



For Immediate Release

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TDOE & Belmont University Name 57 School Leaders to 2024-25 Tennessee Rural Principals Network

Woodbury, TN—The Tennessee Department of Education, in partnership with Belmont University, announced 57 school leaders selected for the 2024-25 cohort of the Tennessee Rural Principals Network (TRPN), which is a comprehensive approach to improve the preparation, retention, and development of principals in rural communities across Tennessee.

“With Tennessee hosting the fifth-largest number of rural students nationwide, this initiative is crucial in fostering educational leadership in communities across our state,” said Lizzette Reynolds, Commissioner of Education. “We are excited to partner with Belmont University for the next cohort of the Tennessee Rural Principals Network to provide these school leaders with professional development opportunities to further the important work of setting all our students up for future success.”

The Tennessee Rural Principals Network launched in 2018, giving rural principals an opportunity to learn and grow together through in-person and online learning sessions, focusing on leadership coaching and job-embedded activities. During this cohort, over the next three years, participants will explore the unique challenges and opportunities in rural school leadership, learn strategies to ensure high-quality instruction and the recruitment, retention, and support of rural educators, build relationships among other rural district leaders, and access effective resources in the rural context.

Cannon County Elementary School Principal Emily Hancock Layne was selected as one of the 57 participants. Director of Schools, Ms. Bonnie Patterson, stated, “We are very proud of the selection of Ms. Emily Layne to be a part of the Tennessee Rural Principals Network. Mrs. Emily is an extraordinary leader and can gain valuable insight from other administrators across the state while sharing her wealth of knowledge.” Marcia Melton, Supervisor of Instruction, stated, “Rural schools encounter distinct challenges that differ from urban and suburban schools. We are pleased to announce that Emily Hancock will represent Cannon County Schools and Cannon County Elementary School. Her participation will enable her to gather valuable insights and information to benefit all our educational leaders.”

“The Tennessee Rural Principals Network is a tremendous professional growth and capacity-building mechanism for rural school leaders, positively impacting the students, families, and communities they serve,” said Dr. Jim McIntyre, Dean of the College of Education and Assistant Provost, Belmont University. “For the next three years, the state of Tennessee has increased the investment in this important effort, enabling the TRPN team to serve and support even more rural principals across the state.”

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