo 1: Early College student Jeremiah Moore with Metro Schools Director Dr. Adrienne Battle and Nashville State Community College President Dr. Shanna L. Jackson. Credit: Shelley Mays, Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Photo 2: Nashville State Community College President Dr. Shanna L. Jackson. Credit: Shelley Mays, Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Photo 3: PNC Regional President for Tennessee Mike Johnson. Credit: Shelley Mays, Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Photo 4: Whites Creek High School Principal Dr. Brian Mells. Credit: Shelley Mays, Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Photo 5: Early College students at Whites Creek High School. Credit: Shelley Mays, Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Photo 6: Metro Schools Director Dr. Adrienne Battle, Nashville State Community College President Dr. Shanna L. Jackson, Whites Creek High School Principal Dr. Brian Mells, and PNC Regional President for Tennessee Mike Johnson.