



Building on Strength
Excellence
For All Children

Knox County Schools
Progress Report Year 4
Five Year Strategic Plan
February 2014



Excellence for All Children



Building on Strength Excellence For All Children



Knox County School Board Mission:

To advocate *Excellence for All Children* by serving Knox County as the governing body for public education.

Knox County School Board Core Values:

Put People First – We care about our students, families and employees and will treat them with respect and dignity.

Pursue Excellence – Exceptional teachers are the core strength of our system and provide every student the opportunity to reach their potential.

Encourage Collaboration – Our schools are stronger working together as a team and our students win when we partner effectively with families and the community.

Develop Leadership – Great leadership at every level will inspire us to overcome challenges and reach our goals.

Embrace Accountability – When we are transparent and take responsibility for results the entire community wins.

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 interrelated 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**)



Knox County Schools Progress Report Year 4 Five Year Strategic Plan

Plan Summary

In December of 2008, the Knox County Schools (KCS) 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 Focus on the Student

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 Effective Educators 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 Engaged Parents & Community

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 Infrastructure - Enabling Student Learning

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.



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Progress Toward Our Strategic Plan Objectives

Implementation

The 2012-2013 school year marked the fourth year of implementation of the Knox County Schools (KCS) five-year strategic plan, *Excellence for All Children*. The prior three years set the trajectory for growth and improvement. Year 4 of implementation, in many ways, marked the initial harvest from the seeds of excellence planted during the prior years. The prioritization of some projects was revisited, as the district looked forward to the development of a new strategic plan during the 2013-14 school year. Overall, 86% of the year-four Strategic Plan goals were completed, with the remainder carried forward for action in Year 5. The notable results of our efforts are highlighted in the following summary.

Focus on the Student

As a result of the hard work of teachers and school leaders, implementation of the KCS Strategic Plan is significantly impacting student achievement toward unprecedented levels in many areas. Our academic results for the 2012-13 school year were predominantly positive and encouraging, as teachers and students continued to rise to the challenge of higher standards:

- For the first time since the Tennessee State Report Card began issuing grades in 2000, the Knox County Schools scored straight As in achievement for reading/language arts, math, science and social studies. The State of Tennessee posted grades of B, A, B and A for reading/language arts, math, science and social studies, respectively. Twenty-one schools posted all As in achievement versus 20 in 2012.

2013 State Report Card Grades								
Achievement				SCHOOL	Value-Added			
Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies		Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies
A	A	A	A	Knox County Schools	B	A	B	A
B	A	B	A	State of Tennessee	B	A	B	B

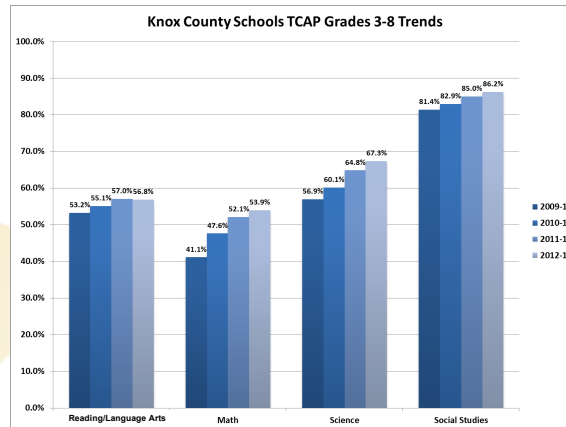
- In terms of value-added report card grades, KCS earned B, A, B and A grades for reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies, respectively. The State of Tennessee posted B, A, B and B grades, respectively. Value-added data measures student growth within a grade and subject, which demonstrates the influence the district, school, or teacher has on the students' performance. Seven schools scored all As in value-added versus five in 2012.
- Overall Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) results demonstrated broad gains across most grade-levels and subject areas:
 - Gains in proficiency in 9 of 11 key achievement measures
 - 3 of 4 TCAP subjects for grades 3-8 (math, science and social studies); essentially flat in reading/language arts.
 - 6 of 7 high school EOC exams (including English III results for the first time) Increases in proficiency in 25 of 31 reported subject and grade combinations



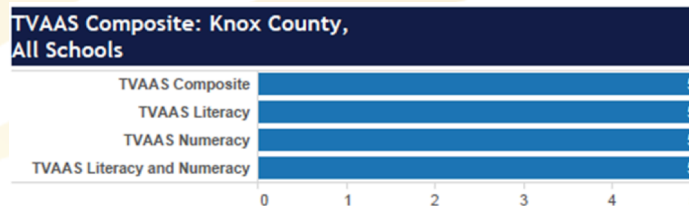
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Progress Toward Our Strategic Plan Objectives

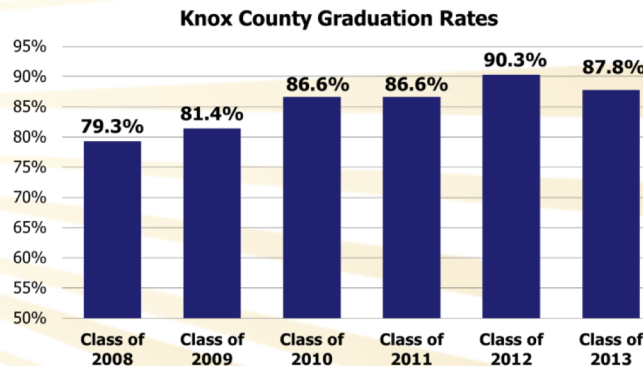
- o Increase of 2.3 percent in 3rd grade reading/language arts proficiency from 51.2 percent to 53.5 percent.



As a district, Knox County Schools achieved composite Level 5 value-added growth (the highest level) on the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS). The KCS achieved also achieved a Level 5 value-added in overall Literacy, overall Numeracy and combined Literacy and Numeracy.



- KCS's four-year high school graduation rate for the class of 2013 was 87.7 percent, compared to 90.3 percent for 2012 and 86.6 percent for 2011.



- The college and career readiness metrics for our graduates continued to show improvement versus the levels at the time of adoption of the 2009 strategic plan:
 - o The number of ACT test takers improved over the last four years from 2,591 to 3,656 or over 41%.
 - o The average composite ACT score for the class of 2013 is 20.2, outperforming the State of Tennessee at 19.5.

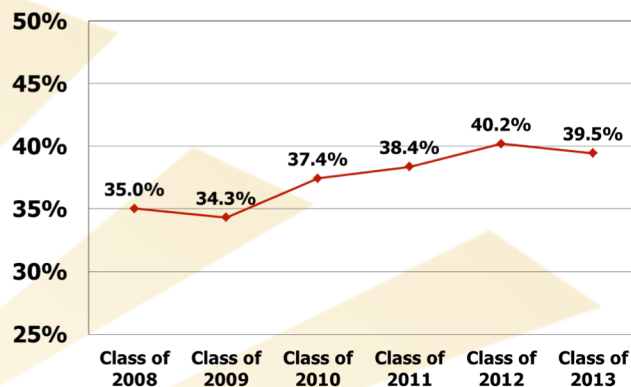


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- The number of students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses and taking the exams for college credit has increased from 1,459 to 2,230 or nearly 53%.
- With regard to the School Board's 100-90-90-90 goal, the percentage of incoming ninth graders who graduated from high school four years later with a score of 21 or better has increased from 34.3% for the class of 2009 to 39.5% for the class of 2013.

**Percent of 9th graders who graduate in 4 years
AND score a 21 or better on ACT**



Other key Strategic Plan initiatives related to our Focus on the Student also include:

- Launch of School Technology Challenge including selection of 11 schools to begin 1:1 technology pilot to enhance personalized learning environment in fall 2013.
- Establishment of partnership with Pellissippi Community College to design CTE magnet school to launch in fall 2014.
- Expansion of Early Literacy Intervention program that includes curricular and professional development strategies designed to provide additional support to struggling early readers.
- Expanded enrichment and tutoring opportunities for students across the district (robotics competition teams, ACT tutoring, AllStar tutoring, fine arts camp, etc.).

Effective Educators

Educator Compensation The KCS increased teacher base salary 4.5% over the last 18 months ending in January 2014. In addition, the district extended principal contracts to 255-days for all secondary principals, resulting in a 12.8% salary increase. The district has created several teacher leadership roles with enhanced compensation. Currently, over 500 formal teacher leader positions (coaches, professional development specialists, master teachers, mentor teachers, and lead teachers) exist in the district, providing more opportunities for career advancement beyond administration. These positions are compensated with contract extensions ranging from five to 21 days beyond the standard 200-day teacher contract, as well as with stipends ranging from \$1,200 to \$6,000 per year.



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In addition to base salary increases, the Knox County Schools also continued with the implementation of its strategic compensation initiatives. APEX (Advance, Perform, Excel) is a district-wide performance incentive program which recognizes and rewards exceptional teaching, student growth, teacher leadership and consistently strong instruction in high needs schools. In 2013, 52% of Knox County Schools' teachers and administrators in TEAM schools qualified for an APEX financial incentive of \$1,500 or \$2,000. As a result, nearly 2,000 educators earned over \$3.2 million in performance bonuses. Moreover, 99% of (or 899) teachers and administrators in the district's 18 TAP schools earned bonuses averaging \$2,100 and ranging from \$300 - \$10,000. Thus, approximately 70% of KCS educators were awarded over \$5 million in strategic compensation for their work in the 2012-13 school year.

Leadership Academy The district graduated the third cohort of Fellows (aspiring principals) of the Knox County Schools / University of Tennessee Leadership Academy in June 2013. The district also selected nine educators for the fourth cohort of Fellows. Of the 31 graduates in the first three cohorts, 15 are currently head principals, successfully leading schools in the district.

TEAM and TAP In the 2012-2013 school year, the Knox County Schools continued the implementation of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). TEAM is Tennessee's new teacher performance evaluation system that, by law, requires every teacher to be evaluated every year, and utilizes student academic outcomes and classroom observation to measure teacher effectiveness. The TAP System for Teacher Advancement also continued as a comprehensive school reform model in 18 of the district's high need schools.

Educator Supports

- Launched the first district-wide professional development conference – *Charting the COREse* – during the summer of 2012 to comprehensively prepare teachers for the transition to Common Core State Standards.
- Doubled the number of lead teachers (peer observers) to 230 in support of administrators in managing evaluation process. Provided principal coaches and mentors for instructional leadership supports.
- Created the District Lead Teacher role to support high quality implementation in TEAM schools and added an additional Executive Master teacher to support TAP schools.
- Expanded coaching support such that all elementary schools had at least one full time instructional coach, and most secondary schools had at least a half-time coach.
- Revamped instructional coaching model to support teachers through individual coaching and teams working in PLCs.

Evaluation Results

- Successfully completed over 12,300 observations and post-conferences for 4,000 educators in the Knox County Schools.
- 67% of KCS educators were rated as above or significantly above expectations (level 4 or 5) based on their TEAM/TAP summative score.
- Of 2,511 teachers with individual value-added scores, 42% earned a TVAAS evaluation composite score of level 4 or 5.

The TEAM and TAP models have helped educators in the Knox County Schools continue to make tremendous strides in student achievement and academic growth. School leaders have implemented the model with fidelity in an effort to ensure that teachers receive high quality feedback. Teachers and administrators continue to provide input via teacher talks, surveys, and other venues regarding some of the implementation challenges. The district is responding to these critiques and making adjustments to integrate best practices from the TAP System and ensure that the TEAM model continues to be a developmental, professional growth model.



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Engaged Parents and Community

The KCS strategic plan recognizes the importance of family and community engagement and support in the educational process, and places a priority on increasing opportunities to build and implement effective parent and community interaction with students and schools. To that end, the KCS has taken a number of actions designed to expand parent and community access to schools.

Community Schools

In 2012-13, the Community Schools concept was expanded to Green Magnet Math and Science Academy, Norwood and Lonsdale Elementary Schools, in addition to the original pilot school, Pond Gap Elementary. Community Schools provide additional learning opportunities for students, and engage and leverage community partners to provide or broker support services for children and families in order to support student success and neighborhood vitality. These pilot programs demonstrated such promise that the program has been expanded in the 2013-14 year and serves students at seven schools.

Principal for a Day

This program invites community and business leaders to spend dedicated time with school principals to better understand the dynamics at play in schools today. The community has demonstrated exceptional interest, as about 80 leaders have participated in each of the last two years. Their participation has led to reciprocal partnering opportunities and expanded support to schools.

Volunteer Management System

In May 2013, the KCS also completed the first full year of implementation of a web-based Volunteer Management System designed to enhance volunteer access and support to schools by increasing parent and community awareness of schools' needs. Over 450 volunteers accessed this system to review volunteer opportunities at about 30 schools in its initial year of operation. Usage trends are increasing and improvements to the system are expected to attract more school participation and, in turn, more volunteer support.

Family Resource Center

In 2012-2013, the KCS began a process to expand the scope of support provided by the Family Resource Center. The Center completed a district-wide needs assessment and is using that information to inform parental engagement and support to all schools. The Center continues to function as a resource to help parents identify and obtain support to meet family needs, while also helping individual schools build the internal capacity to help families in this manner as well.

Annual Parent Conference

In conjunction with Project GRAD, the Knox County Council PTA, the Great Schools Partnership, and Knoxville Parent Magazine, the Knox County Schools hosted its third annual district-wide Parent Conference in 2012. The conference was designed by parents, for parents and provided learning opportunities for parents about how to better support their child's educational experience. This event has annually been attended by 400-800 parents and community members. The KCS is examining ways to expand the reach of this program to include even more families and to provide parents greater access to the information provided at the event.



Knox County Schools Progress Report Year 4 Five Year Strategic Plan

Progress Toward Our Strategic Plan Objectives

Infrastructure – Enabling Student Learning

The district, while mindful of budget constraints and operational efficiency, continues to make investments in ensuring our infrastructure supports staff and students towards achieving our educational goals.

Technology Infrastructure Upgrades

The district's focus on personalized learning coincides with the advent of online student assessments, making technology supports crucial to moving forward in these areas. Technology infrastructure upgrades have been funded from general purpose funds, eRate discounts/rebates, fund balance designation, and capital improvement funds and have provided 42 schools with enhanced networks and full wireless access. Work will continue throughout the 2013-14 school year until all schools have been upgraded.

School Security

In the wake of the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, the Knox County Schools completed a security assessment of all of its facilities and committed to a greater invest in security across the district. These investments included to assigning an armed uniformed security officer to every school, establishing an access control strategy at each school and providing each school a current generation video surveillance system at every school. While some of these investments will be made over several of years, in 2013 the KCS expanded the School Security Officer force to provide each school a dedicated full time school security officer. The district also completed a security assessment of each campus and began the process of establishing a tailored access control strategy at each school. Additionally, all schools now have a video surveillance system and the process has started to upgrade the existing system to ensure all schools have a current generation video camera.

Facility Upgrades

The Knox County Schools completed construction on a new Carter Elementary School and Northshore Elementary School. Both schools opened in fall 2013. The district also lunched renovations at Shannondale Elementary, Chilhowee Elementary, in addition to establishing a new Adult Education High School facility at the Knoxville Center Mall.

Smart Spending

In the spring of 2013, the KCS was one of just four school systems in the nation to be rewarded a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to analyze the alignment of district resources to stated educational priorities. The \$1.2 million grant, with a significant local match from the Great Schools Partnership, allowed the district to begin the 18-month process of conducting a detailed analysis of district spending, return on investment and alignment with key its educational priorities. The results of this work will be incorporated in the next five-year strategic plan that is currently under development.





Knox County Schools Progress Report Year 4 Five Year Strategic Plan

Look to the Future

The Road Ahead: Knox Schools 2020

Over the past four years the Knox County Schools Strategic plan *Building on Strength: Excellence for All Children* has served to focus the district squarely on the work of providing students an excellent education and multiple pathways to achieve success. This has been extremely important and stabilizing in a time of great change in public education across the state of Tennessee. We are now fully engaged in implementing the rigorous Common Core Standards adopted by the state of Tennessee as well as preparing for the new web-based assessment system that is under development by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness College and Careers (PARCC). Our students and teachers are demonstrating an exceptional ability to meet the new higher standards and expectations, and deserve our fullest commendation for the manner in which they have undertaken this difficult work.

The KCS is currently engaged in the process of developing a follow-on strategic plan to guide the district's work through the year 2020. The *Knox Schools 2020* visioning process has engaged thousands of parents, teachers, students and other members of the community to garner insight about the community's desires and aspirations for their schools. While analysis is not complete, it is clear that all segments of the community hold high expectations for our children and our schools.

Our school system's greatest strength is our people. As we look to the future it is clear that we must invest appropriately in both our students and our staff to ensure they have the tools, the skills and the supports to be successful in meeting our high expectations.

A Time for Reflection

Having completed the fourth year of implementation, the Knox County Schools has maintained a steadfast commitment to our five-year strategic plan, *Excellence for All Children*. The plan has anchored our district in a clear vision for student success, even as we have experienced unprecedented change in the public education landscape in the state of Tennessee. With this roadmap as our guide, we have continued to improve our student outcomes and reach the higher standards that we have set for ourselves and our community.

Though it certainly has not always been an easy road to travel, the perseverance and professionalism of our teachers and staff has been the key to our tremendous results over the last few years. As such, the KCS will continue to seek ways to include teacher voice in our strategic decision-making, as well as continuing to embrace teacher leadership as a means of allowing outstanding educators to have a greater role in shaping our instructional work.

By combining the efforts of our staff with the dedication of our students and support of their families and our larger community, we will ensure that we sustain our progress and momentum into the next five-year strategic plan and beyond. Thus, as a community, we will move to the future together with ambitious educational aspirations, a deep commitment to meeting our students' learning needs, and a renewed focus on achieving our goal of *Excellence for All Children*.

Performance Targets

100/90/90/90	For the graduating class of:									
	Actual						Targets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2013	2014	2020	
% of Entering Freshmen Completing high school on time	84	85	88	87	91	88	93	96	100	
% of Entering Freshman graduating with a regular diploma	79	83	87	87	90	88	89	93	90	
...% of those having taken the ACT exam	71	73	88	93	91	93	79	80	90	
.....% of those scoring a composite 21 or higher on the exam	62	58	49	48	49	48	73	76	90	
100/90/90/90 Composite Index	35	34	37	38	40	39	51	57	73	

Percentage of students...	For the school year:									
	Actual						Targets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2013	2014	2020	
Successfully completing 9th grade	79	84	85	87	83	87	84	85	90	
Scoring a composite 19 or higher on PLAN	36	36	39	35	37	39	52	56	80	
Scoring a composite 17 or higher on EXPLORE	37	37	42	41	41	43	51	54	75	
Completing 5th grade on track to score a composite 21 or higher on ACT	46	34	31	31	29	33	60	63	80	

Percentage of students...	Actual						Targets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2013	2014	2020	
Scoring proficient or advanced in end of course exams in:										
U.S. History	59	64	98	98	97	97	70	72	85	
English II	78	78	70	70	68	69	81	81	85	
Biology	69	69	64	60	66	68	76	77	85	
Algebra 1	51	42	42	45	55	60	65	68	85	
Scoring proficient or advanced on TCAP Math in:										
Grade 5	61	58	45	56	58	57	71	73	85	
Grade 8	49	49	32	41	38	54	66	70	90	
Scoring proficient or advanced on TCAP Reading/Language Arts in:										
Grade 3	48	48	50	47	51	53	65	69	90	
Grade 5	58	53	55	60	65	60	69	71	85	
Grade 8	63	61	50	57	57	54	74	76	90	
Completing at least one AP or dual credit course while in high school	29	36	31	40	39	37	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						Targets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2013	2014	2020	
Attendance Rate	94	94	93	94	94	94	96	96	97	
% of schools with at least one year student growth in V-A scores	89	69	36	87	90	72	93	94	100	
% of students with at least one year student growth in V-A scores	62	56	45	58	64	57	78	81	100	
Percent of schools making AYP	68	74	80	57	NA	NA	95	100	100	

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