

## Great Opportunity for Educational Assistants

Franklin County Schools has just become aware of a great opportunity for some of our educational assistants to become properly licensed teachers at no cost. The funding for this very unique program comes initially from the federal government to the state, and then to University of Tennessee – Southern (UTS). The goal is to increase the number of properly licensed teachers, by making it feasible for full-time educational assistants to become teachers.

Franklin County Schools has just signed an agreement to work with UTS, formerly Martin College in Pulaski, in this endeavor; UTS will serve as the required Educator Preparation program (EPP) for licensure.

Educational assistants who qualify for this program can continue to work full-time and enroll with UTS to obtain the required Bachelor's Degree and a teaching license. This will be at no cost to the qualifying assistants and the program is to be completed in two (2) years. The areas of endorsement that are currently available are SPED Interventionist K-8 and Elementary Education K-5.

To qualify for this unique opportunity – the educational assistant must be employed as a full-time educational assistant by Franklin County Schools and

- Have already earned an Associate Degree (in any field) or an equivalent number of hours; and
- Must be accepted for admission into the Teacher Education Program at UTS
  - Requirements include minimum GPA of 2.75 (Associate degree or 60 hours) and
  - ACT score of 21.

The school system's commitment to this program is to provide (name) a mentor for each educational assistant enrolled in the program; the school system will pay the assigned mentors \$2000 to work with the participating educational assistants. The participating educational assistant will do the required 'student teaching' in the classroom of the mentor.

Additionally, the educational assistant's pay will increase \$.50 an hour at the end of each semester as the educational assistant works through the program.

Again, at the completion of this unique program, the educational assistant will have a license to teach (again the only areas currently available are SPED Interventionist K-8, and Elementary Education K-5). With the license, the educational assistant is qualified to apply for any open teaching position for which he or she is qualified.

This program is initially scheduled to begin in January of 2023. We hope to have another group to begin in August of 2023.

If you are interested, I encourage you to contact Sandra Stewart ([sandra.stewart@fcstn.net](mailto:sandra.stewart@fcstn.net)); she is serving as a liaison between FCS and UTS in this endeavor.