



Sumner County Schools News

Committed and Focused on Growing Learners School Year 2017-18, December/January Issue

Quantum Learning Blue Box Skills Evidenced in Sumner County Schools

In combination with Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence, **Sumner County Schools (SCS)** teaches **Blue Box Skills** to assist students with appropriate behavior choices. Paul Ekman, renowned psychologist in the research of basic emotions, identified anger, disgust, fear, sadness, joy, and surprise as the emotions with which humans are “hard-wired.” This means each basic emotion corresponds to a dedicated neurological circuit, and these emotions are innate, universal, automatic, and fast-triggering. However, other emotions, such as humility, empathy, kindness, patience, forgiveness, optimism, gratitude, and compassion, are referred to as complex emotions by Ekman. Through continued research, Ekman determined complex emotions can be culturally shaped and constructed. Therefore, time spent on teaching the use of complex emotions, or **Blue Box Skills**, should have a lasting impact on the character education of SCS students.

Teach the Blue Box Skills Daily
Ekman, P (2016). What 149 Scientists Who Study Emotion Agree About. Perspectives on Psychological Science 11, 31-34



TEACH:	HARD-WIRED...	TEACH:
✧ Humility	✓ Sadness	✧ Kindness
✧ Forgiveness	✓ Joy	✧ Patience
✧ Empathy	✓ Disgust	✧ Gratitude
✧ Optimism	✓ Anger	✧ Compassion
	✓ Fear	



2017-18 Sumner County Schools News Representatives

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Real-Life Application of Blue Box Skills: Sumner County Schools 'Unite' for Record-Breaking \$120,000 Goal

Blue Box Skills were introduced to Sumner County Schools (SCS) educators by Quantum Learning expert Dr. Jenny Severson at the 2017 Learning Summit in July. Four months later, SCS embodied the spirit of three **Blue Box Skills**—kindness, compassion, and optimism—when collectively more than \$120,000 was pledged to the United Way of Sumner County by SCS employees across the district.

“I could not be more proud of our SCS family for their support of Sumner County United Way,” SCS Director of Schools Dr. Del Phillips praised. “This campaign was a record-setting year for our school family as we gave generously to show compassion and kindness to fellow Sumner Countians that need help.”

Blue Box Skills, kindness and compassion, were clear factors in motivating SCS toward successfully surpassing its goal. One of the motivating contributors many SCS employees like about giving to the United Way is their donations can stay right here in Sumner County. Programs, such as Stuff the Bus which provides supplies and backpacks to over 800 low-income students and the Kids Coat Drive which assures students warmth in wintry weather, give SCS personnel a sense of local connection to their heartfelt contributions.

With SCS as the largest employer in Sumner County, Dr. Phillips, who serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Sumner County United Way, challenged employees to raise \$120,000 toward the county’s goal of \$1 million. This was a great challenge as SCS reached a new high of giving with \$105,000 last year. To accomplish this year’s feat, SCS had to draw heavily on the **Blue Box Skill** of optimism.

“Every year the United Way challenges us to exceed our contributions from the previous year,” SCS Safe Schools, Healthy Students Coordinator Katie Brown said. “But I am always optimistic we can reach our goal. We have a committed team of coordinators at each of the schools who I am so very proud of and what they have done. It is easy to stay optimistic knowing they are on the ground because they always surpass my expectations. It has been amazing.”

Previously, the total employee contributions topped \$88,000, where special events made up the remainder of last year’s giving. This year, employee giving alone amassed a staggering \$120,000. Special events for 2017, such as spirit days, penny wars, luncheons, a chili cookoff, dress-up days, and silent auctions, were expected to bring in additional revenue for the pledge drive. SCS Safe Schools, Healthy Students Department is still accumulating a final tally but anticipates this year’s goal will be exceeded by thousands of dollars.

Serving as the backdrop behind SCS successful 2017 United Way campaign were clear indicators of kindness, compassion, and optimism. These **Blue Box Skills** inspired SCS employees to crush this year’s elevated expectations. Dr. Phillips noted, “I know the optimism displayed by our team through this year’s campaign is another example of how we can continue to uplift and encourage all of those we come into contact with every day across Sumner County.”



Sumner County Middle College High Starts Service Learning Club at Vol State



Students at Sumner County Middle College High School (SCMCHS) at Volunteer State Community College (VSCC) saw a need for incorporating service learning into their time at VSCC. Consequently, they decided to start a club designed for service and altruistic projects. **Blue Box Skills**, such as compassion and kindness, are key to these projects. The club is open to all students at VSCC and is led by SCMCHS senior Kailyn Fournier.

The first event coordinated by the service learning club was a potluck dinner catered entirely by SCMCHS students. This dinner was held on November 30th from 4:00—6:00 p.m. in the Rochelle Center at VSCC. The club's intent was to provide healthy home-cooked food to individuals or families suffering from food insecurities.

The dinner was well-attended by VSCC students, employees, and their families. Dr. Jerry Faulkner, VSCC president, dropped by to lend his support and speak with the cooks and guests. Over 100 plates of food were served. In addition, a fun, relaxing atmosphere was created as students played board games and engaged in lively conversation while enjoying the meal.



Gratitude for Vietnam War Veterans at Station Camp High

November 2017, the Moving Wall, a traveling replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D. C., was on display in Hendersonville, Tennessee. The wall is 250 feet in length and displays names of 58,272 Americans who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Vietnam War.

The **Station Camp High School (SCHS)** Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (JROTC) aided with the set up and removal of the wall. The SCHS Bison Battalion

also volunteered to help visitors navigate the wall's information. The battalion assisted families and veterans in locating the name of loved ones on the wall.

This experience allowed JROTC students to pay tribute to the fallen soldiers of the Vietnam War. In addition, the SCHS students were able to interview living veterans to gain knowledge of the war's effect on the veterans and other Americans who lived through the era.

SCHS JROTC leadership shared, "The Bison cadets did an impeccable job at the Moving Wall. They demonstrated their communication skills, responsibility, outstanding leadership, and more!" In the showing of gratitude for all veterans of the Vietnam War, the school and district applaud the students for meeting the JROTC objective of being motivated to be better citizens.



Gallatin High Students Spread Compassion and Much More



If you have watched the film *Freedom Writers*, you may recall a scene where a main character, Mrs. Gruwell, has her English students participate in the Line game. In this activity, students are asked various questions about life ranging from the mundane (go to the line if you like salsa) to the serious (go to the line if you've ever lost a parent). This year, using the Line game premise, **Gallatin High School (GHS)** students in Ms. Glenda Hart's English 10 and 11 Honors classes devised a similar activity and based it on the **Blue Box Skills**. The students took the game on the road to other GHS classrooms to convey some important values such as empathy, compassion, humility, gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, and patience.

Ms. Hart was overwhelmed at the enthusiasm students displayed throughout this lesson. They even wrote the questions, rules, and post

-game lesson for the activity! Ms. Hart found it was very moving to learn how seriously students were taking the game too. Ms. Hart remarked, "I heard them taking great pains to be sure the questions reflected the issues of our GHS community. They were being extraordinarily sympathetic about what would be appropriate questions. Each class was divided into teams for lesson-sharing, and it was very heart-warming to see each team put its own spin on it. For example, one group requested I buy tiny notebooks, so their "students" could take notes during the activity. Another group asked me to print handouts. They really gave 100%. I can't speak for the participants in the other classes, but I certainly know that my students have learned a great deal about themselves and others."

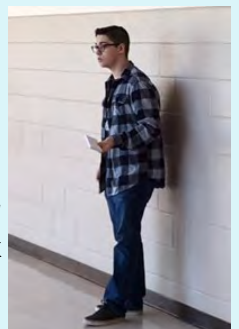


Savannah Ford (11th grade) shared, "I was surprised by a lot of the other students' answers. It goes to show you just really have no idea how dark some lives are. I already have a much



deeper understanding of people I hardly even knew before." Elizabeth Pearson (10th grade) stated, "I think this is a great way to think about how emotions play a part in life. It is also interesting to see how many others have been through the same struggles you have. It's been eye-opening!"

Ms. Hart, a former speech teacher, noted that although there are speaking standards in the English curriculum, she rarely has time to do a project of this magnitude. She said, "It's a shame that Speech is not mandatory; most people will have to present to others in college and/or the work place, but they are never taught how to do it correctly or well." So not only was this a great opportunity for students to learn about **Blue Box Skills** and promote an environment of compassion and understanding for others, the activity also went a long way toward honing GHS students' public speaking skills.



R.T. Fisher Alternative and Problem-Solving Skills

During a student's time at **R. T. Fisher Alternative School (RTF)**, the student is expected to earn points through a level system to complete the program and return to his or her home school. The level system is a positive motivational system for behavioral improvement. The student, the RTF group, and staff will consistently and continuously evaluate the student's responsibilities. Before moving to the next level, the student will have to meet the requirements for the prior level for a specific period of time. By meeting the level requirements consistently, the student will show commitment toward making a positive change in behavior. The student will begin to recognize negative behaviors that have not worked in the past and will try new behaviors to help become successful in the school setting. As the student moves through each level, more will be expected of the student in terms of responsibility and being a positive influence on classmates.

RTF teaches **Blue Box Skills** beginning with the first day a student attends the program. RTF students are taught problem-solving skills for each level of behavior goals. A student then earns points (zero to five) for meeting behavior goals in each class. During the early levels, the students are expected to remain, observe, listen, and be respectful during problem-solving situations. At level four, the students are taught to continue to use and build on problem-solving skills learned from levels one through four.

Pictured below is a level four point sheet and the problem-solving expectations for each level. A goal for RTF staff is to have students develop and increase the use of **Blue Box Skills**, such as humility, empathy, patience, gratitude, compassion, optimism, forgiveness, and kindness, to show they learn from previous mistakes, grow from the experience, and can be successful returning to their home schools. Problem-solving skills help accomplish this!

R.T. Fisher High School
Level Four 86 out of 90 Points (95%)
Level _____ Day _____

Student: _____ Date: _____

Personal Goal: _____

	I	II	PE	III	CHORES	IV	TOTAL
Be Safe							
Be Respectful							
Be Responsible							
TOTAL							

Personal Goal: _____

Bottom Line Violations:
(0 points in all areas)

1. Assault (verbal/physical)
2. Property Damage
3. Sexual Harassment
4. Leaving without Permission
5. Illegal Items
6. Total Disrespect

Additional Violations:
1. Horseplay (0 points in all areas) 2. Sleeping (0 points in all areas)

Additional Expectations:

	+	-
Daily Bus Ride	+	-
Point Sheet Signed	+	-
Problem Solving	+	-
Problem Solving	+	-
ISI or OSS	+	-
Morning Searches	+	-
Homeroom(Morning)	+	-
Homeroom(Afternoon)	+	-
Lunch	+	-
Homework	+	-
Books	+	-

Parent/Guardian Communications: _____

Criteria for Level Met: YES () NO ()

Teacher's Signature _____

Parent's Signature _____

Student's Signature _____

Problem Solving

Re-entry and Level One:

During a problem-solving situation the student will:

- Remain
- Observe
- Listen
- Be respectful

Level Two:

During a problem-solving situation the student will:

- Continue use of Level One problem solving skills.
- Listen and recognize the source of the problem.
- Consider points of view.
- Provide input/opinions in positive manner.
- Show self-control when upset.
- Identify his/her buttons.
- Accurately retrace events leading up to and following the problem.

Level Three:

During a problem-solving situation and/or group the student will:

- Continue use of Level Two problem solving skills.
- With assistance from staff or group the student will participate in the use of problem solving methods:
 1. State what the interest or need is.
 2. State feelings.
 3. Listen to others point of view respectfully.
 4. Explore alternatives.
 5. Select a solution.
 6. Accept and follow through on plan.
- Talk about what is bothering them before they act out.
- Develop acceptable strategies for solving challenges before they become problems.

Level Four:

During a problem-solving situation and/or group the student will:

- Continue use of Level Three problem solving skills.
- Even when upset or disappointed, the student will maintain a positive attitude.

6

Blue Box Skills Promoted by Madison Creek Elementary Book Drive



At Madison Creek Elementary School (MCE), teachers and administrators are committed to providing a strong academic foundation. They make it a deliberate practice to learn new strategies and curriculum to ensure professional, continual growth. With specificity, student learning data is used to make informed decisions to yield the greatest benefits for students. MCE has been privileged to observe steady, measurable gains in student achievement.

This year, Director of Schools, Dr. Del Phillips, challenged Sumner County educators to

integrate **Blue Box Skills**, such as empathy and optimism, into daily practices with students. Sumner County Schools believes character education is paramount for student success. To help MCE students build skills, such as humility, gratitude, and kindness, into their lives, teachers create real-life opportunities for engagement and practice. Students are exposed to a variety of literary experiences in which characters and conflicts are discussed. They write in journals to process thoughts and how actions impact others. Other ways used to encourage positive behavior are asking students to eat lunch with new friends or play together at recess.

Each of those types of experiences are meaningful, but MCE stepped up to the plate in a BIG way this fall. Many students and families were dismayed to hear Hull Daisetta Elementary School in Houston, Texas lost its entire library during Hurricane Harvey. MCE students rallied, combining empathy with optimism. A lofty goal was set to collect 1,000 books to share with Hull Daisetta. Excitement built each day as book boxes were filled. MCE students more than doubled the goal by collecting over 2,600 books! A truck was rented, and books were transported to the deserving students at Hull Daisetta. "Character is destiny," Heraclitus an ancient Greek philosopher once said. If this is true, students at MCE have a very bright future!



Clyde Riggs Elementary Scholars Committed to Helping Feed the Community

In studying Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence, the scholars of **Clyde Riggs Elementary School (CRE)** learn commitment is critical to being successful in every aspect of life. They are taught principles such as when you tell someone you will do something, do it; face challenges head-on; and have courage to reach a goal even if it seems unachievable.

CRE adds **Blue Box Skills** to character education for students as well. The faculty, staff, and school families exhibit compassion and kindness through an annual partnership with Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation (CEMC) to collect canned goods to help feed other Portland families at Thanksgiving. CRE scholars donate canned goods for one month. Individual classes compete to see which class can collect the most canned goods. It becomes a fun competition and is done with a true purpose in mind. Daily totals are turned in and are kept top secret until the end of the collection period. At the end of the competition, students are excited to discover which class collected the most donations. The class that collects the most is rewarded with a popcorn and movie party sponsored by CEMC.

This year, Mrs. Vanderpool's first grade class collected the most canned goods. Commitment and compassion were shown by this class because there may be students in the class that are members of families who will receive assistance at Thanksgiving. Yet, these scholars learned to reach a goal of helping friends and neighbors while facing their own challenges. CRE is extremely proud of all of its students for their valiant efforts to strive toward excellence in scholarship AND service.



Pictured above with some of the canned goods collected are Mrs. Terry Darnell, CRE principal, Ms. Dana White, school counselor, and several members of Mrs. Vanderpool's class.

Dr. William Burrus Elementary and Giving Attitudes

To highlight the importance of **Blue Box Skills**, students at **Dr. William Burrus Elementary School (WBE)** are involved in several schoolwide outreach projects this year. Kindness, gratitude, compassion, and empathy will be skills directly addressed with community-giving projects. Tara Sprouls, WBE school counselor, is organizing an event with a special guest speaker and activities to emphasize the importance of giving. Grade levels will then collaborate to gather needed items for Sumner County organizations and students. The organizations supported are Sumner Humane Society (pet items), Sumner County Family Resource Center (canned food and non-perishable food items), and Christmas gifts and necessities for students at other schools.



WBE Student Leaders Growing in Compassion, Patience, and Humility

WBE student leaders are also improving **Blue Box Skills** of compassion, kindness, patience, humility, and optimism by participating on school teams. One team serves as peer tutors to young readers at WBE. Peer tutors sit and read with younger students before and after school during bus duty time. This helps students with oral reading fluency and connects them to older student mentors. Another team which allows student leaders to develop important **Blue Box skills** is the WBE Green Team. This team coordinates the school recycling program and assists in keeping WBE clean. WBE is very proud of its student leadership teams.



Cleaning school windows



Reading with a peer buddy



Helping Mr. Hill after lunch

Union STEM Elementary Promotes a Benevolent Attitude



Union STEM Elementary School (UES) has established an outreach program to serve the nearby Union community as well as the Greater Gallatin area and beyond. First, UES established an outdoor library to allow children who live in the community to access free books they can read and keep. The outdoor library provides books to children who may not be able to afford them or not have transportation to access the public library. This endeavor enables students to better understand some children are not as fortunate as others.

Next, UES collected over 2,100 pairs of new socks for children who live at the Nashville Union Rescue Mission. The school more than doubled its goal of 1,000 pairs. Through this effort, UES students learned empathy for those who go without some of the basic necessities, such as socks, that others might take for granted.

In addition, UES amassed over 550 stuffed animals for its community partner, The Shalom Zone of Gallatin. These donations helped Shalom Zone reach and surpass its goal of 800 stuffed animals. The students at UES were able to evidence there are children in the community who might not have simple “luxuries” such as stuffed animals with which to play. UES students also were able to contribute to the worthy cause of fire prevention in homes because vouchers for free smoke alarms were attached to the stuffed animals. Another UES collaboration occurred with Shalom Zone through the collection of toys for the Toys for Tots program.



Finally, UES continued to help build **Blue Box Skills**, such as empathy, compassion, gratitude, and kindness, within its students through the collection of coats for children who might otherwise not have a coat to keep warm during the winter months. Through the UES outreach program, children are developing strong character skills such as empathy for others who are less fortunate; kindness toward others without expecting anything in return; gratitude for the blessings they have; and compassion toward others while working to help them prosper. UES plans to expand its outreach program in the spring of 2018 to continue to serve more children and families who are less fortunate.

North Sumner Elementary is RACKing up on Blue Box Skills



The fall and winter citizenship incentive at **North Sumner Elementary School (NSE)** is RACK which stands for Random Acts of Caring and Kindness. NSE faculty, staff, and students all have the opportunity to show their RACK capacity. Once the random acts are captured and recorded through Instagram, Facebook, or family reports, the NSE RACKERs are awarded squares of color to contribute to the NSE Random Acts of Kindness picture displayed prominently in a hallway in the school.

These random acts of caring and kindness support the use of **Blue Box Skills** in all ways. The acts build character. In addition, they put into practice the skills students are learning about such as getting along with and caring for others. Examples of the acts have occurred in classrooms, at home, and outside of school and home. The RACK project will be ongoing until the picture is complete, and a caring and kind culture is evident to all who enter the doors of NSE.



Benny Bills Elementary and World Kindness Day

At **Benny Bills Elementary School (BBE)**, a second grade teacher Mrs. Stacy Benton helped her students learn more about kindness by participating in World Kindness Day on November 13th. Mrs. Benton's students began the event by reading the book *We're All Wonders* by R.J. Palacio. Next, students brainstormed ways to be kind which is a **Blue Box Skill**. Each student then listed a way he or she could be kind to others around them. These ideas were used to create a poster for World Kindness Day. BBE students even used the event to practice writing skills (e.g., writing complete sentences) on the actions they use to show others they care.



J.W. Wiseman Elementary and the Blue Box Skills



Blue Box Skills are taught every day at **J.W. Wiseman Elementary School (JWW)**. Many teachers use storybooks, music, and other materials to teach the skills during classroom instruction. However, the greatest emphasis on **Blue Box Skills** occurs through the counseling department at JWW. The school counselor Ms. Wells teaches lessons on empathy, kindness, compassion, and other character-building traits.

For example, Ms. Wells teaches kindness through toothpaste! The toothpaste lesson is used to demonstrate the power of words. Ms. Wells uses a tube of toothpaste to illustrate how words we use, whether kind or not, are easy to come out. However, those same words are harder to retract or take back when we regret them. This lesson reminds JWW students to be kind to one another and to speak with good purpose. JWW teachers and Ms. Wells will continue to use **Blue Box Skills** to promote a positive school climate and provide a place where students can feel safe and strive for success.

Bethpage Elementary and Daily Practice of Blue Box Skills

At **Bethpage Elementary School (BPE)**, faculty and staff understand it is the duty of home and school to teach children the virtuous **Blue Box Skills** of kindness, patience, humility, empathy, patience, gratitude, compassion, optimism, and forgiveness to help create a more peaceful, happier world. BPE works to ensure students care for one another by providing opportunities to develop kindness and learn to become givers within the community. One way BPE is giving this winter season is through a collection of winter accessories for those less fortunate. There is a huge evergreen tree already decorated with numerous scarves and hats going to those in need to help keep them warm.



Gratitude is another virtue taught daily. It was a focus at the beginning of the school year

when the BPE art teacher had students decorate Gratitude Rocks. On the stones, students listed the items for which they were grateful. The Gratitude Rocks could then be reminders to the students to show gratitude for all they have.

Patience and compassion are instilled in many BPE fifth grade students through a reading partnership with first grade students. This is an initiative put in place by the BPE librarian. In addition, some of BPE

students in fifth grade walk younger students to their classrooms in the mornings and help kindergarten students prepare for going home in the afternoon.

BPE recognizes the importance of empathy as it identifies and responds to the needs and suffering of others. The stakeholders in the school know they must find ways to show people they care and can show compassion. It is their belief positive optimism grows as these skills are continuously taught and applied, not only schoolwide, but throughout a child's lifetime.



Gene Brown Elementary Bobcats Show Compassion



Gene Brown Elementary School (GBE) Bobcats worked overtime in December collecting paper goods for the GBE Student Council Wrap Them in Paper Project. GBE book of the month, *Silver Packages* by Cynthia Rylant, was the inspiration behind the project. The organization received so many paper goods from appreciated donors, the goods had to be stored in the hallways!

Each year, GBE Student Council reaches out to senior citizens in the community for a memorable time of sharing, and this year was no exception. Students delivered and presented the collected items on behalf of GBE while receiving so much goodwill in return. They were able to talk with senior citizens, listen to wonderful stories of Christmas past, and share the most important gifts of all . . . the gifts of time and attention.

Patricia Rodgers, GBE Student Council Advisor shares, “(Thank you for the) wonderful response to GBE Student Council's Wrap Them in Paper Project. We delivered the items yesterday along with apples and oranges, a reading of *Silver Packages*, and singing Christmas songs with the residents. Students also chatted with the residents about their memories of Christmas and gathered some words of wisdom. It was a delightful experience for our Student Council members . . . one they will remember for quite some time.” **Blue Box Skills** at their best!

SMALL ACTS, WHEN
MULTIPLIED BY MILLIONS OF
PEOPLE, CAN TRANSFORM
THE WORLD.

Millersville Elementary Morning Meetings and Mustang Round-up



The faculty and staff of **Millersville Elementary School (MES)** understand the importance of providing students with a loving and supportive environment in which students can feel safe and ready to learn. To strengthen the sense of security and community, MES students, staff, and faculty begin each day with a Mustang Morning Meeting. During this time, they assemble for announcements, celebrations, and to learn about Quantum Learning Education's Eight Keys of Excellence and **Blue Box Skills**. MES encourages students to use the keys and skills to guide them through life in and out of school.

This year, in addition to building an awareness for unity through morning meetings, MES has created Mustang Mentor groups. During these small group sessions known as Mustang Round-ups, a mentor works to make connections and build relationships with a small group of students using **Blue Box Skills** such as kindness, patience, and compassion.

At MES, faculty and staff strive to provide students with an atmosphere of understanding and good character. The morning meetings and Mustang Round-ups are avenues to promote a productive learning environment and strengthen relationships among students, staff, and faculty. **Blue Box Skills** and the Eight Keys of Excellence foster positive behavior with the intention of making these principles acceptable ways of thinking and acting for MES students.



Howard Elementary Students Learn Sign Language, Empathy, Kindness, & Optimism



Fall 2017 brought a new opportunity to third, fourth, and fifth grade students at **Howard Elementary School (HES)**. In partnership with a local nonprofit Sign Club Co. and its executive director Poppy Steele, HES students were invited to participate in an afterschool club designed to teach hearing students how to communicate with the Deaf. Sign clubs in several Sumner County Schools teach sign language and educate participants about Deaf culture.

Though there are currently no Deaf students at HES, almost 60 members in HES Sign Club were highly engaged in learning about challenges faced by the Deaf. At the end of each club meeting, members asked question after question about how these students take part in activities the hearing population takes for granted. Examples of those activities were watching a movie, hearing fire alarms, and telling each other Happy Birthday. The twelve-week course helped HES students begin to develop an understanding of how the Deaf feel. HES is excited to have a club that encourages **Blue Box Skills** such as empathy!



According to statistics, 90 percent of parents/guardians of Deaf children never learn to sign. Therefore, while sign clubs work hard to end isolation, to break down communication barriers, and to ensure Deaf children can develop friendships with their peers, the course also helped prepare future parents/guardians for possible communication needs within their families.

Furthermore, HES Sign Club participation assisted students with learning the importance of being kind and helping others who need friends – whether deaf or hearing! Club members learned to cooperate and help each other during activities. Fifth graders were regularly seen helping younger club members who felt less confident. This evidence shows the club strengthened another **Blue Box Skill** -- kindness!



Through participation in HES Sign Club, students demonstrated optimism as well. Sign Club Co. is dedicated to creating a world where Deaf children can live freely without barriers. HES students express their hopefulness for this goal by participating in various community activities. They signed the National Anthem at Walk Across Sumner in October, signed Christmas carols in the Hendersonville Tree Lighting and Gallatin/Hendersonville Parades, and performed at the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities in November. Students were required to practice at least nine additional hours outside of regular club meetings to participate in these events. With these actions, HES students showed the community a willingness to invest time toward making a brighter future for Deaf children. HES Sign Club has illustrated yet another **Blue Box Skill** -- optimism!



Visit www.signclubco.org for more information on establishing a Sign Club at your school.

Watt Hardison Elementary Promotes Beta Club's Mission

The fifth grade Beta Club members at **Watt Hardison Elementary School (WHE)** practice **Blue Box Skills** (humility, empathy, patience, gratitude, compassion, optimism, kindness, and forgiveness) daily! This practice aligns with the National Beta Club mission to promote the ideals of academic achievement, character, service, and leadership among elementary and secondary school students. Mrs. Jackson, the club sponsor, collaborates with WHE fifth grade teachers to choose students whom exhibit the **Blue Box Skills** on a consistent basis. "The students that were chosen for National Beta Club have maintained an A-B average the first nine weeks of school. In addition, a student must be trustworthy and always maintain high expectations to be a part of the club," said Mrs. Jackson.



On December 7th, 2017, the WHE Beta Club had its 2017-18 induction and candlelight ceremony. The members took the Beta pledge and lit candles that represent the different pillars (achievement, character, leadership, and service) of the club. Families and teachers attended and celebrated the students' accomplishments.



Throughout the school year, WHE Beta Club members volunteer to assist with various events. Many have already helped with Reading Under the Stars, kindergarten registration, Thanksgiving dinner, and the canned food drive. WHE Beta Club members do a wonderful job being positive role models for all other students!



Teaching Leadership Skills at Nannie Berry Elementary

Nannie Berry Elementary School (NBE) Leadership Club has been very active this year. The club membership consists of fourth and fifth grade NBE students who demonstrate Living Above the Line qualities and **Blue Box Skills**. The members are often seen as role models and are looked up to by their peers.



One event led by club members was the recognition of NBE bus drivers during Bus Drivers Appreciation Week. The club spent several days making signs of gratitude, along with other goodies, for the drivers. Then, the club members and staff representatives met early before school each day of the week of appreciation to be there when the first bus driver arrived until the last driver left.



In addition, the NBE Leadership Club joined forces with the NBE Drama Club to honor military veterans. During a presentation, the students provided explanations of what Veterans Day is and why it is celebrated. They also honored each special guest / veteran by name. NBE students in attendance were able to shake hands and thank the veterans for their service after the program ended. Job well done, NBE Leadership Club!



Second Grade Kindness Elves Discovered at Guild Elementary

Guild Elementary School (GES) believes the Christmas/holiday season is the perfect time to reinforce acts of compassion and empathy (**Blue Box Skills**) with children. During the month of December, Mrs. Bowles' second grade class made a commitment to 12 Days of Kindness. Each of the 12 days, the students spread random acts of kindness throughout GES. The second graders took time every day to sprinkle some care and appreciation on various GES faculty, staff, and students to let them know how grateful they are for all they do.



Kindness elves are passing out candy canes to classes nearby.



Second graders are making ornaments that shine with special notes to cause others to smile.

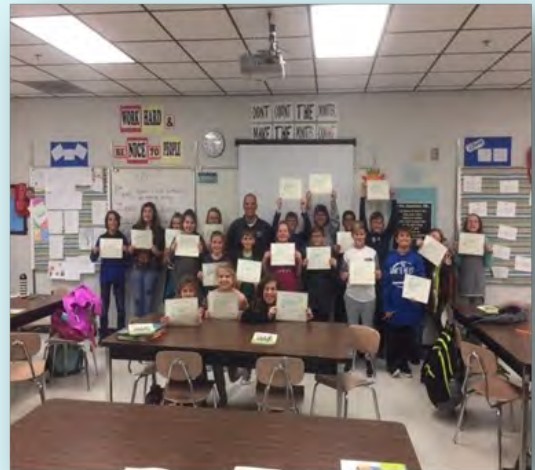


Writing Christmas cards to GES principal, Mr. Sawyers, is another act of kindness.

White House Middle and Projects Supporting Blue Box Skills

GREAT Graduation - Teaching Forgiveness, Empathy, & Kindness

White House Middle School (WHM) fifth grade students had an opportunity to participate in the GREAT (Gang Resistance and Training) program during Ms. McCullough's related arts class. This six-weeks program teaches students to deal with issues such as bullying, peer pressure, and decision making. Congratulations to the graduates of the program!



WHM Food Drive – Teaching Gratitude and Compassion

WHM collected approximately 2,000 cans of food for the Second Harvest Food Bank in October.

Boxes were placed throughout the school, and students from all grade levels contributed. The cans collected were given to the local White House Food Bank.

WHM Sixth Grade PBL Project - Teaching Patience and Optimism

Sixth grade students at WHM put together a project designed to use inside hallway lockers for organization. Students measured lockers to determine the size of the product they would design. Then, they conducted a survey to ask peers about the problems to be addressed with the product. Some questions were on keeping up with books and materials, learning if items fell out of lockers easily, and if issues at lockers made the students late to class. The data gathered helped create the plan for the product.



The project taught engineering and organizational skills as well as **Blue Box Skills**. The collaboration emphasized the need to find ways to be respectful in the hallways, to be on time for class, and to work together toward a common goal.



Westmoreland Middle Supports Blue Box Skills in the Music Department



Over the past two academic years, **Westmoreland Middle School (WMS)** instrumental arts program has been going through change. The transition is to incorporate a total experience for students and prepare them to walk into higher education ready for success on every level. The importance of total character of students is found in every aspect of the experience. In a band class, the results of the individual are important, but the sound of the ensemble is the comprehensive goal that each leader must move toward. At WMS, each student has the title of leader. The designation promotes the expectation WMS holds for them — to be a leader in the school, classroom, and community on behalf of the Westmoreland Schools' Music Departments.

WMS sixth graders are taught the foundation of leadership by example. One day, the students may learn a new note. In that process, they could learn that “Squeak Happens,” but they are not to laugh or pass judgement on those making the squeaks because they are learning. Instead, WMS students are taught some of the best sounds come from musical errors. Therefore, they are encouraged to keep playing when mistakes happen because that is part of the learning process. WMS student leaders are also taught to work in a musical triangle and to assist the person on each side to produce the best sound possible. **Blue Box Skills**, such as patience, kindness, and compassion, make the band better.



In seventh and eighth grade WMS band class, students continue growth with their instruments. They also focus on being the best in all they do while using their gifts to encourage and help others. Through chair challenges or audition times for honor bands, WMS student leaders learn if they brag or speak unkindly to the others in competition for the positions, then they will no longer be permitted to compete for or hold the position. This process teaches humility and empathy to WMS band members. However, it also teaches students to be optimistic regarding the time and effort given to ultimately produce the outcome they are striving to achieve.

In upper grade level classes, the leaders are often given opportunities to attend functions and events. When doing so, they are reminded to thank every visitor for choosing to give their time to

WMS student leaders. When programs are given donations, WMS sends thank you notes created by students. WMS promotes the mindset of putting the work behind all you do, and this reinforces **Blue Box Skills**.

WMS student leaders are constantly encouraged to keep practicing to become better because they are the ones who can speak multiple types of languages, organize after-school time to learn an instrument, and maintain a high standard of academic achievement to remain active in extracurricular music activities. An extraordinary musical village is the goal for WMS, and it is larger than just the music!



TW Hunter Middle Exhibits Kindness, Compassion, and Gratitude

TW Hunter Middle School (TWH) teachers and students promote kindness, compassion, and gratitude through community service. The **BANDITS** (Buccaneers Against Narcotic Drugs in This School) club at TWH sponsors the collection of items used in various programs throughout the year along with assistance from TWH cheerleaders and Beta Club.

The student body collected canned goods for the Food 2 Families Food Drive. This program is sponsored by WKRN News 2 and the Second Harvest Food Bank. TWH helps families in the community who are in need by giving to the drive.

The school is currently collecting items for the second annual TWH Care Package Program. The program invites students and staff to donate items to be used to create care packages for local senior citizens who live in nursing homes or are homebound during the winter holiday season.

Through these types of community outreach activities, students at TWH develop **Blue Box Skills** such as compassion for others who are in need, kindness to help others, and gratitude for what they and their families have and can provide.



TW Hunter is collecting items to place in shoe boxes to take to local senior citizens who are living in nursing homes or may be homebound during the winter holiday season.

Portland West Middle Book Club “Wonders”

The **Portland West Middle School (PWMS)** Book Club has been doing some serious reading! Made up of students from sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, as well as several faculty members, the book club has been an exciting arena to share books and ideas. So, when the book *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio was made into a movie, club members decided it was the perfect opportunity to compare and contrast a movie with a book. Imagine the wonderful surprise when a HUGE lesson on **Blue Box Skills**, such as empathy, patience, compassion, optimism, forgiveness, and kindness, also took place!

Auggie Pullman, *Wonder*'s main character, looks different from other kids . . . dramatically different. His differences led his parents to homeschool him for several years. However, with the support of his family and school administration and faculty, Auggie entered the public school system as a fifth grader. While he struggles to deal with bullying and friendlessness, he also experiences life events that show **Blue Box Skills**.

After the PWMS Book Club members read Auggie's story in *Wonder*, the group traveled to a Gallatin theater to watch the movie. During the next book club meeting, PWMS students evaluated the story using the book and movie formats. They were asked thought-provoking questions such as:

What character traits did you learn about Auggie throughout the book/movie?

How does being bullied affect Auggie?

Did the movie do a good job portraying Auggie and relating the book contents? Why or why not?

What advantages did Auggie have because his family was well off?

What was the most important lesson you learned from this book/movie?

The rich discussion and reflective insights on how students are treated at PWMS made the time invested in sharing Auggie's story worthwhile. The motto at the PWMS Book Club is “Choose Kind!”

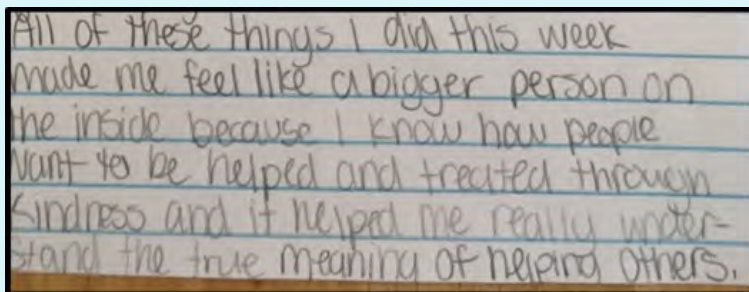


Ellis Middle: Superheroes Making a Difference

Theater students at **Ellis Middle School (EMS)** are practicing **Blue Box Skills** introduced during the 2017-18 Sumner County Schools Summit. The students in Lynn-nore Chittom's theater class address these skills (humility, empathy, patience, gratitude, compassion, optimism, kindness, and forgiveness) by pretending to be cast as superheroes. The superhero unit, designed and implemented by Mrs. Chittom, begins with a class discussion to help students identify the motivational differences between superheroes and villains. Through this discourse, students begin to realize the only distinction is in how one responds to the circumstances experienced. Whereas villains seek power, control, and greed, the heroes demonstrate self-sacrifice, kindness, patience, empathy, humility, and optimism while trying to save the world.

With this knowledge as a foundation, students are assigned a method-acting project in which they pretend they have been cast as superheroes for an upcoming production. To prepare for the imagined roles, students are instructed to do two random acts of kindness each day for five days. As a class, students brainstorm specific ways they can be superheroes at home, at school, and in their communities. They are all provided wristbands reading "I am a Superhero!" to serve as reminders to behave in only superhero ways. At the end of the project, students write reflection papers to help consider their experiences.

The reflection papers proved the value of the assignment. Comments from Mrs. Chittom's students were about the joy felt when making others happy, about the positive feelings toward self when they recognized the many ways they can make a difference at home and school, and about the desire to continue to help others in their daily lives. Many **Blue Box Skills** were expressed.



All of these things I did this week made me feel like a bigger person on the inside because I know how people want to be helped and treated through kindness and it helped me really understand the true meaning of helping others.

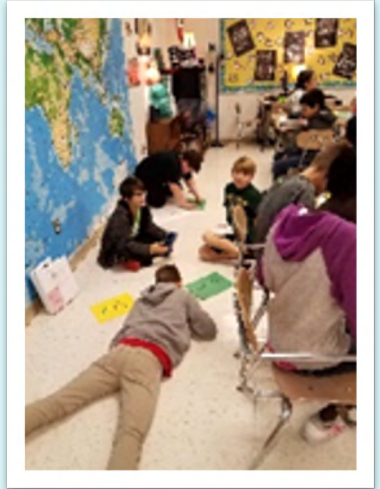
In addition to the method-acting assignment, Mrs. Chittom's superhero unit included a character-creation writing assignment, script revision group work, performances, and ties to three Broadway shows that relate to origin stories (backstories on how characters gain their supernatural powers) and villains' lairs. To continue to encourage **Blue Box Skills**, Mrs. Chittom plans to facilitate this project each quarter this school year.



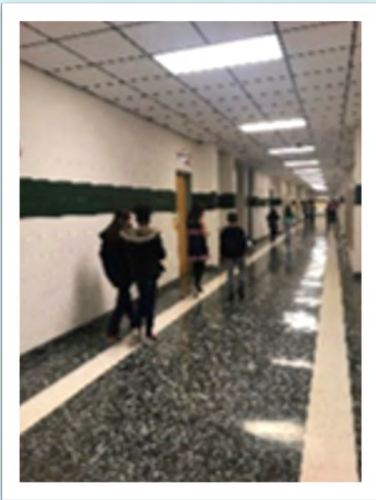
Shafer Middle Practices Respect and Empathy

Considering the cultural diversity of the **Shafer Middle School (SMS)** family of learners, the **Blue Box Skills** of empathy and respect are practiced every day. SMS starts by using Socratic seminars in classrooms weekly. The skills of Socratic seminars, such as having formal discussions based on a text with a leader asking open-ended questions, listening closely to comments, thinking critically, and sharing thoughts and responses to others' views, are taught at the beginning of the school year and are applied all year long. When used appropriately, these seminars encourage respectful discussion and empathetic thought.

Group work is an important part of SMS learning strategies also. To promote positive collaboration, students are taught to carry their parts of the work load, to respect others' opinions, and to operate as a team to produce the best product possible. The result of this teamwork is everyone takes pride in the effort.



Weekly, SMS students are involved in the Speak Up to Stand Up program headed by school counselors Becky Horacek and Tammy Twyman. This program is based on the Olweus Bullying Prevention program. The lessons by SMS counselors teach anti-bullying, empathy, respect, cultural diversity, and other character education.



The sixth grade faculty at SMS specifically teach elements of cultural diversity every holiday season. Students research holidays in numerous cultures, produce presentations on their assigned cultures, and present the information to classmates. No two students in a class researches the same culture. This allows for variety in cultural experiences from all around the world. One of the goals of this unit is the deliberate focus on respect for others' cultural traditions.



Daily, SMS encourages its students to be respectful to themselves, other students, and the faculty/staff. SMS is committed to producing good citizens that will positively impact society.





Letters of Gratitude by Station Camp Middle Students

As Thanksgiving season approached, **Station Camp Middle School (SCMS)** chorus teacher, Megan Hester, began to talk to her students about the **Blue Box Skills** of gratitude and compassion, traits each will use throughout their lives. “We so often take things for granted, and I wanted the students to stop and think about all the things they were thankful for,” Ms. Hester stated. “I even had them write out lists of things they were thankful for. The lists were long and very impressive!” Focusing on work with **Blue Box Skills**, Ms. Hester continued:

After discussing thankfulness with my students, we discussed being kind. I gave them the task of writing one thank-you note to one adult in the school (they could not write to me). I told them they did not have to sign them. The students absolutely loved this! Many students chose to write several letters. And one of my students wrote a letter to every single person on staff! The students completely exceeded my expectations. I was somewhat surprised at how they took to it. I made sure to preview every letter before delivering it, and I was so touched by the emotion and sincere tone to them.

SCMS faculty and staff were thrilled with the gratitude project. While all expressed how much they loved their letters, many expressed how the letters came at just the right time! Seventh grade math teacher Shari Payne said, “Just when, as a teacher, you are feeling overwhelmed, a bit worn out, and left wondering if all your effort is even making any difference . . . you receive a handwritten note from a student!” Susan Odom, who teaches seventh grade social studies, commented, “It really is the best feeling to get a letter of appreciation from a student! They come at a certain time when you seem to need it the most.” Seventh grade ELA teacher Amy Joley added, “They (the letters) are often the shot of fuel that I need to keep me going during a particularly demanding week.” Sharon Long, SCMS receptionist, said, “I loved the letter. It just put me in a good mood receiving it. It is not often that we get complimented by students or parents for the job that we do.” There was even a note addressed to the entire staff posted at the staff mailboxes from an anonymous sender!

Teachers were quick to praise the students for their acts. Niki Lampton, sixth grade math teacher new to SCMS, told of a student finding her in the hallway to give her a letter even though she did not know Ms. Lampton. “It (the letter) said she was glad I was here, and that made me feel even more welcome. It means a lot that she wrote to the ‘new’ person that she did not know,” shared Ms. Lampton. Art teacher Drew Kirk, said, “My spirit was lifted by their selfless acts. I am so thankful to have the opportunity to teach such amazing students.” Science teacher Amy Radley said, “In that moment, their thoughtfulness reminded me I am changing students' lives every day.” A letter recipient also, Principal Brian Smith, had this to say about the students:

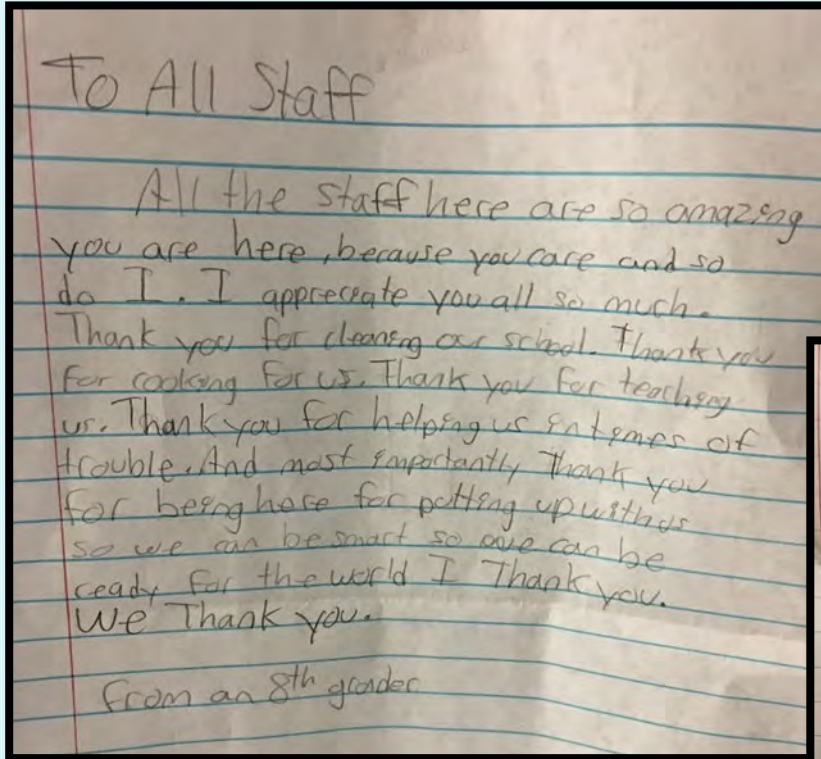
Our students showed a true depth in character when taking the time to write individual notes of thanks to all our teachers. The kindness in this student gesture showcased how success comes from acknowledging gratitude and taking the steps necessary to let those who influence know that we are thankful for their time, commitment, and belief in our school. We truly have an unbelievable student body and first-class staff and faculty. I know I will not soon forget the kind words I received in my personal letters.

Repeatedly, the recipients stated they were reminded why they continue to do what they do. Nurse

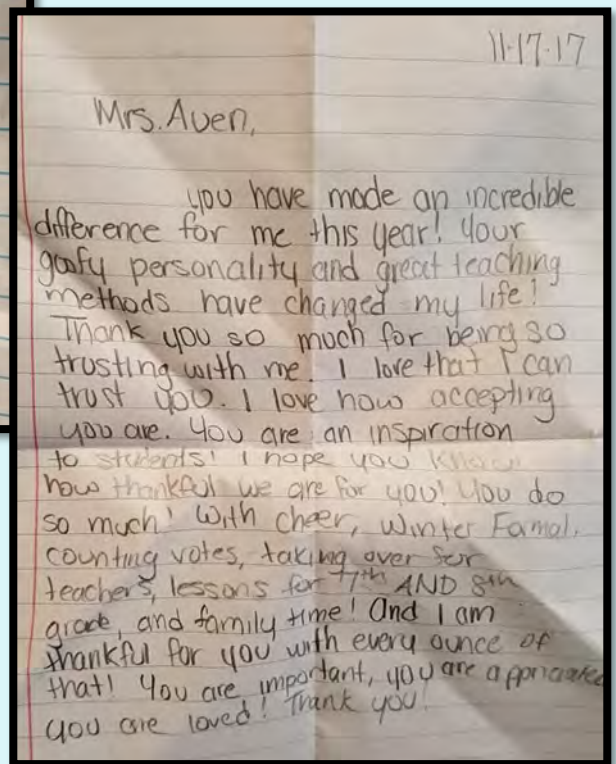


Letters of Gratitude by Station Camp Middle Students (continued)

Amanda Welty conveyed, "It let me know a simple smile meant a lot to the students." Ms. Joley, SCMS ELA teacher, spoke from the heart of the love that is felt for the young men and women of the school. She revealed, "I sometimes forget these little people are PEOPLE with real struggles and real battles they are fighting outside of our cinderblock walls. The letters are a reminder of my 'Why!' My why is, was, and always will be that I want to be a person, possibly in some cases the only person, in my students' lives they can look to and say, 'Because of you, I didn't give up!'"



Examples of letters of gratitude
written by SCMS students



Left to Right: Opal Beck, Carson Lamb,
chorus teacher Megan Hester, Karson
Oliver, Kevin Marsh, Madelyn Johnson,
and Aiden Walker



Spotlighting Positives in Sumner County Schools

Station Camp High, Blue Box Skills, and a Newell Regional Nominee

Yearly, the Newell Award National Committee and Tennessee Orthopaedic Alliance recognize athletic trainers for the service and leadership they provide local athletic communities. The group picks one local athletic trainer from each participating region to be considered for the Newell National Athletic Trainer of the Year Award. Recommendations come from community members who share examples of service, leadership, and shared experiences by the trainer.

For 2018, Andy Yarbrough, Station Camp High School (SCHS) Athletic Trainer, was named the year's Newell Regional Nominee for the region including Sumner County Schools. This honor was bestowed on Mr. Yarbrough because of his caring treatment and support of SCHS athletes. Community supporters believe Mr. Yarbrough truly serves as a dedicated mentor to the athletes and makes a long-lasting impact on each one.

Mr. Yarbrough works for BodyGuard Sports Medicine, a comprehensive sports medicine program, at Sumner Regional Medical Center in Gallatin, Tennessee. BodyGuard is focused on treatment and prevention of sports injuries in athletes of all ages and provides athletic training to student athletes at four schools in the Sumner County Schools district. Every BodyGuard athletic trainer has been certified by the National Athletic Trainers Association Board of Certification.

With the Newell honor, Mr. Yarbrough received a regional plaque and the opportunity to win National Trainer of the Year which would provide \$2500 to SCHS and \$10,000 for the award recipient. The winner will be announced in May 2018. Sumner County Schools wishes Mr. Yarbrough the very best in the competition!



Libraries in Sumner County Schools Welcome Students to Read, Read, Read!

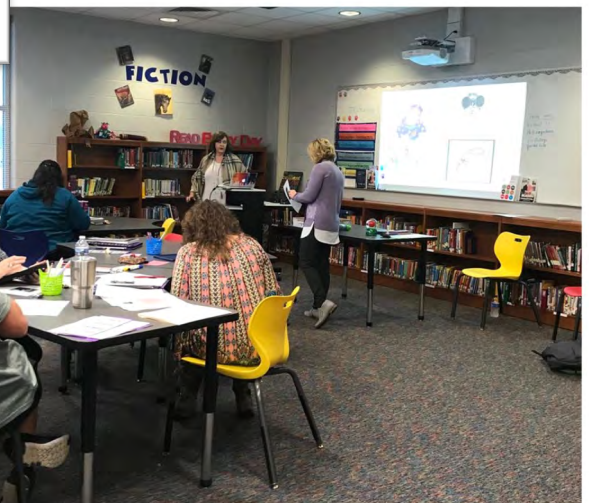
PWMS



GBE



CRE



SCE



GHS





Sumner County Schools Mission

Sumner County Schools commits to growing learners who are college and career ready through quality instruction, effective use of resources, building a collaborative culture, and strong leadership.