



Building On Strength

# Excellence For All Children



## Knox County School Board Goals:

- Increase Student Achievement
- Improve Recruiting and Retention of all Knox County Personnel
- Increase Parental and Community Involvement

## Knox County School Board Mission:

The Knox County Board of Education, as the governing body for the school system, evaluates needs, sets policy, allocates resources and implements strategies to ensure all students have access to a quality education.

## Knox County Schools Vision:

*The Knox County Schools will be a system where all students achieve at high levels and every school is a school of distinction. Children will begin their education at an early age, and high quality instruction, rigorous curriculum, and high standards will permeate the educational landscape from early education to graduation.*

*Innovation and creativity will be the hallmarks of our school district: in teaching, in management and particularly in student learning. In short, we envision a future where we will achieve academic excellence for all of our children. To achieve this vision, we must address our culture, our priorities and our practices in five inter-related areas: students, educators, parents and community, infrastructure, and accountability.*

## Knox County Schools Strategic Goals:

- Focus on the student to ensure they excel academically and are prepared for life beyond the classroom
- Recruit, select, induct, develop, support, promote, compensate and retain effective educators
- Engage parents and community in a meaningful way to support student learning
- Build the infrastructure to enable and support student learning and district goals
- Ensure that all adults are focused on achieving results for children (accountability)





# Plan Summary

In December of 2008, the Knox County Schools introduced a vision for the future of its schools to the community. This vision, “Building on Strength: Excellence for all Children,” focused on several critical areas – **Students, Parents & Community, and Educators** – and two overarching components that undergird the core academic work that must be done to achieve the vision: **Infrastructure and Accountability**.

In 2009, the Board of Education adopted a Five Year Strategic Plan to achieve excellence for all students. In keeping with the vision for the future, the plan has four goals: Focus on the Children, Engaged Parents & Community, Effective Educators, and Infrastructure – Enabling Student Learning. Measures for accountability are woven throughout this plan.

**Goal 1** speaks to universally high standards and expectations, ensuring that each individual student has access to outstanding classroom instruction, creating multiple pathways to successful graduation, and expanding opportunities for challenging coursework and access to learning 21st Century skills. Goal 1 also addresses the importance of beginning each student’s academic life with a strong foundation and how the district can help contribute to developing the whole child. Special attention will be directed to supporting high needs schools and ensuring that each child receives strong student supports.

**Goal 2** is focused on effective educators and our responsibility to recruit, select, induct, develop, support, promote, compensate, and retain personnel with a focus on quality and instructional excellence. The KCS will be more deliberate in the development of its principal and teacher pipelines in order to ensure strong leadership and high quality instruction at each school. Adequate support will be provided to teachers and principals in order for them to effectively do their jobs.

**Goal 3** concerns the role of parents and the community in achieving our vision. The KCS acknowledges that these stakeholders are important players in supporting the education of all students and that we must build family educational efficacy and coordinate focused district partnerships in order to make that happen. The district plans to fully implement “Family Friendly Schools” and communicate more effectively with parents and the community in order to engage them in the daily lives of students. Collaborative partnerships with the community, including higher education, will help us achieve the strategic initiatives set out in this plan.

**Goal 4** addresses the infrastructure necessary to support the Knox County Schools core mission of advancing student academic development and achievement, including the effective management of financial resources that will be essential to achieving our educational goals. In order to achieve this mission, the KCS will leverage its functions and resources to operate efficiently, effectively, and professionally, ensure a safe, healthy, inviting learning environment for all students, and base our actions on sound data and accurate, relevant information.



## Overview

In July 2009, the Knox County Board of Education adopted the five year strategic plan for the Knox County Schools as proposed by the Superintendent of Schools. The first year of implementation was the 2009-2010 school year. This report is the inaugural report on the strategic plan, *“Building on Strength: Excellence for All Children.”* It summarizes the progress within each of the four goal areas: Focus on the Student, Effective Educators, Engaged Parents and Community, and Infrastructure – Enabling Student Learning, that are outlined in the plan. Accountability measures are incorporated throughout the plan to ensure that all staff remain focused on achieving results for children.

The 2009-2010 school year was the first year that schools and school systems in Tennessee were subject to higher achievement standards adopted by the state in February 2010. While this is a much needed action to bring Tennessee’s educational standards and expectations more in line with national standards, the short-term effect is that schools will appear to be performing at lower levels than before as they move to meet the new standards. Nonetheless, the Knox County Schools marked some significant achievements when the state report cards and performance data were released in

### What is

# 100/90/90/90?

**100%** of an entering freshman class will complete high school within four years

**90%** of those will graduate with a regular diploma

**90%** of those who graduate with a regular diploma will have taken the ACT exam

**90%** of those who have taken the ACT will have scored a composite 21 or higher

January 2011:

A 5.2 percent increase in the district’s four year high school graduation rate to 86.6 percent (2009 graduation rate was 81.4 percent). A small part of this increase is due to a one-time methodological change, but the district’s graduation rate would still have seen a 3.4 percent increase without the adjustment.

Ten Knox County schools have moved to “good standing” under Tennessee’s accountability criteria. Overall, the Knox County Schools have six more schools in good standing in 2009-10 than in the previous year.

A number of schools have demonstrated significant improvement under Tennessee’s accountability criteria, including Austin-East Magnet High School, Beaumont Magnet, Belle Morris and Christenberry Elementary Schools, and Halls High School.

Against the district’s 100-90-90-90 goal, 88.3 percent of entering freshmen completed high school on time, 86.6 percent of those graduated with a regular diploma, 88.2 percent of those took the ACT, and of those 49 percent scored a composite 21 or higher. While 49 percent is a lower percentage of students scoring a 21 or higher on the ACT than years past, it is in fact a greater number of students overall because more students actually took the test. For the 2009-2010 school year, the district as a whole did not make adequate yearly progress toward meeting the No Child Left Behind benchmarks due primarily to high school graduation rates and the mathematics achievement of African-American students. In all but 14 of 87 schools, or 84 percent of Knox County schools, made their performance targets or made significant progress toward those targets. The data also points to some areas for improvement. Middle school mathematics and district-wide academic performance in certain NCLB “sub-groups” such as students with disabilities and limited English proficient students are areas that will require additional focus.

For more information on these higher standards, go to [www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org).





## What have we achieved this past year?

The Knox County Schools accomplished many things during the 2009-2010 school year in each key area. Many of the tasks set out in Year One of implementation dealt with planning for the years to come and coordinating functions at the central office to better support schools. Each task was tackled and over 90 percent of them were completed this past year. Those that are incomplete have been picked up in Year Two and will be completed along with Year 2 tasks. The following are some highlights from each goal in Year 1:

### Goal 1: Focus on the Student

- Expanded inclusion of students with disabilities into general education settings
- Student advisory model in all high schools except for one
  - Outlined plans for a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) High School to open August 2011
- Worked with Vols4STEM to plan a successful in-service for all math and science middle and high school teachers to visit area STEM businesses
- All 8th graders completed a four year plan for high school, including parent involvement
- Urban schools organizational structure redesigned and operational
- Aligned and consolidated reporting lines and organizational structures associated with various student support services programs and departments

### Goal 2: Effective Educators

- Formed the Leadership Academy at the University of Tennessee and began its first class on June 3, 2010



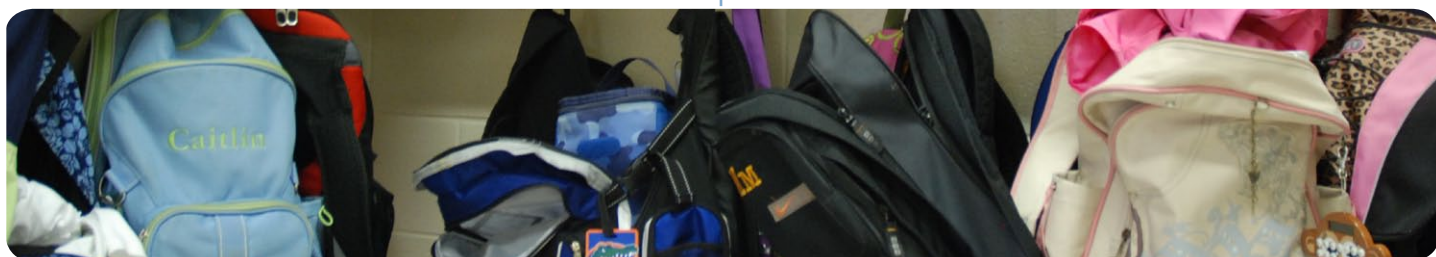
- Began work on a model for performance-based differentiated pay among teachers and principals, or “strategic compensation,” to be implemented in 2011

### Goal 3: Engaged Parents & Community

- Revived the Great Schools Partnership with a new leader and it has become a private not-for-profit organization separate from the school system
- Requirements of a system-wide volunteer clearinghouse were defined with plans to install it during the next school year.
- Established a district-wide Family and Community Engagement function to coordinate and lead family engagement efforts
- Developed a comprehensive system-wide professional development initiative to fully educate staff and administrators in the tenets of the Family Friendly Schools culture and processes

### Goal 4: Infrastructure – Enabling Student Learning

- Launched the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and made available to all schools - subsequent phases and training to continue throughout the next year
- Refined the district’s organizational structure
- Improved the school resource allocation methodology





## What have we learned from this past year and how does that affect our plans for the next year?

The first task required to implement this plan was to develop a system to monitor and report progress. An implementation tracking instrument that includes the five stages of implementation: assign, initiate, assess, design, and install, was created to accomplish this task. Each task was evaluated using these stages of implementation. The status report for each task is available in the strategic plan section of the Knox County Schools website at [www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org).



## In support of various elements of the strategic plan the Knox County Schools also marked the following achievements in 2009-2010:

- Opened the Paul L. Kelley Volunteer Academy – a non-traditional high school that is supported, in part, by the Simon Youth Foundation
- Began the expansion of TAP – the system for teacher and student advancement – to 14 additional schools
- Implemented Tennessee’s higher academic standards and the state’s more rigorous curriculum requirements
- Began the process of establishing a STEM Magnet High School
- Piloted a middle school bridge program made possible by the Great Schools Partnership for rising freshmen at risk of not being successful in high school





## What do we have to look forward to in the 2010-2011 school year and beyond?

In 2010 Tennessee was selected to receive \$501 million through the Federal Race to the Top grant. The Knox County Schools will receive \$13 million as a result, which will facilitate implementation of components of the strategic which might otherwise remain unfunded. This includes strategic compensation, expanding TAP (the Teacher Advancement Program already in four Knox County Schools), implementing formative assessments across the district and a leadership academy for aspiring principals.

The Knox County Schools also received a \$26.5 million federal grant from the Teachers Incentive Fund. This will be used to expand TAP to an additional 14 schools. TAP is a comprehensive school reform system that provides powerful opportunities for career advancement, professional growth, instructionally-focused accountability, and competitive compensation for educators. Approximately \$17.6 million of the federal grant will go directly to 14 high-needs schools for personnel costs, affecting more

than 650 teachers and 9,300 students. Remaining funds will support training, data systems, a new teacher evaluation system, and professional development.

The Great Schools Partnership also reinvented itself this year by planning to separate itself from Knox County and move to a privately funded public education foundation. A new executive director is in place with a plan to expand existing programs and pilot several new initiatives, such as e-learning, a middle school bridge program in the summer, teacher mentoring and induction, and TAP. Its mission is to serve as a “catalyst, think tank, incubator, and start-up funder for making the Knox County Schools globally competitive” remains unchanged. For more information, go to the partnership’s website at [www.great-schoolspartnership.com](http://www.great-schoolspartnership.com).



# Performance Targets

## 100/90/90/90

For the graduating class of:

	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Targets				
	2008	2009	2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2020
% of Entering Freshmen Completing high school on time	84	85	86	<b>88.3</b>	87	90	93	96	100
% of Entering Freshman graduating with a regular diploma	79	83	81	<b>86.6</b>	82	85	89	93	90
...% of those having taken the ACT exam	71	73	75	<b>88.2</b>	76	77	79	80	90
.....% of those scoring a composite 21 or higher on the exam	62	58	67	<b>49.0</b>	69	71	73	76	90

## Percentage of students...

For the school year:

	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Targets				
	2008	2009	2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2020
Successfully completing 9th grade	79	84	81	<b>85</b>	82	83	84	85	90
Scoring a composite 19 or higher on PLAN	36	36	40	<b>39</b>	44	48	52	56	80
Scoring a composite 17 or higher on EXPLORE	37	37	41	<b>42</b>	44	47	51	54	75
Completing 5th grade on track to score a composite 21 or higher on ACT	46	34	52	<b>31</b>	55	57	60	63	80

## Percentage of students...

Scoring proficient or advanced in end of course exams in:	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Targets					
	2008	2009	2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2020	
<b>U.S. History</b>	59	64	64	<b>98</b>	66	68	70	72	85	
<b>English II</b>	78	78	79	<b>70</b>	79	80	81	81	85	
<b>Biology</b>	69	69	72	<b>64</b>	73	74	76	77	85	
<b>Algebra 1</b>	51	42	56	<b>42</b>	59	62	65	68	85	
<b>Scoring proficient or advanced on TCAP Math in:</b>										
<b>Grade 5</b>	61	58	65	<b>45</b>	67	69	71	73	85	
<b>Grade 8</b>	49	49	56	<b>32</b>	60	63	66	70	90	
<b>Scoring proficient or advanced on TCAP Reading/Language Arts in:</b>										
<b>Grade 3</b>	48	48	55	<b>50</b>	58	62	65	69	90	
<b>Grade 5</b>	58	53	62	<b>55</b>	65	67	69	71	85	
<b>Grade 8</b>	63	61	67	<b>50</b>	70	72	74	76	90	
<b>Completing at least one AP or dual credit course while in high school</b>										
	29	36	29	<b>31</b>	41	45	50	54	75	

In 2009 the tests were re-normed. In 2010, the TCAP proficiency standards were increased. The new proficiency standards were estimated to be approximately equivalent to the 2008/2009 Advanced standard. The 2008 and 2009 percents are for Advanced only.

## District-wide . . .

	Actual	Actual	Target	Actual	Targets				
	2008	2009	2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2020
<b>Attendance Rate</b>	94	94	94	<b>93</b>	95	95	96	96	97
<b>% of schools with at least one year student growth in V-A scores</b>	89	69	90	<b>35</b>	91	92	93	94	100
<b>% of students with at least one year student growth in V-A scores</b>	62	56	68	<b>45</b>	72	75	78	81	100
<b>Percent of schools making AYP</b>	68	74	84	<b>80</b>	86	91	95	100	100



What do  
**YOU**  
think?

Please visit [www.knoxschools.org](http://www.knoxschools.org)  
to view the full plan.

Email us your feedback at: [strategicplan@knoxschools.org](mailto:strategicplan@knoxschools.org)

**Or send a letter to:**  
Strategic Plan Feedback  
Knox County Schools  
P.O. Box 2188, Knoxville, TN 37901

## How to Make Your Voice Heard:

- Get involved with your local school or district PTA or PTO
- Sign up at [Vols4STEM.com](http://Vols4STEM.com) to work with teachers and students needing your expertise in science, technology, engineering, and math disciplines
- Attend open houses, school board meetings, and other school forums
- Mentor students through a variety of community organizations

## KCS Leadership Team

**Dr. Jim McIntyre**

Superintendent

**Dr. Donna Wright**

Assistant Superintendent,  
Curriculum & Instruction

**Bob Thomas**

Assistant Superintendent,  
Administrative Services

**Ed Hedgepeth**

Executive Director, High Schools

**Dr. Elizabeth Alves**

Executive Director, Middle Schools

**Nancy Maland**

Executive Director, Elementary Schools

**Montina Jones**

Senior Advisor for High Needs Schools

**Becky Ashe**

Director, Curriculum & Instruction

**Ron McPherson**

Executive Director, Finance

**Dr. Kathy Sims**

Executive Director,  
Human Resources

**Gail Byard**

Executive Director,  
Information Technology

**Walter Mencer**

Administrative Assistant  
to the Superintendent

**Russ Oaks**

Chief of Staff

**Missy Massie**

Executive Director, Student Support  
Services

**Nakia Towns**

Broad Resident/Director,  
Human Capital Strategy

**Ginnae Harley**

Broad Resident/Director of Federal  
Programs

**Lizzy Carroll**

Harvard University intern

**Jessica Holman**

President, Knox County  
Education Association

**Adam Parker**

Principal, Gibbs Elementary School

**Becky Whitehead-Irvin**

Principal, Vine Middle Magnet School

**Dr. Jon Rysewyk**

Principal, Fulton High School

**Melissa Copelan**

Director of Public Affairs

**Tracey Matthews**

Family & Community  
Engagement Supervisor

**Jennifer Evans**

VP of Workforce Development  
& Education, Knoxville Chamber