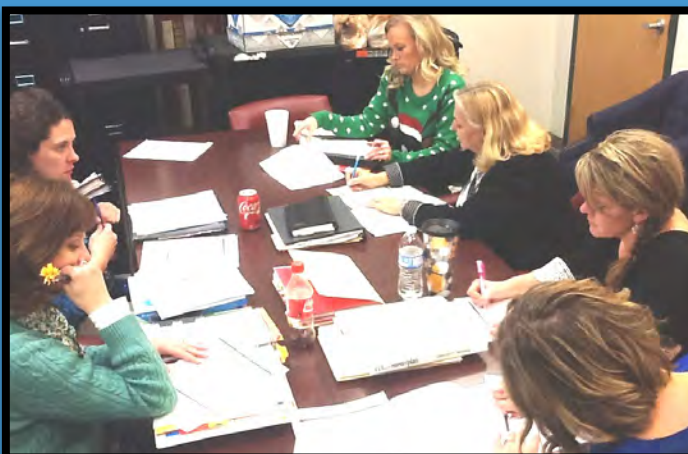




Sumner County Schools News

**Committed and Focused on Growing Learners
School Year 2016-17, Issue 6**



Sumner County Families + Sumner County Schools =



Student Success in Sumner County!





2016-17 Sumner County Schools News Contributors

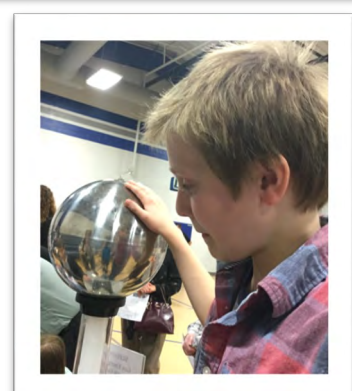
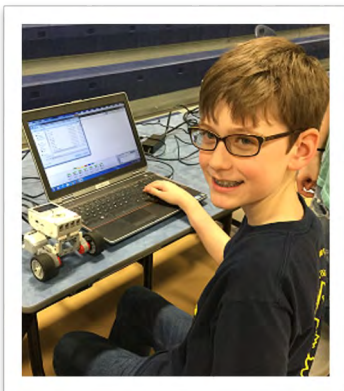
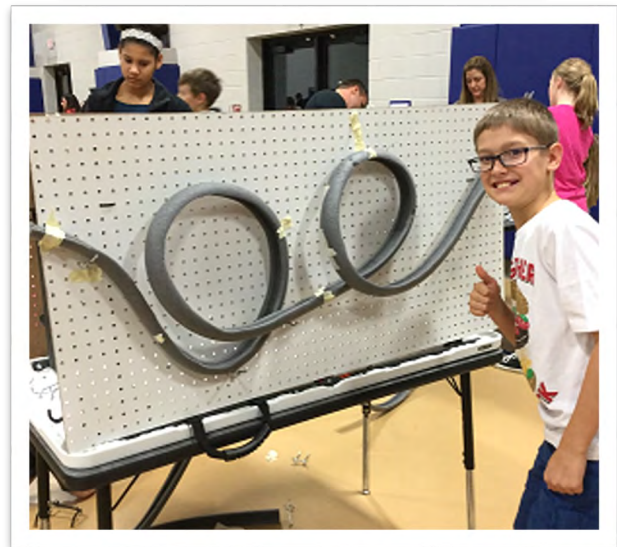
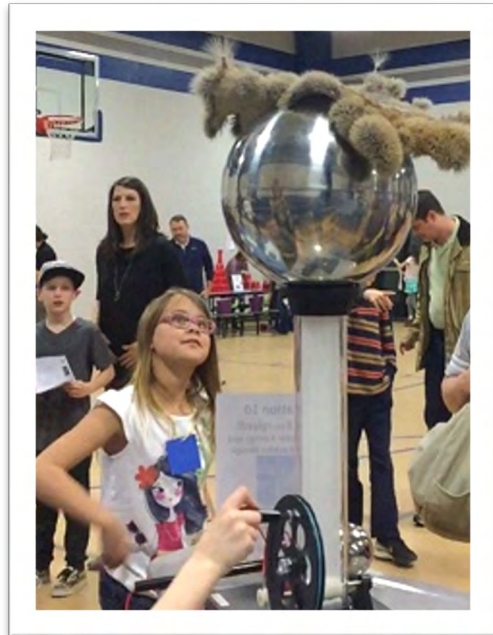
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Dr. William Burrus Elementary STEM Family Night

Dr. William Burrus Elementary School (WBE) had its first *WBE STEM Family Night* recently. The school collaborated with The Adventure Science Center and provided a rich assortment of STEM activities for WBE students. Some of the stations that the families enjoyed were *Moving Molecules*, *Designing and Building Towers*, *Get Energized with Wind Turbine Design*, *Amusement Park Physics with Roller Coasters*, *UV Wristbands*, and *Robot Challenges*. The STEM family night was designed to promote STEM development and family engagement at WBE because the school recognizes that **“Family Engagement Impacts Student Achievement.”**

WBE had over 100 families turn out for this exciting event! Families seemed to enjoy the station activities and the time spent together in a learning environment. The STEM activities were based on grade-level standards and required students to develop thinking and problem-solving skills that are critical to student achievement and growth. That is why WBE believes that the night’s activities should have a definite impact on its students’ learning. Teachers volunteered to facilitate the STEM stations, and many WBE teachers plan to integrate the activities into their instructional plans in the future. WBE will continue its monthly focus on STEM and plans to expand the *WBE STEM Family Night* next year.



George Whitten Elementary and Poetry Power

George Whitten Elementary School (GWE) hosted its second annual *Poetry Under the Stars* event in April for students and their families. The Title I-sponsored event was a huge success! Approximately 100 people were in attendance. The GWE gymnasium was transformed into an outdoor campsite, complete with tents, campfires, pillows, and sleeping bags. Several strands of white lights hung strategically throughout the gym to give the illusion of stars in the sky as students, teachers, and families took turns reading their favorite poems at the microphone.

In addition to being provided a relaxed reading atmosphere, GWE families were served pizza in the cafeteria and given an opportunity to visit the school book fair in the library. Events, such as *GWE Poetry Under the Stars*, encourage family engagement at GWE, and ultimately, make an impact on student achievement.



Clyde Riggs Elementary Escapes and Engages

Clyde Riggs Elementary School (CRE) hosted its first annual *CRE Escape Night* this semester. The event featured four rooms that depicted real escape game scenarios. Each room used a popular children's book and camping theme to create engagement in the event. Teams, which included parents, guardians, and students, had

Another great family engagement event that recently occurred at CRE was a visit from author Kevin White. Mr. White shared several of his books, such as *Stubby Pencil Noodlehead* and *Chasing Watermelons*, to the delight of CRE families! Hands-on activities and student participation engaged CRE families and created a hit



to work together to solve clues, puzzles, and tasks to escape the room in a specified amount of time. The *CRE Escape Night* activities challenged students to use higher order thinking and problem-solving skills to determine solutions for tasks. The night was a huge success, and plans are underway to make it an annual event.

with all in attendance. In addition, students learned about Mr. White's detailed writing process that starts with choosing a topic and ends with completion of the finished book. Application of this writing process may be found in CRE students' writing in the future!



North Sumner Elementary: One Big Happy Family

North Sumner Elementary School (NSE) is fortunate to have a high level of family involvement. The involvement can be attributed to the numerous Title I family meetings, NSE music programs, and various other school activities that are planned to promote family engagement. NSE faculty and staff know that when parents or



guardians are involved in what their children are learning and doing, then the students will develop a unique feeling of self-worth and pride. The NSE family engagement events provide students with opportunities to show parents and family members what they are doing in school and allow the families to see firsthand the effort



that the students give to their learning.

NSE starts the school year with family activities on registration night. As the year continues, Title I family meetings, built around a variety of themes, are offered. Right now, Title I and classroom teachers are already busy making plans for next year!

NSE Fall Festival is an opportunity for families to gather at the school. The book fairs hosted each year by the NSE library, in conjunction with grade-level music programs, is another. Furthermore, room parents organize class celebrations for national holidays that include all families.

The Oak Grove community and surrounding areas are also very involved in the school and the character development and academic achievement of NSE students. Guest readers from local businesses spend time reading with students. Periodically, the Gallatin Morning Rotary Club provides a bicycle for a student with good citizenship.

NSE believes that involving its families in student learning establishes beneficial, long-lasting relationships among families, faculty and staff. The partnership allows students to know that the school stakeholders are interested in and care about their success.



Families are an Important Part of Union STEM's Success



Union STEM Elementary School (UES) has many great opportunities for family engagement. Not only are families involved through the fabulous PTO and annual fundraising events, but they are at UES on days and nights that spotlight students' achievements. Some of the family engagement events attended are the annual *UES Science Fair Night*, the *UES Global Cardboard Challenge Create Day*, the *UES STEM Expo* for fourth and fifth grades, and the *UES Third Grade Culture Fair* held monthly.

Parents, such as Fireman Robison, volunteer time to visit and have lunch with students who have received special recognition. Other parents, grandparents, and guardians volunteer to read with UES students on a weekly basis. UES may definitely count on these advocates to be there and to play a pivotal role in helping students achieve reading and sight word goals. Observing the way that students' faces light up when the

volunteers arrive to help is evidence of the significance that family engagement has on influencing student achievement. UES faculty and staff attest that when family members get involved, children notice and positive results occur!

Parent involvement in education is crucial. No matter their income or background, students with involved parents (or guardians) are more likely to have higher grades and test scores, attend school regularly, have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school.

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, 2006.



UES loves its families, encourages their involvement, and is an excellent school because of them!

Portland Gateview Elementary GETS in the GAME



Portland Gateview Elementary School (PGE) believes in creating strong relationships with students and families from the first day of school until the last one. On registration day, the entire PGE faculty and staff, with lots of support from its Title I staff, welcome students and families with a plan to facilitate the process smoothly. Games are set up for families to play and become familiar with all members of the school. Family engagement activities continue throughout the year until the final school year events, which are exciting graduation celebrations for kindergarten and fifth grade students. Through these two events, PGE opens the door to the educational journey of a kindergarten student

and creates a sense of accomplishment and memories for fifth graders who are moving to middle school.

PGE also believes the benefits of family engagement opportunities include better student grades, increased student attendance, positive attitudes and behavior, a greater willingness for homework completion, improved state test results, self-efficacy, parent empowerment, deeper communication, collaboration among parents and teachers, and improved morale for faculty and staff. The acknowledgment that family engagement is the key to student success from pre-K to graduation echoes throughout the halls of PGE!



Jack Anderson Elementary Bench Buddies

About Bench Buddies

At Jack Anderson Elementary School (JAE), volunteers come each week to work as and with a *JAE Bench Buddy*. *JAE Bench Buddies* work together on one of the reading benches located outside each kindergarten, first, and second grade classroom. JAE volunteers work one-on-one with students on letters and sounds, sight words, reading fluency, and any other reading skill that students may need to practice. Teachers tailor the reading activity to each individual student's need. Each week, JAE is privileged to have eighty-four bench buddy volunteers!

Purpose of Bench Buddies

JAE Bench Buddies serve as effective tools to allow family engagement during the school day. Reading growth in students who practice with a bench buddy each week has been evident to JAE teachers. *JAE Bench Buddies* support ongoing family engagement as it is a tool used throughout the entire school year!

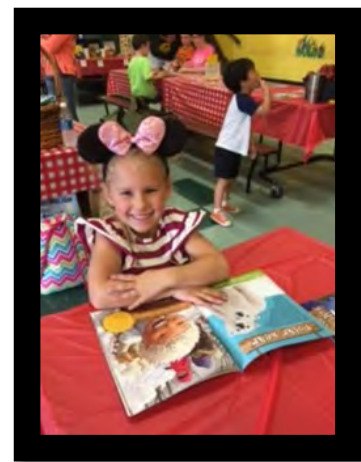


JAE Bench Buddies in action!



Benches are organized for each volunteer to pull designated activities for students.

Gatorfest at Guild Elementary Campground



Guild Elementary School (GES) hosted *Gatorfest at GES Campground* as its culminating family engagement event for the 2016-2017 school year. The event was a wonderful evening of literacy, art, and talent celebration by GES students and families. GES families followed the GES Campground map through various learning activities such as the *GES Genre Scavenger Hunt*, the *GES Youth Art Month Trail Exhibit*, and the *GES Happy Camper Book Fair*. The REACH Title I program hosted a “book-nic” with story snack samples at the GES picnic area. Families read stories together and rated the books’ appeal. Then, they received a story snack for their lunch

bags. Some of the snacks were animal crackers for the book, What if you had Animal Teeth, hotdogs for the book, Woof! Ripley’s Shout-outs, and apples for the book, Apples A-Z. Finally, families entered a book raffle to win their choice of “tastiest book.” Winners were selected and named during morning announcements the next day. The grand finale for the night was the *GES Talent under the Stars Show* where Guild Gators showcased their amazing talents. GES thinks it is always great to share these engaging experiences with its students and their families.



Family Engagement at Bills Elementary Impacts Student Achievement

During the 2016-17 school year, Benny Bills Elementary School (BBE) had several after-school activities aimed at involving parents/guardians with their children's learning. These were meaningful, hands-on events where families and students were excitedly engaged!

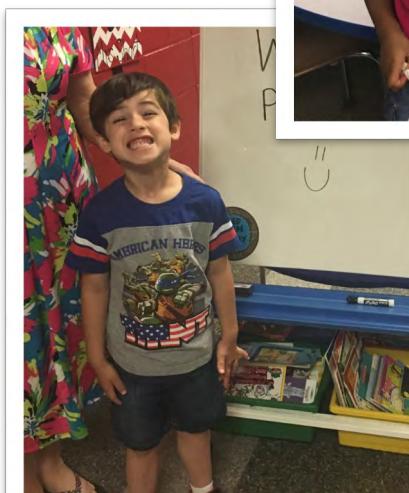
The school hosted a *Reading Under the Stars* activity for families to enjoy reading time together. Tents were set up, along with a campfire, to provide a cozy place to read. The Adventure Science Center had a planetarium show in the BBE gym for families to learn about the solar system and planets. Title I offered snack bags for everyone. This night helped generate excitement in family reading activities.

Title I also promoted a holiday-themed event in December filled with reading activities, crafts, and even pictures with Santa! This fun event assisted families with understanding how reading impacts student achievement. Reading strategies used in the classroom were shared with parents/guardians to use at home.

Another beneficial BBE family engagement activity was a BBE Jump Rope Program that allowed parents/guardians and students to participate in a night full of jump rope instruction. This activity showed healthy, fun ways for families to comprehend that physical activity directly correlates with better cognition and focus in school. A healthy body and exercise strengthen brain function.

A new family engagement event at BBE for this year originated with the Nashville Adventure Science Center. The center orchestrated STEM

activities in various stations throughout BBE. For days after the event, students were talking about the learning and fun it created. STEM connections were made by students through the use of the scientific method and scientific inquiry along with the realization that these processes may be used in other learning opportunities.



Future BBE students who will take part in these events next year!

At Lakeside Park Elementary, Family Engagement Starts Early



Lakeside Park Elementary School (LPE) begins to engage families as soon as its kindergarten students attend registration! The start of kindergarten is celebrated with an orientation involving the future LPE students and their parents/guardians. The goal of the kindergarten orientation is to assist students and families with a successful transition to the “world” of school. The incoming student and parents/guardians are invited to accompany the principal on a tour of LPE. The tour includes a visit to the cafeteria for lunch, time on a school bus, story time in the

library, and a peek at the computer lab and playground.

To provide a friendly, new connection to the school, four current LPE parents/guardians participate as mentors in the orientation activities. These mentors are able to answer questions and provide information that is vital to integrating the new families into the LPE family of learners!

Family Involvement at Knox Doss at Drakes Creek Middle

Knox Doss at Drakes Creek Middle School (KDDC) faculty and staff are always looking for ways to engage families. KDDC firmly believes that the families of its students are a vital part in student success. Therefore, there are many ways for families to get involved at KDDC. For starters, sports programs promote family support with activities such as cheering in the stands or standing with the child at awards/end of the season banquets. KDDC clubs and trips encourage families to be involved through informational meetings and the use of Remind 101 groups to keep them updated on what is occurring with these activities. The arts and music programs at KDDC urge families to get involved with musicals, concerts, or to help take students to the Tennessee State Concert Performance Assessment.

A very important family engagement activity at KDDC is a sixth grade parent orientation meeting. Often, this meeting is the school's initial contact with incoming families. The orientation is held in May for rising sixth graders and their families.

KDDC recognizes that sixth grade students will experience new demands on time management skills. Many students have limited experience with changing classes or the use of lockers. The requirements of middle school can definitely

be overwhelming to both students and parents. For that reason, this evening of orientation is hosted by KDDC administration, sixth grade teachers, and related arts teachers. The students and their families get information about the school, tour possible classrooms, acquire supply lists, and learn about summer requirements such as reading assignments. The orientation seems to provide the incoming KDDC students and families with a sense of comfort and understanding that allows them to ease into middle school rather than try to take it all in on one of the registration nights. Instead, the students and families already feel that they are a part of the KDDC Mustang family when registration night arrives!



Westmoreland Middle and Orientation for Sixth Grade Families



WMS, the band and choir performed for the families. After the performance, WMS band director, Jennifer Peterson, and WMS choir director, Beth Hickey, discussed the music programs and their merits. This helped inform students of the opportunities afforded them through the programs. Students were then able to sign up for a program of interest.

This spring, the Westmoreland Middle School (WMS) sixth grade teachers invited the incoming sixth grade students and their parents/guardians to tour and visit WMS. The orientation offered assistance to the students and families as they begin the transition from elementary school to middle school. WMS teachers designed a welcome rotation with activities for students, which included all elementary feeder schools. While students were moving through the rotations, the parents attended a breakfast meeting with WMS principal, Danny Robinson, and WMS guidance counselor, Chris Walker.

The student rotations were designed by teachers with a focus on an activity specific to their content areas. Students were given a packet that included an explanation of each class and what to expect the first few weeks of school. Teachers also conducted a question and answer session during each rotation. To provide a student's viewpoint during the sessions, each teacher asked a current sixth grade student to attend and provide advice for the incoming students.

As an introduction to the related arts program at

In addition, the sixth grade teachers at WMS wanted to ease the minds of parents/guardians who had questions or concerns about the new school setting. Therefore, a question and answer sessions was held for them as well. During that session, parents/guardians asked general questions about schedules, curriculum, lunch, clubs, activities, and behavior programs. The opportunity to engage families in the expectations of WMS faculty will be beneficial to a smoother start next year. Overall, the sixth-grade orientation was a great success for WMS students, families, teachers, and administrators.



Sumner County Middle College High Senior Picnic

Each April, as seniors move toward graduation, the Sumner County Middle College High School (SCMCHS) has a senior picnic. This year's picnic was held on April 25, 2017, with a group of 50 students, parents, and siblings attending from a graduating class of 23. Parents and students had an opportunity to meet and network with other SCMCHS families and the staff. After the potluck picnic, SCMCHS Senior Booklets were given to seniors. The booklets included each student's Last Will and Testament, Senior Prophecy, Senior Superlative, and Senior Quote and Interview.



Station Camp High: Success for Advanced Art Students!

Station Camp High School (SCHS) Advanced Art students recently competed in the *Middle Tennessee Regional Student Art Exhibit* at Belmont University's Leu Center of the Visual Arts. Twenty-five schools throughout the Middle Tennessee area participated with over 550 works entered. Of those entries, only 115 from grades 6-12 were selected for the exhibit.

SCHS students represented the school well! Blair Colbert received Best in Show with her piece entitled *Paper Cuts* and Best Painting for her work entitled *A Mother's Betrayal*. *Paper Cuts* sold for \$500 and became a part of the permanent collection of the Tennessee Arts Education Association. In addition, *Paper Cuts* appeared on a billboard at the intersection of Eighth and Wedgwood Avenues to help support the arts in education. Blair's talent also assisted her with becoming the recipient of scholarships in excess of \$225,000 from the following colleges/universities: Watkins College of Art, Memphis College of Art, Maryville College, Cumberland University, Arcadia University, and Belmont

University.

SCHS student, Zoe Medeiros, was awarded Best Video Production for her video entitled *Sunshine and the Devil in Training*. Zoe's talent warranted the receipt of scholarships over \$117,000 from Watkins College of Art and Design, Memphis College of Art, Arcadia University, and Cumberland University!

Other SCHS students were also recognized:

Sydney Hildebrand won First Place in the 12th grade division with her piece entitled *Chromatic Crystal*. Sydney's talent was awarded with scholarships over \$24,000 from Watkins College of Art and Design and Cumberland University.

Ariel Dominguez was awarded Second Place for his work entitled *Spectrum*. Ariel's talent was recognized with over \$18,000 in scholarships from Watkins College of Art and Cumberland University.

Lucy Crow won First Place in the 10th grade division for her self-portrait entitled *Bass Drops Heal Everything*.

Christina Alva received Honorable Mention for her piece entitled *Mi-Flor* in the 10th grade division.

Abby West was awarded First Place for her work entitled *Life Ablaze* in the 9th grade division.

Scholarships awarded for student accomplishments and their portfolio submissions to colleges in the *Middle Tennessee Regional Student Art Exhibit* totaled \$812,000. SCHS students received approximately \$384,000 of that scholarship money! Congratulations to all students who participated in the show!



Station Camp High's Awarded Artwork



Blair Colbert's *Paper Cuts*



Blair Colbert's *A Mother's Betrayal*

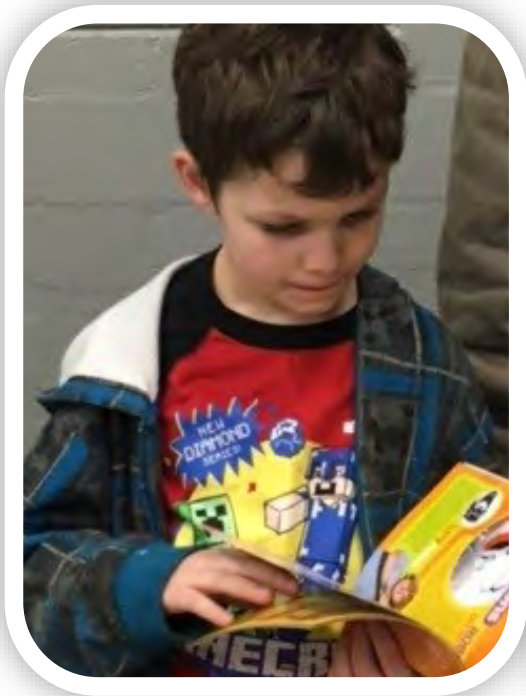
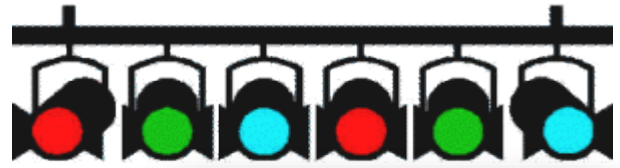


Sydney Hildebrand's *Chromatic Crystal*

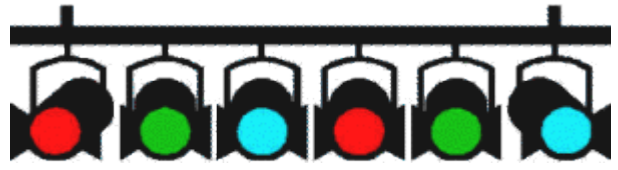


Ariel Dominguez's *Spectrum*

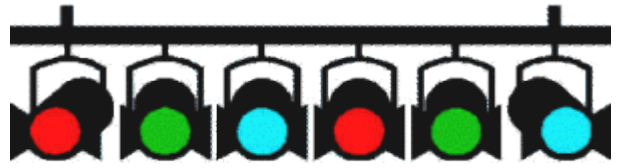
**Spotlighting Family
Engagement
in Sumner County Schools**



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Community Partnerships: Dollar General and Sumner County Schools

For the sixth year in a row, Sumner County Schools has been the recipient of the Dollar General Literacy Foundation's benevolence with a grant of nearly \$42,000. In May, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation awarded more than \$7.5 million to nearly 870 nonprofit organizations. The 2017 Power 4th! Summer Reading Program, which provides the opportunity to strengthen reading comprehension skills to 120 upcoming fourth grade students, was one of the programs funded by the foundation.

Dollar General is committed to helping increase the literacy skills of individuals of all ages. The focus of the organizations receiving this year's Dollar General grant awards—helping adults learn to read, preparing adults for the high school equivalency exam, promoting childhood summer reading, or supporting English learners—is evidence of its strong commitment to education. "Dollar General is excited to provide these organizations with funding to support literacy and education throughout the 44 states we serve," said Todd Vasos, Dollar General's CEO. "Providing these grants and supporting the communities we call home reflects our mission of *Serving Others*, and it's rewarding to see the impact these funds have."

Sumner County Schools offers a sincere THANK YOU to the Dollar General Literacy Foundation. The foundation's commitment to reading and learning, as well as its passion for completing its mission of serving others, will have a tremendous impact on students' futures!



2017 Recipients of Dollar General Literacy Foundation Grants