



RESOURCE GUIDE



MSCSFACE
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Dear Adopters,

I extend my sincere gratitude to the corporations, organizations, and individuals that support our students and families through the Adopt-A-School Partnership Program.

For over 40 years, Memphis-Shelby County Schools has sponsored one of the most established and respected Adopt-A-School programs in the country.

The Adopt-A-School Program is near and dear to my heart. Throughout my career as a school principal, I implemented the Adopt-A-School Partnership Program at each school I have led. I was able to form numerous partnerships and launch programs for students, their families, and the community. I'm proud to say that many of the programs continue today.

We know that through the support of its Adopt-A-School partners, schools can address obstacles and provide opportunities that ultimately lead to the social and academic growth of students. Adopters become a part of the fabric of schools, and we want every school in the district to experience the relationships and commitment adopters offer.

*Lori M. Phillips, Ed.D.
Chief of Student, Family, & Community Affairs*



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About Our District

MISSION

Preparing all students for success in learning, leadership, and life.

VISION

Our District will be the premier school district attracting a diverse student population and effective teachers, leaders, and staff all committed to excellence.



District Snapshot



We are Tennessee's largest school district.

We are also one of the top 25 largest public education systems in America.



We have more than 200 schools,

including traditional K-12 schools, theme-based Optional schools, alternative, career & technical, virtual, and charter schools.

We serve students of all backgrounds and abilities.

We serve more than 106,000 students

in all grades, including nearly 3,300 pre-kindergarten students.



Approximately 4,000 students

are enrolled in our gifted and talented program; 10,000 are in the Optional program, and 29,000 take advanced academic classes. More than half of MSCS students are considered economically disadvantaged, and we provide tailored support for more than 15,000 students with disabilities and 8,800 English language learners.



We are Shelby County's second-largest employer,

with nearly 14,000 employees, including more than 6,000 teachers.



Adopt-A-School Partnership Program

Our Program

The Adopt-A-School Partnership Program is a Memphis-Shelby County Schools (MSCS) District initiative that brings businesses, civic and faith-based organizations, individuals, or any other community-based group together with a school to form a partnership. During the partnership, adopters and school personnel commit themselves to specific goals, activities, and resources (human/financial), all of which are intended to make a sustainable impact on student success. Also, Adopt-School Partnerships are high-quality, innovative relationships that enrich the learning experience and help close the gaps of students, while enhancing the city's and our communities' future. MSCS is fortunate to have strong support from volunteers and community partners. MSCS sponsors one of the most established Adopt-A-School programs in the country. Through the support of its Adopt-A-School (AAS) partners, MSCS students have been connected to the community in many ways including exciting guest speakers for career day; generous donations of equipment for the science lab; dedicated tutors who spend time one-on-one focusing on reading and math skills; and dedicated mentors who reach out to struggling teens who need an extra adult who really cares.

Our History

The Adopt-A-School program was started by legacy Memphis City Schools and the Volunteer Center of Memphis in 1979. It was designed to create a family consisting of a business, civic group and/or religious organization and a school. The purpose of the program was to foster a better understanding in the community of our public school district and to establish a person-to-person relationship between the adopter and adoptee that would create a spirit of involvement and concern for our schools. The ultimate goal of the program was to encourage greater community-wide interest in our schools, to ensure the economic and public educational future of our city and to make our school district a model for which every Memphian could be proud. The program began with 15 partnerships. Today, over 40 years later, the program is called Adopt-A-School Partnership (AAS Partnership). Partnership was added to the name in 2000-2001 because the focus of the program moved from a paternalistic relationship to a partnership in the holistic education of our children. Our schools now have more than 500 business/community partners. The goal of the program remains basically the same and that is to promote partnerships between schools and the community that create a sense of ownership of the schools and a belief that a quality public school district is an investment in the continued growth and prosperity of the city.

Adoption Levels of Participation

Campus Adopter: An organization/individual that partners with one school by providing resources and/or services at no cost during the school year.

Community Adopter: An organization/individual that partners with two or more schools by providing resources and/or services at no cost during the school year.

Sponsor: An organization/individual that provides a one-time service, resource, or financial contribution to a school and/or the Memphis-Shelby County Schools District during the school year.



Adoption Categories/Opportunities for Service

Student Development

Activities that support the cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and ethical development of students.

- Tutor
- Mentor
- Internships
- Proctor tests
- Speak on Career Day
- Coach athletic teams
- Read to classes and/or students
- Sponsor student clubs
- Teach character education
- Other activities as needed by the school

Teacher Support

Activities that help encourage and recognize teachers for their effort and success.

- Remodel/rejuvenate the Teachers' Lounge
- Sponsor teacher appreciation
- Recognize excellent teachers
- Assist in the Library
- Assist in the classroom
- Sponsor a weekly or monthly health or fitness activity at the school (yoga class, cooking, demo)
- Other activities as needed by school

Parent & Family Support

Activities that directly support parents and families.

- Translate or interpret for parents and family member
- Conduct parenting classes
- Conduct adult education classes (job training, GED/HiSet readiness)
- Conduct English as a Second Language classes
- Sponsor parent motivational events
- Other activities as needed by school

Resource Enhancement

Donation of money, goods, or non-monetary support of the schools' students, families and programs; can include volunteer support such as clerical assistance.

- Provide financial contributions
- Provide school uniforms
- Provide office supplies and equipment
- Provide school supplies and books for students
- Provide donations for families in crisis (Thanksgiving baskets, fire victims)
- Assist the school with fundraising projects
- Provide gifts for students at the holidays
- Provide transportation (field trips, sporting events)
- Assist in the office
- Other activities as needed by the school

Positive School Climate

A school's climate refers to the "quality and character of its life." This includes safety, relationships, morale, motivation, and the physical environment of the school building.

- Monitor hallways and outside space
- Beautify and renovate school property
- Chaperone field trips
- Serve on a School Leadership Council
- Provide professional development for school staff
- Sponsor student motivational events (pep rallies, TCAP rally)
- Sponsor parties for classrooms
- Provide incentives and rewards for students
- Other activities as needed by the school

Best Practices for a Meaningful Adopter and School Partnership

- Prior to beginning a partnership, the adopter and the school develop written roles, commitments, expectations, and a common definition of a successful relationship.
- Adopters engage in a range of activities at the school, including student development, teacher support, positive school climate, parent and family support and resource enhancement.
- Schools and the District communicate regularly with adopters through various means such as newsletters, phone calls, emails, social media and meetings.
- The District and schools provide appropriate training to adopters for specialized tasks or new initiatives, such as mentoring and tutoring.
- The school designates one person to serve as the coordinator for the AAS Partnership. The coordinator periodically meets with adopters to discuss opportunities for collaboration, share successes or obstacles and continue to build relationship.
- The adopter and the school reflect upon the relationship at least once per year to consider past performance and outline goals for the next year, including feedback on how the relationship has benefited the students and school.

[1] Addendum to Quality Standards for School-Based Volunteer Programs

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Adopt-A-School Partnership?

A partnership that brings businesses, civic and faith-based organizations, individuals or any other community-based group together with a school to form a partnership. During the partnership, adopters and school personnel commit themselves to specific goals, activities, and resources which are intended to make a sustainable impact on student success.

What is in it for our organization?

Enhanced community image, better prepared workforce, a better understanding of public education, motivated employees who enjoy “giving back” to the community through worthwhile service. The benefits of partnership with schools are endless!

How do we decide which school to partner with?

Many times partnerships are established because of the school's location in relation to the business/community organization. Other times employees of the organization may have children or grandchildren attending the school you want to work with or someone in the organization may have attended the school and a relationship/tie is already established.



Can we partner with more than one school?

Yes. We have many adopters with multiple schools. However, we do want you to make certain that you have the personnel to work with more than one school. If resources are unavailable to fully support more than one partnership, it is beneficial for one strong effective partnership rather than multiple ones.

What kind of things can we do for the school?

You can involve your employees as tutors, mentors, coaches, or guest speakers. You may offer internships to students, develop incentive programs for academic achievement; provide training for teachers; offer the use of your facility for faculty meetings; provide management expertise; present career awareness and many other activities or programs that are beneficial to students.



How do we know what would be beneficial to students?

You learn that through communicating and planning with your school. The school improvement plan must be utilized to help identify the needs of the school and your resources should be aligned with those needs.

Are there certain programs that the school district endorses for us to work with?

No. There are many wonderful programs that are available. When you plan with your school, you can discuss programs they may want to implement. Prior to getting involved with a program, ensure the principal agrees that it will benefit the students and is worthwhile.

How long does the partnership last?

Once a partnership is established and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed, it continues until the school and the adopter determine that the partnership is no longer effective.

Do we have to renew it each year?

Yes. Schools/adopters should review the partnership plan once a year to determine if the plan has been successful or if priorities have changed. The MOU will be updated accordingly and signed each year.

What can we do for the school?

The possibilities are endless! Talk to your school coordinator or refer to the list of suggested activities for more ideas.

Can we partner with a specific program in a school such as the art department or the choir?

Yes.

What do we need to do if we cannot reach anyone at the school or if no one will return our phone calls?

Call the Family and Community Engagement Office at 901-416-7600, and we will be happy to make sure that the message gets to the appropriate person.

We want to do more for our school. We just don't know what to do.

The key to a successful partnership is communication. The more you communicate with your school, the more you will learn about the needs of the school. Ask your school to suggest how you can involve your employees in a meaningful way that will benefit the students and/or teachers.

What do we need to do if we want to change schools?

Contact the Office of Family & Community Engagement at 901-416-7600 and we will discuss your concerns and will assist you in selecting another school.

Steps to Successful Adopt-A-School Partnership

School identifies needs

Schools will submit an [Adopt-A-School Partnership Plan](#) which in turn provides the School Partnerships Team with the necessary information to inform partner recruitment and matching.



Potential adopter identifies interest

Potential Adopters or Partners will submit a [Partnership Interest Form](#) and identify how they want to partner with us! <http://bit.ly/MSCSPartnership>



Partnership Meeting

Schools and adopter develop a partnership plan that outlines their collaboration for the school year and complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Build a strong partnership

Maintain and strengthen your partnership through consistent and meaningful engagement that aligns to what you hope to achieve together!

Share your success

Share the success of your partnership via surveys, emails, and social media platforms. We want to ensure your good work is known and celebrated!



Benefits:

- Provides a lasting bond between schools and the community
- Promotes and supports student success
- Businesses and organizations enjoy “giving” back to the community through their local schools
- The school community positively gains from the additional resources and experiences offered by adopters
- Promotes cooperation and encourage the exchange of expertise, resources, and services
- Increases employee performance, retention and productivity
- Creates opportunities to receive positive recognition within the community
- Enhances your community image
- Provides a better understanding of public education and the role learning plays in developing and preparing a workforce
- Offers opportunities for employee volunteerism
- Encourages greater community-wide interest in our schools and helps to ensure the economic and public educational future of our city
- Offers opportunities for employee volunteerism
- Enhances communication with educational systems and increases understanding
- Contributes to a healthy community

Questions for Adopters...

- What is your organization's/company's motivation for becoming an adopter?
- What resources does your organization/company have available to support the needs of the school (time, talents, treasures)?
- How much time can your organization/company commit to the school? (weekly, quarterly, yearly) and for how long (one year or multiple years)?
- Is there specific information you will need to report to your leadership that school leaders will need to provide?
- How will the projects or activities you engage in enhance your company's goals?
- Are there any restrictions to the support you can provide to the school?
- Have you met with the school administration to gain an understanding of the culture of the school?

Questions for School Leaders...

- Does the school have information for your review such as a recent needs assessment or school improvement plan that may be useful to match services needed with the partner's resources?
- Are you confident that the services offered will have the desired impact on the school? How will you measure?
- How can we ensure that adopters are offered purposeful volunteer experiences?
- What is the process to share timely and meaningful feedback?
- Will this adopter partnership help support the requirements of the your district?
- Are there other adopters working with the school that we may be able to collaborate with to leverage resources?
- What opportunities are there for this partnership to directly impact student achievement such as chronic absenteeism, literacy rates, etc.?

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Get to know your school. Listen and ask questions about the students and families represented at the school.

Follow school rules and emergency procedures.

Familiarize yourself with the daily school schedule and holidays and breaks.

Obtain monthly calendars and attend school activities.

Contact appropriate school personnel when emergencies arise.

Please advise school personnel if you can no longer fulfill your obligations.

Address the culture changes that may occur (e.g., changes in administration or district priorities).

Create a winning environment. Not everyone's ideas will be implemented, nor will everyone's activities be perfect.

Be Flexible. Be willing to adjust to changes in plans.



MSCS Volunteer Process

VOLUNTEER WITH MSCS!

Memphis-Shelby County Schools offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities for interested adults.

Volunteers truly assist in providing the best possible educational experience for all MSCS students.

LEVEL 1

- Speakers
- Program Guests
- Jurors/Judges
- Test Monitors
- Class Readers One-Time
- Volunteers Registration
- Helper

Must be directly monitored and supervised by school at all times.

1. Schools conduct a screen at: Sex Offender Registry TN website.
2. Sign in at the front desk and provide identification when requested by school personnel.



LEVEL 2

- Classroom Aides
- Office Assistants
- Daytime Field Trip Chaperones
- Hall Monitors
- Safety Patrol

Must be directly monitored and supervised by school personnel.

1. Watch Orientation Video
2. Complete Online Application
3. Expect results between 5-7 business days.



LEVEL 3

- Overnight Chaperones
- Interpreters
- Mentors or Tutors
- Athletic Assistants or Coaches
- After-school Assistants

May interact with students without direct supervision of school personnel.

1. Watch Orientation Video
2. Complete Online Application
3. Schedule and complete fingerprinting at the Board of Education.
4. Expect results between 7-10 business days.



RENEWAL LEVEL 2 & 3

1. Watch Orientation Video and Update Online Application
2. Expect results between 5-7 business days



To start the process visit: <http://www.scsk12.org/face/>

District Initiatives that you may choose to sponsor for your adopted school(s)

Memphis-Shelby County Schools (MSCS) needs and seeks the support of individuals, local businesses, non-profit organizations, corporations, and members of the faith-based community to support projects, programs and opportunities for our students and their families. We believe working collaboratively with families and members of our community will build sustainable relationships that will impact our community. Below is a list of special events and programs that your organizations can consider for volunteering or sponsorship at your adopted school(s).

(Please note that not all programs may be offered at each school. Availability varies by grade band and the specific needs of the school community)

Back to School Kick-Off Held during the month of August; Collections continue throughout the year

It's Back to School time! This is a county-wide Block Party held at the Board of Education. This is a one-stop shop for registration, immunizations, food, and activities for the whole family. This event is streamed live on 88.5FM. Community vendors line the parking lot sharing information and offering giveaways to all who attend. MSCS relies on the generous support of community organizations to help supply Free school supplies and backpacks to every student who attends the event. Adopters may organize back-to-school drives for their specific school(s) and sponsor their Back-to-School activities.



Necessity Drive Kick-off Held in September/Collections continue throughout the year

The primary focus of the drive is to provide necessary items to under-resourced students who attend MSCS. Individuals, companies, and organizations provide necessary items or monetary contributions to support this initiative. These items include toothpaste, soap, sanitary napkins, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, lotion, etc.

Adopters may organize back-to-school drives for their specific school(s).



Families Connect Kick-off in September and continues throughout the school year

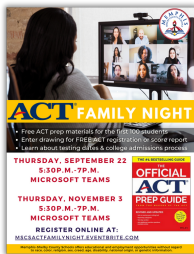
Families Connect is a parent engagement training program with the primary focus of fostering strong connections between schools and families. The 9-week curriculum includes: strategies for creating a positive home environment; understanding ESSA and TN Report Card; establishing open dialogue with school staff; and, staying involved in middle school, high school, and beyond. The program is currently offered in 15 schools in English, Spanish, and Arabic. MSCS partners with organizations to help expand this opportunity throughout other schools within the district. Adopters may sponsor the program at their adopted school(s).



ACT Family Night Kicks off in September and continues throughout the school year

Families are invited to participate in an informational session where they learn about preparing their students for the ACT. Representatives from area colleges and universities as well as industry experts share resources about the college admissions process, testing strategies, scholarships, registration and testing dates. Students receive free ACT prep materials. These sessions are held quarterly at various locations within the district to make it accessible to all families.

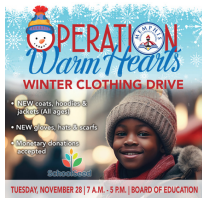
Adopters may sponsor ACT night for their adopted schools.



Operation Warm Hearts Produced during the month of November/December (National Day of Giving)

In order for children to arrive at school ready to learn, we strive to eliminate some of the obstacles children may experience. MSCS embarks on an important mission every winter: Operation Warm Hearts. MSCS partners with the community to collect coats and winter gear for students. Local retailers and malls serve as collection sites, as well as matching the number of donations received. This is an all-day event beginning at 7 a.m. though 6 p.m.

Adopters may hold collection drives or purchase coats for their adopted schools.



MSCS Parent Institute (Annually)

Calling all MSCS Families! This event offers MSCS families across the district a day of learning, support, and fun, including free childcare, giveaways, and college and career information. Offered are a variety of knowledge sharing sessions that are facilitated by MSCS content specialists and community partners. Guest speakers include nationally renowned individuals recognized for their innovation and leadership in education and family engagement. MSCS partners with organizations to support the continuing development and engagement of our families. Adopters may be a speaker at the Institute or support the families at their schools by sponsoring transportation or sponsoring the event.



Family Resource Center

The mission of the Family Resource Center (FRC) is to eliminate barriers that impede student success. The FRC provides the following: academic support resources for schools and families; family referral services and partnership and collaboration activities through workshops, seminars, and training. MSCS seeks to secure additional partnerships and restructure the space to make it more conducive for parents to access services.

Adopters may provide services, or needed resources/materials, furnish the space, or make monetary donations.





Annual Adopt-A-School Recognition Luncheon Celebrated during October, Adopt-A-School Month

The Adopt-A-School Partnership Program is a MSCS District initiative that brings businesses, civic and faith-based organizations, individuals or any other community-based group together with a school to form a partnership. We celebrate by highlighting innovative partnerships, their valuable contributions, and the impact they have made on our students and families.

Principals are asked to nominate one adopter each year for special recognition.

Literacy Tours

In collaboration with corporate and civic organizations, Family & Community Engagement organizes customized literacy tours where professionals can connect with students. Corporate partners choose a theme based on their industry expertise or focused areas of interest/business objectives and we provide meaningful opportunities for volunteer readers by matching them with schools/classrooms. Themes have included caring for the environment, citizenship, cultural heritage celebrations, career exploration, and early childhood literacy. Literacy tours can be conducted in-person or can be virtual experiences that offer busy professionals the opportunity to read with students without leaving their building!

Adopters may provide/host sessions with their adopted school(s).

Lunch Buddy Program

Did you know that a positive relationship with a mentor can greatly enhance a child's self-esteem, academic and long-term success? MSCS provides a venue for mentors to have an opportunity to share their talents, experience, and wisdom, celebrate successes and participate in learning opportunities. The MSCS Lunch Buddy program pairs school-aged students with caring adults to share their lunchtime meal twice a month.

Adopters may serve as mentors in Lunch Buddy program at their adopted School(s).



Purpose: Mentor and support middle school youth through a series of one-on-one meetings.

October 2-6, 2023
Mentorship Sessions Begin

General Conversation Topics

- Sports/Athletics
- Fashion/Art
- Hobbies/Interests
- Cars
- Video/Electronic Games
- Friends
- Celebrities/Movies

Community Mentorship Volunteers

- MSCS School District
- Private/Religious/Non-Profit Organizations
- Healthcare Employees
- College, Career & Technical Education Employees
- City of Memphis Employees
- Communications/Media Employees
- Safety & Security Employees
- Business
- Faith-Based/Church
- Organization Members



To participate complete the Mentor Profile at <https://forms.office.com/sv9529u111>

Memphis County Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, or disability in its programs and services.



Family & Community Engagement
160 S. Hollywood Street, Room 164
Memphis, TN 38112
www.scsk12.org/face
Phone: (901) 416-7600
Email: scsface@scsk12.org

 Facebook: **FACESCS**



Instagram: **FACESCS**



Twitter: **EmpowerSCS**