



Educator Preparation Provider/Local Education Agency Primary Partnership Agreement

Educator Preparation Provider (EPP)	Johnson University
Local Education Agency (LEA)	Knox County Schools
Academic Year of Agreement	2026-2027

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Certification (signatures verify partnership)	
EPP Head Administrator: Dr. Roy Miller	Title: Dean, Templar School of Education
Signature: 	Date: 07/28/2026

LEA Head Administrator: Dr. Jon Ryeswyk	Title: Director of Schools
Signature: 	Date: 8/12/2026

**Prompt
1**

Identify goals for recruiting high-quality candidates, including candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and diverse populations, and how evidence will be collected, shared, and used to increase the educator pipeline. *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

Templar School of Education (TSOE) is committed to a strong, collaborative partnership with Knox County Schools (KCS) to identify and recruit high-quality teacher candidates. Over the past ten years, Johnson University's Admissions Office and Templar School of Education have worked closely with KCS to develop and implement strategic goals aimed at enhancing teacher recruitment and retention, particularly in high-need areas.

Partnership Goals:

Goal 1: Develop a robust pipeline of highly qualified teacher candidates to serve the staffing needs of Knox County Schools.

Goal 2: Intentionally identify and support teacher candidates in critical shortage areas, including Special Education, English Language Learners (ELL), Science, and Mathematics.

Strategies for Goal Implementation

Goal 1 Strategies: Johnson University and KCS representatives will meet at least twice annually to assess progress toward shared recruitment goals.

- These meetings will include data sharing related to current TSOE candidates, program offerings, and KCS personnel and staffing needs.

- The partnership will utilize shared data to better align educator preparation with district staffing demands and ensure responsive recruitment efforts.

Goal 2 Strategies:

- TSOE collaborates with KCS to implement targeted recruitment strategies aligned with district needs.

- Teacher candidates participate in field experiences and student teaching/intern placements in hard-to-staff schools, gaining valuable experience and skills relevant to high-needs settings.

- TSOE K-5 candidates graduate with an ELL endorsement, addressing KCS need for certified ELL teachers.

- The Integrated Early Childhood Licensure program enables Johnson University graduates to more effectively support inclusive education for students with disabilities within general education classrooms.

Ongoing Recruitment Activities:

Johnson University engages in a wide range of activities to support recruitment, including:

- Participation in KCS-sponsored college fairs and youth outreach events
- Presentations by JU faculty and staff at college and career events across KCS middle and high schools
- Collaboration with local community colleges, churches, and other community-based organizations
- Targeted outreach through social media and digital campaigns
- JU faculty participation in the KCS recruitment fairs

Governance and Stakeholder Involvement:

Johnson University and Templar School of Education maintain a Board of Advisors (BOA) that includes key KCS personnel, such as a representative from the Department of Talent and Acquisition, school principals, teachers, and other educational leaders.

- KCS representatives actively participate in the TSOE admissions process, including application review and prospective student interviews.

- BOA members also collaborate with TSOE faculty to identify emerging district needs, inform program development, and identify areas for continuous improvement.

This partnership reflects a shared commitment to preparing and placing highly skilled educators in schools where they are most needed, promoting academic success for all students across Knox County Schools.

**Prompt
2**

Describe the strategies and actions in place to co-select clinical educators and collaborate to prepare, evaluate, and support high-quality clinical educators, both provider and school-based, who demonstrate a positive impact on candidates' development and pre-k-12 students. *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

Selection of Clinical Mentor:

Clinical mentors are selected collaboratively by KCS principals and the Director of Clinical Placements. Candidates must meet the following criteria, in alignment with Tennessee State Board policy:

a minimum of three years of teaching experience; an active teaching license with an endorsement in the content area or a closely related field where mentoring will occur; a high level of effectiveness rating from the previous academic year; a demonstrated commitment to supporting the development of interns and student teachers.

In addition, clinical mentors agree: to provide consistent guidance and feedback to interns/student teachers; conduct at least one informal observation using the TEAM rubric; and fulfill the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Templar School of Education (TSOE) Intern/Student Teaching Handbook. Prior to beginning their mentorship, clinical mentors will review the TSOE Handbook in collaboration with KCS staff to ensure clarity on expectations. Once mentors are assigned, clinical supervisors will conduct an in-depth review of the handbook with them to reinforce understanding and alignment with program goals. Clinical mentors will also participate in the revised Mentor Modules, which is a collaboration with the TDOE and CEEDAR.

Selection of Clinical Supervisors:

Clinical supervisors play a critical role in the success of clinical placements. Candidates must: hold a minimum of a master's degree; have at least 10 years of experience in teaching and/or school administration; be certified in the TEAM evaluation system; commit to the expectations detailed in the TSOE Intern/Student Teaching Handbook. KCS (Knox County Schools) staff review and provide input on the roles and responsibilities of clinical supervisors, ensuring alignment with district expectations.

Preparation and Training of Clinical Educators:

The preparation of clinical mentors and supervisors is a collaborative effort between EPP faculty and KCS staff. Training includes the following topics:

- The approved EPP evaluation model; educator disposition assessments (EDA); providing effective feedback to interns/student teachers; communication and professional expectations; TDOE and InTASC standards.

Following the initial training, clinical mentors and supervisors meet to discuss the unique needs of their assigned intern/student teacher. This meeting provides an opportunity to clarify expectations and establish a shared plan for support.

Ongoing Communication and Support:

To foster ongoing support and alignment: Clinical mentors and supervisors will meet bi-weekly to monitor intern/student teacher progress; supervisors will provide ongoing support and respond to mentor needs; supervisors will also collaborate weekly following seminar sessions to identify common trends or areas in need of additional support or training; feedback surveys will inform the development of timely and relevant professional learning for clinical educators.

Clinical mentors and supervisors will complete a satisfaction survey regarding the implementation of their roles. Data from evaluations and surveys will be reviewed collaboratively with KCS principals and the KCS Human Resources Department to inform ongoing program improvements.

Role of Principals:

Principals play a key role in supporting clinical placements. They receive and review the TSOE Intern/Student Teaching Handbook alongside the placement coordinator. Their responsibilities include:

Understanding and reinforcing expectations for each intern/student teacher; supporting interns/student teachers throughout their placement; participating in training sessions to clarify their role and expectations.

**Prompt
3**

Describe the design and implementation of clinical experiences, utilizing various modalities, of sufficient depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration to ensure candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness and positive impact on pre-k-12 students (For instructional leader programs, ensure how clinical experiences allow opportunities for candidates to practice applications of content knowledge and skills.). *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

The Templar School of Education's Graduate Placement Coordinator and Undergraduate Field Experience Coordinator work closely with partner school districts (KCS) to collaboratively place students in mutually agreed-upon clinical experiences. These experiences are intentionally designed to allow teacher candidates to apply knowledge from their methods courses directly in classroom settings during their placements.

Clinical supervisors receive a comprehensive handbook and training to guide them in supporting teacher candidates. In addition, Educator Preparation Program (EPP) supervisors regularly visit classrooms to provide support to both the candidates and their mentor teachers.

Undergraduate clinical experiences begin as early as the first year, starting with a general school observation course. In this initial experience, students observe classrooms in four different schools. The goal is to familiarize them with local school environments, routines, teaching practices, classroom management strategies, and the physical setup of classrooms.

From the second through fourth years, candidates complete one clinical placement per semester. Each placement is tied to a specific course and builds upon prior knowledge. Concurrent coursework focuses on content-specific pedagogy, lesson planning and preparation, and opportunities for targeted feedback from School of Education and KCS faculty. While the duration of placements may vary, candidates typically spend one day per week in the classroom for approximately ten weeks per experience (30-40 total hours).

Throughout each placement, clinical mentors complete an Educator Disposition Assessment (EDA) for each teacher candidate. This data is analyzed both individually and collectively to ensure candidates are developing effectiveness and demonstrating a positive impact on PreK-12 students.

Field experiences are intentionally aligned with methods courses, and schools are selected to address student needs in targeted content areas. Templar School of Education candidates observe and engage in placements across eight to ten KCS schools, gaining valuable exposure to varied classroom settings and student populations. Candidates are required to complete at least one placement in a Title I school and one placement in an ESL classroom.

In the fifth year, candidates pursue a full-year teaching internship while earning a master's degree. During the internship year, candidates complete three distinct placements. Data—including TEAM evaluations, clinical mentor feedback, and EDA results—is collected multiple times throughout the year to monitor and support candidate growth.

The clinical experiences are structured to provide depth, breadth, diversity, coherence, and duration. They are carefully sequenced and aligned with methods courses to support the continuous development of candidates' instructional and classroom management skills. These experiences provide opportunities for teacher candidates to:

- Plan and deliver instruction to individuals, small groups, and whole classes
- Administer and analyze student assessments
- Apply pedagogical models appropriate to diverse student needs
- Receive ongoing, constructive feedback from clinical educators

Overall, the Templar School of Education's clinical experiences are designed to prepare candidates to demonstrate instructional effectiveness and make a meaningful, positive impact on PreK-12 student learning.

Prompt 4 Describe the process partners use in the program design, evaluation, and decision-making for continuous improvement. *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

The School of Education (TSOE) at Johnson University, in collaboration with Knox County Schools (KCS), has established a set of mutually agreed-upon key assessments, transition points, and exit requirements that guide teacher candidates from admission through licensure and beyond. The process is outlined below:

Initial Stage (Years 1 and 2) Admission to Johnson University: Candidates are admitted to Johnson University with a minimum ACT score of 21. During this time, students complete core curriculum courses and gain early exposure to the teaching profession. Year 1: Introductory Observation Course-Students participate in a school observation course, visiting and researching four schools. This early field experience familiarizes them with classroom environments, teaching practices, and school culture. Year 2: Background Checks-Before entering any KCS school for clinical experiences, all students must complete fingerprinting and a background check.

Introduction to Teaching Course- This course includes a supervised clinical experience where candidates implement TEAM-aligned lesson plans. Candidates receive immediate, structured feedback from TSOE faculty.

Mid-Point Assessment (End of Year 2)- Application to TSOE- At the conclusion of Year 2, students formally apply to the Templar School of Education. Application requirements include minimum 2.75 GPA, an ACT of 21/SAT of 1080 or passing Praxis Core (Praxis I) scores, faculty and professional references, a professional portfolio, and an interview with TSOE faculty and a KCS representative. Admission Review- A selection committee, comprised of TSOE faculty and a KCS representative, reviews applications and assessment data to make admission decisions.

Coursework Phase (Years 3 and 4): Transition to Education-Specific Coursework; Upon acceptance, candidates begin taking education-focused courses, including content-specific methods courses paired with clinical experiences.

Key Assessments- Peer and professor feedback on practice lessons, evaluations from clinical mentors, continuous reflection and academic performance in coursework

Undergraduate Graduation Requirements-Candidates earn a BA/BS in Interdisciplinary Studies and must: apply to the Master of Arts in Holistic Education (MAHE) program, interview with the graduate placement committee (TSOE faculty), maintain a 3.0 GPA and earn at least a B- in all teacher education methods courses, and successfully pass the state-required licensure assessment tests.

Pre-Internship Requirements- Prior to beginning the internship, candidates complete additional drug screening and updated FBI/TBI background checks.

Graduate Year: Internship and Advanced Coursework- The graduate year includes a year-long internship in a KCS school. Candidates complete three clinical placements and engage in ongoing coursework.

Seminars and Workshops- Weekly seminars and professional development workshops are led by TSOE faculty, KCS representatives, and educational experts. Topics include special education practices, resume and interview skills, working with English Language Learners (ELL), managing challenging behaviors, and project-based learning.

Graduation and Licensure- To graduate and obtain licensure, candidates must: complete the approved EPP evaluation model which includes multiple TEAM classroom observations and evaluations, engage in weekly graduate seminars, and demonstrate proficiency on EDA.

Post-Graduation Assessment and Program Improvement- First- and third-year surveys are distributed to program completers and their employers to gather longitudinal feedback. Data Tracking and Analysis- The Assessment Coordinator monitors TVAAS data of program completers using the TNAtlas and Via data systems. TSOE faculty review and analyze this data during Data Team meetings to inform continuous program improvement. Data portfolios are created and distributed to principals and clinical mentors. Stakeholder feedback is solicited to inform decisions and drive continuous improvement. Deans Newsletter will be used for sharing data. Shared Key assessments: Professional licensure assessment scores, TVAAS scores, TDOE EPP Report Card, Teacher pipeline needs and KCS focus areas. These discussions and analyses ensure that the TSOE-KCS partnership remains data-driven, responsive to local needs, and focused on preparing effective teachers who positively impact PreK12 student learning.

Prompt 5 Describe how partners will collaborate and make decisions to ensure candidate preparation is inclusive of LEA curricular content and materials. *NOTE: Responses should not exceed one page per prompt.*

Johnson University (JU) faculty work in close partnership with Knox County Schools (KCS) supervisory staff to ensure that teacher candidates are well-prepared to implement local education agency (LEA) curricular content and instructional materials. This collaboration ensures strong alignment between candidate preparation and the instructional expectations of KCS.

To support this alignment, JU faculty participate in district-provided professional development, including training on High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) and other KCS-led initiatives. Additionally, Johnson University has adopted and purchased the same HQIM resources used by KCS. This allows candidates to gain familiarity with the district's instructional materials and practice using them with fidelity in peer teaching settings before applying them in clinical placements. Johnson University faculty also participates with KCS in the Literacy and other trainings provided by the state.

TSoE (Templar School of Education) faculty collaborate with KCS curriculum supervisors to ensure coursework and field experiences reflect current district practices. This coordination guarantees that candidates are trained to use district-approved materials effectively and consistently.

During clinical placements, candidates receive structured feedback from mentors and EPP supervisors on their use of KCS curricular materials. Reflections, lesson plans, preparation protocols, and instructional delivery are all reviewed to support candidate growth and alignment with district expectations. Candidates are also required to reflect on their use of KCS materials and receive targeted feedback to improve instructional practices.

During the internship/student teaching year, clinical candidates participate in all KCS professional development activities alongside practicing teachers. This immersion deepens their understanding of district initiatives and instructional strategies.

Furthermore, KCS instructional supervisors and academic coaches frequently serve as guest speakers in methods courses, sharing current district practices and expectations. KCS staff also serve as adjunct professors, further strengthening the integration of LEA content into candidate preparation.

Primary Partnership Outcomes	As partners work together to develop and implement the primary partnership agreement, describe the desired EPP and LEA short-term and long-term outcomes of the partnership agreement. Include a timeline if applicable.
	The Educator Preparation Provider (JU) and Partnering School System (KCS) are committed to a collaborative partnership designed to achieve shared short-term and long-term goals that support teacher candidate development and address district talent needs. Short-Term Goals Recruit High-Quality Candidates: Intentionally recruit and support teacher candidates, including those from diverse backgrounds, to reflect the diversity of the student population and strengthen the future educator workforce. Address Areas of High Need: Provide licensure pathways in high-need subject areas to help fill teacher vacancies within KCS. Enhance Candidate Preparation: Offer rigorous, high-quality clinical experiences that prepare teacher candidates to meet the diverse academic, social, and emotional needs of all learners. Support Clinical Supervisors: Identify, train, and support a diverse pool of clinical supervisors to mentor and guide teacher candidates effectively. Additionally, the Templar School of Education (TSOE) and KCS will collaborate to create more standardized clinical experiences across all KCS sites. This effort will help ensure consistency, quality, and equity in placements for all teacher candidates. Long-Term Goals Continuous Improvement: Monitor partnership progress annually, identifying strengths and areas for growth to inform planning for the next academic year. Strategic Alignment with Talent Goals: The TSOE, as a primary EPP partner, commits to working closely with KCS in alignment with the district's Talent Strategy, which focuses on four key areas: Talent Systems and Infrastructure- Enhancing how KCS manages and supports talent initiatives. KCS Employer Brand - Improving how KCS communicates, invests in, and engages the broader community to attract and retain talent. Hiring Manager and District Supports -Strengthening support systems for hiring managers to foster successful recruitment and retention conditions. Pathway Development and Ownership- Building and maintaining a sustainable, diverse talent pipeline that reliably supplies high-quality educators to KCS schools. This partnership is grounded in mutual accountability and a shared vision to prepare teacher candidates for excellence while supporting the evolving needs of the district.

KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

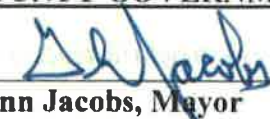
This Document is approved by the Knox County Board of Education on the 3rd day of August, 2026 as reflected in its minutes, and certified by its Chairperson.


Kristi Kristy, Chair

Date: 8/3/2026

Approved by
Knox County Board of Education
August 3, 2026

KNOX COUNTY GOVERNMENT


Glenn Jacobs, Mayor

Date: 8/7/26

KNOX COUNTY LAW DEPARTMENT

CONTRACT #: 26-480

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM


Gary Dupler, Deputy Law Director

Date: 7/28/2026