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| A picture containing logo  Description automatically generated | **Media Contact:** Ryan Poe  901-268-5074  rpoe@memphischamber.com |

**Memphis companies to host 20 teacher externs this summer**  
*Two-week Chamber program strengthens classroom-community connections*

* Over summer break, 20 high school teachers will spend two-weeks working at one of 19 companies as part of the Greater Memphis Chamber’s 2023 Teacher Externship Program.
* Teacher externs will shadow company employees, take facilities tours, and participate in hands-on activities designed to give them a deeper understanding of workforce needs.
* Teachers to receive a stipend of $2,500 and a $200 gift card for classroom supplies.

**MEMPHIS, Tenn. (Thursday, June 8, 2023) –** With schools out for summer break, the Greater Memphis Chamber today begins embedding 20 local high school teachers at 19 businesses for two weeks to strengthen connections between classrooms and companies as part of its Teacher Externship Program.

The popular program, which has grown from four teacher externs at three host businesses during its pilot year in 2022, gives teacher externs a $2,500 stipend, a $200 gift card for classroom supplies, and a deeper understanding of job opportunities and workforce needs that they can share with their students.

“We launched the Teacher Externship Program last year to help prepare our students, teachers, schools, and companies for the historic job growth we’re seeing across Greater Memphis,” said Ted Townsend, president and CEO of the Chamber. “Today, our region has more jobs than ever before and a record number of jobs in the pipeline, mostly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This program helps teachers empower their students to make the career decisions that are right for them.”

The hope is that the program will increase the number of students receiving degrees or certifications in STEM-related fields. In its [Prosper Memphis 2030 strategic plan](https://blog.memphischamber.com/chamber-unveils-growth-plan-prosper-memphis-2030), the Chamber set a goal of awarding 20,000 degrees/certificates per year, with a minority participation goal of 45%, by the end of 2030.

Teacher externs were chosen in a competitive application process and placed with a company that mirrors their subject areas. Over the course of two weeks (64 hours) between now and the end of July, they will participate in job shadowing, facilities tours, and other hands-on, job-related activities.

“This experience helped me see the correlation of what I am teaching and what businesses use in today's world,” said Power Center Academy teacher Raven Lomax, who participated in the externship program in 2022. “I have taken a lot of notes on what I can do more and differently in my classroom. This experience also exposed me to different platforms I would like to teach within my lessons which will prepare my students to be career or college ready when they graduate.”

The following teacher externs are participating in the program in 2023:

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| * Audrey Cummings (Collierville) * Randy Forrester (Germantown) * Morgan Wiley, Power Center Academy * Bria Bacchus, Whitehaven (MSCS) * Jimmie McKenzie, Trevezant CTC (MSCS) * Freda Fields, Bolton AgriSTEM High (MSCS) * Jennifer Sims, Central High (MSCS) * Joi Rhodes, East High (MSCS) * Tracy Thomas, Trevezant CTC (MSCS) * Jacqueline Hicks (MSCS) | * Allen Savage, MASE High School * Megan Wallace (Germantown) * Dequilah Brandon, Melrose High (MSCS) * Hershel Davis, Bluff City High (Greendot) * Tierney Fondren, Craigmont High (MSCS) * Erica Gardner, Whitehaven High (MSCS) * Jasmine Williams, Melrose High (MSCS) * Patrick Shipp, Medical District High (MSCS) * Marcus Watson, Kingsbury High (MSCS) * Monica Thomas, Houston High (Germantown) |

The following companies have signed up to host a teacher extern in 2023:

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| * Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare * Lehman Roberts * Transnetyx * I-Bank * JM Smuckers * Nike * Cigna * Engineered Medical Systems * The Redwing Group * The ProGeny Place | * Regional One * Peabody Hotel * Charles River Laboraties * Turner Construction * Bryce * MLGW * Dunavant * Youdle * College Rover |

“Teachers are the front door to the workforce,” said Amity Schuyler, chief innovation officer and senior vice president of Workforce Development for the Chamber. “Our companies value and understand the teacher’s role in shaping student career pathways and see the potential for this program to accelerate a student’s awareness of the opportunities in our region. This is why we’ve grown from three companies last year to 19 this year. As Ford’s BlueOval City and other huge projects come online, our businesses are leading from the front in career preparation, which is one of the most exciting developments in our education ecosystem in decades.”

Companies pay $3,500 per extern, which includes the stipend, classroom gift card, technical support to screen and match the right teacher to the right company, and help crafting the externship experience.

For more about the Chamber’s Teacher Externship Program, visit [MemphisChamber.com/Externs](https://memphischamber.com/externs/).

***About the Greater Memphis Chamber:*** *One of Memphis’ oldest institutions, dating back to 1838, the Greater Memphis Chamber is a privately funded nonprofit that serves as the region’s lead economic development organization and the “Voice of Memphis Business” on local, state, and national issues. The Chamber’s mission is to relentlessly pursue prosperity for all — through economic and workforce development, pro-growth advocacy, and by providing support and resources to its investors, which include many of the region’s largest employers. For more information about the Chamber, visit* [*memphischamber.com*](file:///C:\Users\rpoe\Desktop\www.memphischamber.com) *and* [*memphismoves.com*](https://memphismoves.com/)*. Also, follow the Chamber on* [*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/memphischamber)*,* [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/memphischamber)*,* [*LinkedIn*](https://www.linkedin.com/company/83560) *and* [*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/memphischamber/)*, and sign up for its weekly newsletter,* [*Memphis Fourword*](https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/uQL7BSu?source_id=d1b09dc9-c5c6-468a-803d-9f8f7d3b08eb&source_type=em&c=poGe9f2ekl9acrR-Omg8jezlGh8BmWaoebgrgca2jedp5npJcs4FKQ==)*.*