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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Educators in West Tennessee Receive $35,550 in Grants from Leaders Education Foundation

JACKSON, Tenn. (October 27, 2026) – Leaders Education Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, gave $35,550 to educators in West Tennessee schools for their L.E.A.D.S. Grants. These grants cover Classroom Grants, Teacher Appreciation Grants, and Professional Development/Certification Grants.

"Educators play a vital role in shaping future generations," said Leigh Anne Bentley, President of Leaders Education Foundation. "L.E.A.D.S. Grants help remove barriers for teachers, whether they are creating hands-on learning experiences, celebrating colleagues, or advancing their education. We are honored to empower educators to excel in their classrooms and professions while making a lasting difference for their students and communities."

The reception took place at Union University's Ethos Forum, where the Foundation held a check presentation for recipients to recognize their impact. In 2026, there are 42 recipients of L.E.A.D.S. Grants. The recipients of the Classroom Grants shared videos of what projects they wanted to do with the grants and were voted on by the public through Leaders Education Foundation's Facebook page. Their videos reached over 150,000 people, as well as over 17,500 interactions total. Teacher Appreciation Grants were $500 each, and recipients can use them for a celebration day for teachers, classroom supplies, or other materials. Professional Development/Certification Grants are for recipients who want to further their own education, so they can help improve the teaching skills that they can apply to their classrooms. These grants were $1,000 each.

Recipients of the L.E.A.D.S. Classroom Grants include:

- Chantel Barnes, North Side High School
- Hannah Bogue, East Elementary School
- Sharrell Bray, Denmark Elementary School
- Hannah Butler, Trenton Rosenwald Middle School
- Becky Clark, Alamo City School
- Sharon Clark, Sunny Hill Intermediate School
- Karen Danter, Thelma Barker Elementary

- Samantha Ellis, South Gibson County Elementary School
- Leah Gray, Freed-Hardeman University
- Amy Groves, Jackson Christian School
- Sandy Hodges, Peabody High School
- Whitney Hogg, Rose Hill School
- Samantha Hutcherson, Ripley Elementary School
- Jamaica Kirby, Haywood Elementary School
- Susan Lankford, Freed-Hardeman University
- Claire Layman, South Gibson County Elementary School
- Brittany Lewis, East Chester Elementary School
- Shanice Martin, Jackson Career & Technology School
- Jasmin Parks, Denmark Elementary School
- Shereka Phinnessee, Parkview Prep Academy
- Jeffrey Sartain, Bolivar Central High School
- Wendy Tate, Stigall Primary School
- Denise Tucker, Arlington Elementary School
- Angela Walden, Thelma Barker Elementary
- Angela Yopp, Jackson Central Merry Middle High School

Recipients of the L.E.A.D.S. Teacher Appreciation Grants include:

- Adrian Anderson, Libertas School of Memphis
- Chontel Bridgeman, North Parkway Middle School
- Vicki Crossno, Huntingdon Primary School
- Brittanie Doaks, Northeast Middle School
- Angelia Haltom, Chester County High School
- DeShadrian Henson, Rose Hill School
- Dr. Jody Hinson, Rutherford School
- Jeanna Rice, Thelma Barker Elementary School
- Debbie Sheehan, Stigall Primary School
- Xavier Taylor, Liberty Tech High School

Recipients of the L.E.A.D.S. Professional Development/Certification Grants include:

- Laura Carter, Trenton Elementary School
- Matthew Davis, Collegiate School of Memphis
- Nathan Ganucheau, Middleton High School
- Jessica Lawson, Trenton Elementary School
- A'Laseyunna Ragland, Halls Elementary School
- Janet Sweeney, South Elementary School
- Joy Whetstone, Jackson Academic Steam Academy

The application period for L.E.A.D.S. Grants opens every July. To apply, visit leadersgives.org/grants.

To learn more about Leaders Education Foundation, become a Foundation member, or Give Forward, visit leadersgives.org.

About Leaders Education Foundation

Leaders Education Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in West Tenn., established in 2019. The Foundation brings together community-minded citizens, members, and organizations to make lives better, together. It invests back into its community through scholarships, grants, and additional resources. These resources provide educational opportunities and promote workforce development, lifelong learning, and training for students, teachers, and communities. For more information about Leaders Education Foundation, to become a member, or to Give Forward, please visit their website, leadersgives.org.

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