



News Release

**For Immediate Release
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Dr. Bryan Johnson is selected to Education Week's 2020 *Leaders To Learn From*



Education Week, an independent news organization covering K-12 education since 1981, announced today that Dr. Bryan Johnson, superintendent of Hamilton County Schools, is one of their **Leaders to Learn From** for 2020. Education Week honored Dr. Johnson for leadership in career and technical education, his vision to bring Future Ready Institutes to Hamilton County Schools, and their impact on preparing graduates to be ready for future success.

Each year, Education Week identifies some of the nation's most exceptional school district leaders and shines a spotlight on their extraordinary contribution to the success of educators and children in its **Leaders To Learn From** special report. Education Week looks for leading-edge district leaders who seize on smart ideas, skillfully execute them, and are seeing promising results for their students and school communities. The honor includes a feature story about each leader and a video of the leader at work in the schools and community they serve.

"We're so proud of this year's crop of creative and inspiring leaders. They prove that every day, committed educators make good on the promise of public schooling," said Denisa Superville, an editor on the Leaders To Learn From project. "These leaders offer great lessons for their peers to emulate, and we're

pleased to give them the recognition they deserve, but often don't get to hear."

You can read the [interview](#) available today on the Education Week **Leaders To Learn From** website. Education Week will feature two leaders in their newsletter each week. The video featuring each leader will be posted on the website the week the leader is featured.

Future Ready Institutes began in the fall of 2017 in Hamilton County Schools and challenged the traditional approach to education in high schools by developing career-themed small learning communities. Teachers of all content areas, including English, math, science, and social studies, work closely with the career theme teacher to provide classroom instruction through the lens of a career. The goal is for students to clearly understand why a classroom lesson is important and how young learners will use the information in the future. Themes in the institutes include medicine, robotics, forensic science, engineering, hospitality, technology, and more. There are 29 Future Institute programs now available for high school students in Hamilton County Schools.

Local businesses and industries have joined the district to provide professional expertise for the institutes by sharing resources, offering intern experiences, redesigning lab and classroom space, and putting the organization's name on the institute. Leading area organizations now partnering with an institute include Erlanger Hospital, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, EPB, See Rock City, Inc., Bryan College, BlueCross, and CHI Memorial Hospital. Unum provided funding for teacher training to get Future Ready Institutes started, and J.P Morgan Chase also supported the work with funding to get the program off the ground.

The success of the institutes spread early as The Urban League of Greater Chattanooga awarded the program its Community Impact Award in the first year. Word spread to Washington, D. C. this year and resulted in a visit by Frank Brogan, U.S. Department of Education assistant secretary of elementary and secondary education. Brogan stopped at Tyner Academy to see students and teachers at work. Future

teachers in the UTC Institute of Teaching and Learning were busy developing individualized education plans (IEPs) for hypothetical students as Brogan visited their class. ZaRiah Clay, Jayla Lounds, and Jasmine Jackson, students in the teaching program, had a laser-focus on how to structure accommodations for a student to help the child complete academic assignments. The visiting dignitaries were impressed by the work students were doing and the opportunities they are receiving in the institutes.

"The students in this program are doing things that I did not do until I was well into my college program," said Brogan. "Instead of just thinking about a topic, these students are actually doing the work, and that is incredible and significant to the future of students in our schools."

Enrollment in the institutes is open to students across the district. The ambitious teens understand the opportunity they have to get a head start on a career. Kaylea Moore, a student at the UTC Institute of Teaching and Learning at Tyner Academy, lives in the Brainerd High attendance area but decided to enroll in the program at Tyner Academy to begin work on her career goals.

"I have wanted to be a teacher all my life," Moore said. "This was an amazing opportunity for me and an easy decision for me to be a part of the institute."

The Future Ready Institutes, along with the vision of district leaders and hard work by classroom teachers, are turning the fortunes of Hamilton County Schools as the district works its five-year plan Future Ready 2023. The district has advanced academically to become the fastest improving school district in Tennessee in the three years since Johnson took over leadership. Hamilton County Schools was ranked the #130 district in the state for student growth in 2016-2017, moved to #77 in 2017-2018, and jumped to #2 in the state in the 2018-2019 school year. Hamilton County Schools moved from a Level 1 designation in student academic growth to Level 5, the top designation by the state, in 2019. The district also earned Level 5 designation in all sub-categories for the past year. Twenty-one schools in the district earned Level 5 designations across the board. In the 2018-2019 school year, 84% of schools in the district and 80% of teachers met or exceeded student growth expectations. The district moved from five schools earning Reward status in 2016-2017 to a district record 32 Tennessee Reward schools in 2018-2019. Hamilton County Schools is now looking beyond the accomplished goal of becoming the fastest improving to seeking to be the best school district in Tennessee.

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