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College of Education
TENNESSEE TECH

Dean's Quarterly Update
March 2023

What is the Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School?
A Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® Partner

Since 2019, the **Elinor Ross CDF Freedom School** coordinated by the College of Education, in partnership with the Children's Defense Fund, has **served dozens of children and their families** through this free six-week summer literacy and cultural enrichment program. *Scheduled during June and July, the school is available to Putnam County children, 1st through 5th grade, whose families qualify for free/reduced lunch programs.*

Named for the late Professor Elinor Ross, a tireless champion of education, reading, and literacy for learners of all ages, the Freedom School provides a host of engaging and interactive learning experiences in the arts, sciences, fitness, reading/literacy activities, weekly field trips to a variety of venues, and family-specific dinners and events. Participants (referred to as Scholars) are also given free age-appropriate literature to take home for their personal libraries.

Professor Janet Kesterson Isbell, who spearheaded the CDF partnership and served as the executive director for three years, has passed the torch to her colleague Associate Professor Amber Spears who has been an integral part of the program since its inception.

"I'm really looking forward to the summer, but it's a bit daunting to step into the roll as executive director of this amazing program. However, we have such a great foundation on which to build and continue to provide unique and diverse learning opportunities for our Scholars. Plus, the family engagement/intergenerational element of the program really broadens and strengthens the experiences."
~ Amber Spears, Executive Director and Associate Professor of Literacy

To learn more about the Ross CDF Freedom School, please visit www.tntech.edu/freedomschool or email freedomschool@tntech.edu.
~ Lisa Zagumny, Dean / College of Education

Ross Freedom School Scholars

Class of 2022

Amber Spears, Executive Director

children's defense fund
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