



Warren County Schools Principals Selected for 2024-25 Tennessee Rural Principals Network

McMinnville, Tenn., September 25, 2024 – Two Warren County Schools principals have been selected to join the 2024-25 cohort of the Tennessee Rural Principals Network (TRPN) as announced by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) today. Brandy Wilcher, Principal of Irving College Elementary, and Rex Crabtree, Principal of Eastside Elementary, are two of just 57 principals chosen from across the state for the program. This prestigious network, developed in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education and Belmont University, focuses on improving the preparation, retention, and development of school leaders in rural communities across the state.

"We are incredibly proud of Mrs. Wilcher and Mr. Crabtree for being named to the Tennessee Rural Principals Network," said Dr. Grant Swallows, Director of Schools, Warren County Schools. "Their leadership is vital to our district, and this opportunity will not only enhance their professional growth but also bring new insights that will benefit our entire community. Warren County is fortunate to have two exceptional principals representing us at the state level."

As members of the Tennessee Rural Principals Network, both Wilcher and Crabtree will have the opportunity to engage in leadership coaching, job-embedded activities, and access valuable resources tailored specifically to rural schools. This program is designed to address challenges such as limited resources, staffing shortages, and budget constraints while focusing on fostering close-knit relationships within their school communities.

Brandy Wilcher expressed her enthusiasm for the opportunity, saying, "I'm delighted to be part of the Tennessee Rural Principals Network and to have the chance to connect with fellow rural school leaders from across the state. At Irving College, we're fortunate to have close-knit relationships with our students, parents, and community, but like many rural schools, we face unique challenges such as limited resources and staffing. I'm looking forward to learning from other principals about their successes, sharing what's working well for us, and exploring creative solutions to the common challenges we face in rural education."

Rex Crabtree shared similar sentiments, highlighting the benefits of working in a rural school, stating, "I'm very excited for this opportunity to work and meet with fellow principals across the state who work in schools similar in size to Eastside. Working as a principal in a rural school is such a blessing because we get to know our students well in smaller class sizes, we get to know our parents well over the years, and we actively work in the communities where we live."

He added, "The struggles of being a principal in a rural school are unique with budgets and the amount of teachers available for key positions. I love reaching out to the principals in our county to discuss ways they are succeeding and to get advice. Being a fellow in the Tennessee Rural

Principals Network will allow me to reach out to other leaders across the state to see what they are doing well and to give advice to others for things that we are doing well at Eastside."

Launched in 2018, the Tennessee Rural Principals Network continues to support rural school leaders by focusing on high-quality instruction, educator recruitment and retention, and fostering collaboration across districts.

About Warren County Schools:

Warren County Schools is dedicated to providing a supportive and challenging educational environment that fosters academic excellence and prepares students for future success. Through a commitment to innovation, community engagement, and the professional growth of our educators, Warren County Schools strives to be a leader in education both locally and statewide.

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