



**TCSS U** NIVERSITY

**INFORMING ADVOCATES FOR OUR SCHOOLS**

The Tuscaloosa County School System is excited to announce the return of TCSS University (TCSS U), a program designed to engage members of our community who are passionate about education, seek a deeper understanding of issues facing our schools, and want to become informed advocates for education and students in our community. Applications are being accepted for this program, now through Wednesday, September 15, 2021, at 4 pm. You will find more information about the program and application process below.

## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF TCSS U?**

To provide members of the community with an opportunity to learn more about the Tuscaloosa County School System and its operations, including instructional and administrative services.

To create a sense of pride and knowledge among program graduates, enabling them to act as informed advocates for our schools.

## **HOW WILL THE PROGRAM WORK?**

Members of the program will meet seven times. Locations for most sessions are still being finalized, but sessions will be held at various TCSS schools and facilities across our county.

Session One: Tuesday, September 28, 6 – 8 pm, TCSS Central Office

Session Two: Tuesday, October 26, 6 – 8 pm, Location To Be Announced

Session Three: Tuesday, November 9, 6 – 8 pm, Location TBA

Session Four: Tuesday, January 25, 6 – 8 pm, Location TBA

Session Five: Tuesday, February 8, 6 – 8 pm, Location TBA

Session Six: Tuesday, March 8, 6 – 8 pm, Location TBA

Session Seven: Tuesday, April 12, 6 – 8 pm, Location TBA

TCSS U Reception & Graduation: Monday, April 25, 4 – 5:30 pm, TCSS Central Office

Sessions One through Seven will focus on various aspects of our school system, and will be facilitated by TCSS leaders who work in each of these areas. Topics will include school finance, curriculum, school safety, teacher recruitment and retention, counseling, assessment and accountability, special education, transportation, facilities, child nutrition, and more. Dinner will be provided at each of the five sessions, beginning at 5:30 pm. Participants are welcome to arrive at 5:30 for dinner, but are not required to be present until the official start of the session. Sessions will begin promptly at 6 p.m., and participants may continue their dinner as the session begins.

The final session will be a Reception and Graduation at the April 25 Tuscaloosa County Board of Education meeting. In order to graduate, a program member may miss no more than one of the seven sessions.



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## **HOW MANY MEMBERS WILL BE ACCEPTED?**

Approximately 40 members.

## **WHO CAN APPLY?**

The purpose of TCSS U is to engage a wide variety of citizens, from all areas of Tuscaloosa County, who care about education in our community. This includes, but is not limited to, parents and guardians of TCSS students, educators, business professionals, community and civic leaders, members of non-profit organizations, and retired educators.

## **IS THERE A COST TO APPLY OR BE A PART OF THE PROGRAM?**

No.

## **HOW DO I APPLY?**

Applications are available at all TCSS schools. Contact your local school office for an application. You may also call (205) 758-0411 for an application. The application includes submission instructions. To be considered for the program, an applicant's completed application must be received by Monday, September 13, 2021, at 4 pm.

## **HOW WILL PROGRAM MEMBERS BE SELECTED?**

A steering committee, comprised of TCSS leaders, educators, and community members, will review applications and hold interviews. All applicants will be notified if they have been selected or not by Monday, September 20, 2021.

## **WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING?**

TCSS U will follow whatever current procedures are in place for our schools. As of the publication of this document, masks are strongly recommended, but not required, in our schools. We practice social distancing to the best extent possible in a K - 12 setting. Locations for TCSS U are being selected with social distancing in mind.

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?**

Please call (205) 758-0411 with any additional questions.



# PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The inaugural session of TCSS U was held during the 2019 - 2020 school year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, TCSS paused the program for the 2020 - 2021 school year. We are glad to reintroduce TCSS U for 2021 - 2022! Below are comments from members of the first class of TCSS U, discussing their experience with the program.

"From funding issues and curriculum to opportunities for our students and programs to support them, this program has been so helpful. The leaders of our Tuscaloosa County School System have such a large responsibility & obligation to our community that they handle with great poise and expertise! They really do care about our students and our community. I consider myself a pretty involved & educated parent, but I had NO IDEA all that goes into making our school system what it is. If you have an opportunity to attend TCSS U in the future, do it!"

- Jeremy Burrage, Parent

"Being a part of TCSS U allowed me a glimpse into the Tuscaloosa County School System on an intimate level. I have learned about great programs, innovative approaches to instruction, and have felt community and camaraderie. The district leaders/presenters have been open, honest and intentional about funding, needs and facts."

- Terri Boman, Educator & Executive Director, Tuscaloosa Education Foundation

"I like that they explain things at a level that parents can understand. For example, when they explained the Alabama State Report Card for schools, they explained the detail that goes into it, so a parent can really understand what exactly makes up a school's score. Also, I like that you get to network with other parents, and I like that the participants are leaders within their school communities, so they can take this information back and share it."

- Janice Smith, Parent & School Secretary