

nashvillepeer

Year in Review

2025-2026

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN

METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

VANDERBILT Peabody College

ABOUT NASHVILLEPEER

NashvillePeer engages in collaborative research with educators, families, students, and the community to inform decisions that expand opportunity, foster innovation, and uphold Metro Nashville Public Schools' vision of Every Student Known.

PARTNERSHIP TO DATE

2021
NashvillePeer Established

5
Working Groups Launched Between 2021–2024

14
Rapid Response and Small Grant Awards

17
Completed Research Studies

CURRENT ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

23
VU Faculty

21
VU Students

102
MNPS Leaders and Staff

7
NashvillePeer Staff

2025-26 SUMMARY

Deepening our core research initiatives during the 2025–26 academic year, NashvillePeer advanced collaborative research within five long-term, **cross-institutional working groups** and three short-term **rapid response studies**. Working group topic areas include postsecondary readiness, student absenteeism, educator support, school climate, and youth success and wellbeing while rapid response studies focused on pressing district needs including evaluations of MNPS' tiered intervention and teacher retention bonus programs, and how the state's definition of economically disadvantaged affects who is counted among MNPS students.



Partnership in Practice

MNPS RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

7 Research for Action

NashvillePeer engaged MNPS leaders in discussions of new research findings, their implications for decision-making, and opportunities to leverage evidence to improve outcomes.

33 School Co-Design

School teams, district leaders, and researchers partner to develop and test improvement strategies for their school contexts.

5 District Co-Design

District leaders and researchers synthesize lessons from schools and community engagement efforts to co-design strategies that drive district-wide improvement.

> **We're uncovering different ways to do our work better. I don't know that we would have landed at some of the innovative practices and strategies that we have [without NashvillePeer].**
>
> MNPS PARTNER

NASHVILLEPEER NETWORK EVENTS

Fall Working Group Convening	NashvillePeer launched the 2025–26 school year by bringing MNPS leaders and Vanderbilt researchers for a day of strategic planning and collaboration. Participants reflected on prior learning, identified key challenges, established goals for the year ahead, and planned research activities aligned with district priorities.
Annual Research Symposium	More than 100 MNPS leaders, community partners, and Vanderbilt scholars gathered for the annual NashvillePeer Symposium to explore findings from working groups and rapid response studies.
Global Scholars Discussion	NashvillePeer hosted a discussion with vistiting international scholars reflecting growing global interest in partnership-based approaches to improving education systems.



Scholarship and Influence

PRESENTATIONS

Research Conference Representation

- AERA Annual Meeting (4 Presentations)
- Sociology of Education Association Annual Conference
- University Council for Educational Administration Annual Convention

Presentations to National Audiences

- National Summit on Improvement in Education
- Learning Environments Action Research Network (LEARN) Winter Symposium
- National Network of Education Research Practice Partnerships (NNERPP) Annual Forum
- Global Education Deans' Forum
- Vanderbilt Education Leadership and Policy Reunion (EdD Program)

Presentations to Local Audiences

- Vanderbilt University Policy Innovation Days
- Vanderbilt Community Engagement Symposium

PUBLICATIONS

Research Briefs

- Left Out of the Count: How Including TennCare in Tennessee's Definition of "Economic Disadvantage" Would Affect Nashville's Schools

Blog Posts

- From Research to Practice: How Co-Design Supports College and Career Readiness in MNPS Schools
- Planning with Purpose: Highlights from the 2025 Fall Convening
- Learning from the Field: How Research and District Action Are Addressing Chronic Absenteeism

Working Papers

- Ready for What? School and District Responses to State College and Career Readiness Accountability in Tennessee

Journal Acceptances

- Peabody Journal
- AERA Open

MEDIA

Vanderbilt Peabody Directors Champion Education Research on Capitol Hill

DECEMBER 9, 2025 · VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

MNPS Heads Into School Year With Improved Student Test Scores

JULY 30, 2025 · NASHVILLE SCENE

NashvillePeer Receives Grant to Study Chronic Absenteeism Across MNPS

JULY 15, 2025 · VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY