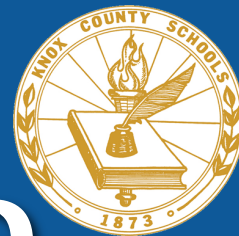


*Building on Strength*

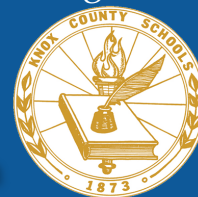


# Excellence

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**)



## 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.





## Progress Toward Our Strategic Plan Objectives

### Implementation

The 2011-2012 school year marked the third year of implementation of the Knox County Schools (KCS) five-year strategic plan, *Excellence for All Children*. The first two years established foundational elements of the plan, and the third year of implementation both solidified this foundation and enhanced and expanded key educational strategies and initiatives. Overall, 76% of the year-three Strategic Plan goals were completed, with the remainder carried forward for action in Year 4.

### Focus on the Student

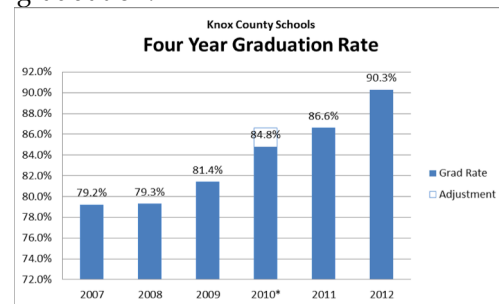
Effective implementation of the KCS Strategic Plan is clearly having a significantly positive impact on student achievement. By virtually every quantifiable indicator of student learning and success, results from the 2011-2012 school year reflect strong academic progress:

- Overall Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) scores in grades 3-8 increased in all four tested areas: Math, English/Reading, Social Studies and Science. TCAP proficiency rates in all four subject areas were higher than the state as a whole, and increased by 2 to 5 percent from the previous school year.
- For the second consecutive year, KCS grades on

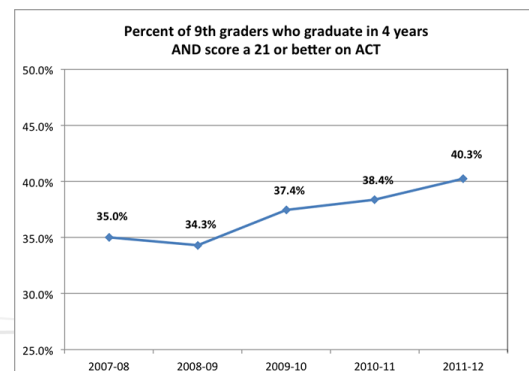
TCAP % Proficient or Advanced (2011-12)			
Subject	State	Knox County Schools	Knox Growth Over Last Year
Reading	49.9%	57.1%	1.9%
Math	47.3%	52.1%	4.5%
Science	60.5%	64.8%	4.7%
Social Studies	82.9%	84.6%	1.5%

the Tennessee Report Card were either higher or on par with the State of Tennessee in every category, and in two of eight graded areas the system increased from a "B" to an "A". The Knox County Schools report card grades compare favorably to area school systems, and to comparably sized school districts around the state. At the school level, 20 schools posted all As in achievement and 5 schools scored all As in value-added.

- KCS's four year high school graduation rate for the class of 2012 increased to 90.3 percent, an increase of 3.7 percent from 2011. Much of the significant increase in graduation rate can be attributed to strategic plan initiatives, including the impact of the Dr. Paul Kelley Volunteer Academy, now in its third year of operation as a non-traditional pathway to graduation.



- At the same time, composite ACT scores for the class of 2012 improved to 20.6, up from 20.4 in 2011, showing increased scores on each tested subject and outperforming the State of Tennessee.
- A key metric of college and career readiness is the School Board's 100-90-90-90 goal. In this regard, 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 40.2% for the class of 2012.







## Progress Toward Our Strategic Plan Objectives

Successes on other key Strategic Plan initiatives also include:

- Implementation of a robust Early Literacy Intervention program that includes curricular and professional development efforts designed to provide additional support to struggling early readers. Initial data from these interventions demonstrate marked improvements on measures of guided reading and should begin to be reflected on state assessments.
- Opening in the fall of 2011, the L&N STEM Academy magnet high school established itself as statewide model for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and immersive utilization of instructional technology.
- The International Baccalaureate Magnet Programme at West High School began its first year of implementation in 2011 and continues to be a very popular and rigorous academic opportunity.
- In 2011, the TAP System for Student and Teacher Advancement was expanded from 4 schools to 18 high-needs schools in an effort to further advance student achievement by creating support structures and incentives that maximize teacher effectiveness.



### Effective Educators

In the 2011-2012 school year, the Knox County Schools began implementation of the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM). TEAM is Tennessee's new teacher performance evaluation system that requires every teacher to be evaluated every year, and utilizes student

academic outcomes and classroom observation to measure teacher effectiveness. This is a teacher assessment model that focuses on the application of research-based, proven teaching methods and student growth. TEAM encourages and facilitates teacher reflection and professional growth.



While the new TEAM teacher evaluation system is not perfect, it represents a vast improvement over Tennessee's previous evaluation model. Moreover, the Knox County Schools has been highlighted by the Tennessee Department of Education for its robust training and support of teachers and evaluators in the new system, and our fidelity to the excellent new evaluation instrument.

The TEAM model as it has been applied in the Knox County Schools is having a significant impact on the quality of classroom instruction, and in turn on student achievement and academic growth. In just the first year of TEAM implementation the system has seen the number of teachers in the district who perform significantly above expectations increase dramatically from 27% of teachers earning Level 5 Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) scores in 2010-2011 to 36% seeing these outstanding outcomes in 2011-2012. Research indicates that teacher incentive programs coupled with strong educator professional development and support structures can have a positive impact on teaching and, therefore, student learning.



## Progress Toward Our Strategic Plan Objectives



**APEX** (Advance, Perform, Excel) is the Knox County Schools strategic compensation initiative which began in the 2011-2012 school year. This performance incentive program recognizes and rewards exceptional teaching, student growth, teacher leadership and consistently strong instruction in high needs schools. In 2012, the first year of implementation, 58% of Knox County Schools teachers qualified for APEX financial incentives of \$1,500 or \$2,000. This is a higher proportion than expected and correlates with the increase in high quality teaching and student academic results the school system experienced with the implementation of the new TEAM teacher evaluation system.



### 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 help guide this effort, the Knox County Schools has established the Parent and Community Engagement District Advisory Council (DAC). The DAC is a body designed to have parent representation and administration support from all schools in the district. While the council has not yet recognized its full

potential, the DAC is taking on a broader role in focusing and guiding the school system's family and community engagement strategies and activities.

In conjunction with Project GRAD, the Knox County Council PTA, the Great Schools Partnership, and Knoxville Parent Magazine, the Knox County Schools hosted its second annual district-wide parent conference in 2012. The conference was designed by parents for parents and provided opportunities for parents to acquire information and learn how to increase their educational effectiveness.

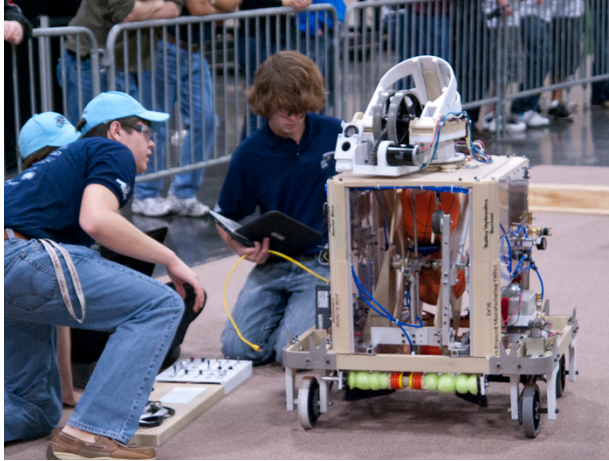
Also becoming established and widely utilized in 2011-2012, Parent University is our program designed to highlight and coordinate the ongoing educational and outreach activities for parents in the Knox County Schools and to help parents to be more effectively engaged in the educational life of their children.

In 2011-2012 the pilot program for the Community Schools concept was continued and carefully reviewed. 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. The Community Schools pilot at Pond Gap Elementary School is showing great promise as this effort has improved attendance, decreased disciplinary referrals and increased academic achievement results for participating students. Given this success, a decision has been made to expand the pilot to three additional schools, Green Magnet Math and Science Academy, Norwood and Lonsdale Elementary Schools in 2102-2013.





## The Challenges



### Infrastructure – Enabling Student Learning

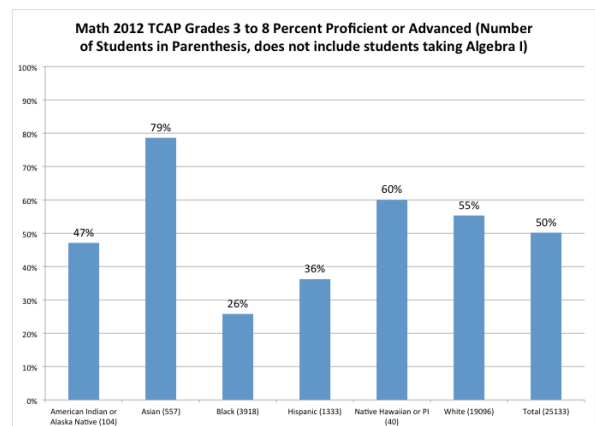
While continuing to maintain a lean central administrative and support structure, the district has implemented processes to better support educators and students, and to enable parents to be better informed and engaged.

- The Education Management Information System (EMIS) has been expanded to include a “dashboard” function, and a simple “homeroom” report page that provides teachers with clear and immediate access to the most critical student data. EMIS also has additional financial and personnel related information that made it possible to conduct a focused “return on investment” analysis to inform the budget development process.
- A telephone and text notification system has been implemented to inform parents, in near real time, of significant transportation delays and changes.
- The Board of Education has also committed \$13.8 million of fund balance resources to improve and expand school facilities at Shannondale and Pond Gap Elementary

Schools as well as facility upgrades at Farragut High School, the completion of ongoing upgrades to high school science laboratories, and a system-wide technology assessment.

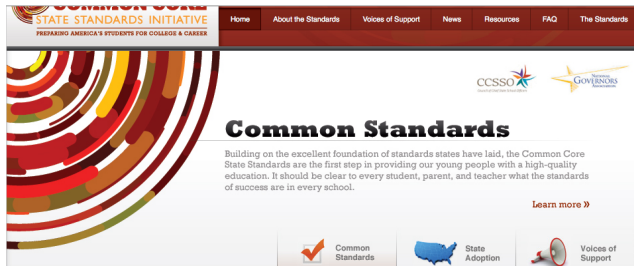
### The Challenges

While The Knox County School System has seen strong and steady academic progress in student growth and achievement over the past several years, this progress has at times been incremental, and significant challenges remain. With Tennessee’s adoption of higher student and teacher performance standards, it has become clear that more must be done to ensure that all students are excelling and meeting these rigorous academic expectations. In addition, gaps between the lowest performing student groups and the highest performing students have emerged that are sometimes significant, and always unacceptable. In many cases these gaps are beginning to close, but the KCS must implement strategies and dedicate resources to radically increase the pace of our academic progress while challenging all students, including the most advanced students, to reach for higher levels of performance.

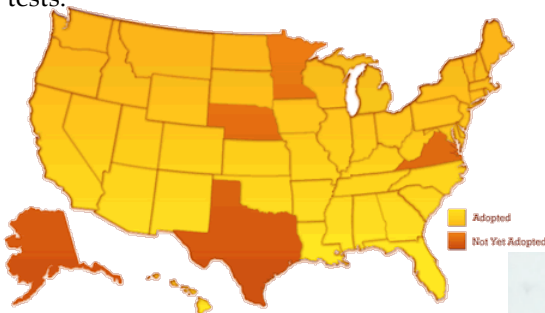




## The Challenges

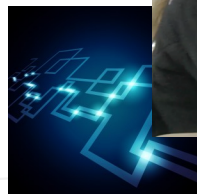


Tennessee has adopted the Common Core State Standards for education which further increases the urgency to accelerate academic results and close performance gaps. The rigorous new Common Core Standards are designed to prepare students with the knowledge and skills to compete in an increasingly global environment. These demanding standards emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, and introduce the next generation of assessments that will give students, parents, and educators better information about college and career-readiness based on performance beyond multiple-choice tests.



Partnership for Assessment of  
Readiness for College and Careers

Tennessee has joined the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). PARCC is a 23-state consortium working together to develop the next generation of K-12 assessments in English and mathematics. These assessments will replace the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) by 2014-2015, and the PARCC assessments will be exclusively administered to students electronically. This requirement highlights a significant challenge in the Knox County Schools: access to technology and the educational resources available online is surprisingly limited in our schools. Our children will be expected to function productively and effectively in a digital world and we must educate them in one.







## The Challenges

In the spring of 2012, our School Board began a broad-based dialogue with our community regarding the level of financial investment needed to support effective public education in our community. This robust and largely healthy discourse highlighted the challenges of providing a truly outstanding public education to all of the community's children in a deeply resource-constrained environment. While the outcome of that very public conversation was an incremental increase in fiscal resources, budget constraints continue to be a significant challenge to successful implementation of this strategic plan.

Looking forward, the district's ability to personalize learning for students -- that is, meeting the individual learning, support, and resource needs of each of the more than 56,000 students -- will be a key to academic success. Personalized learning with the support of robust instructional technology tools will likely be a core tenet of the Knox County Schools' next five year strategic plan, and a critical factor in the universal success of our children and our schools, and indeed the future vitality of our community.





## Conclusions

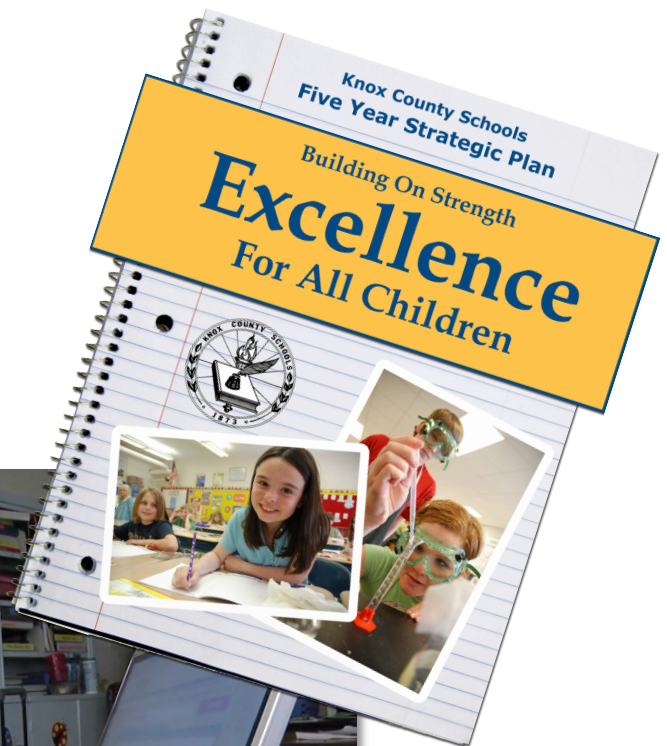
### Conclusions

The Knox County Schools continues to be guided and driven by our five-year strategic plan, *Excellence for All Children*. The bold vision it articulates and the clear roadmap it provides for instructional improvement and educational innovation have been critical factors in the academic success our school system has experienced in the past several years, and the notably positive student outcomes that we achieved in the 2011-2012 school year.

Our careful implementation of the strategic plan, coupled with the remarkable dedication and expertise of our teachers and staff, have allowed us to continue to make strong academic progress. But we cannot rest on our accomplishments.

We must continue to expect more of our students and ourselves in order to prepare our children for a bright, competitive and successful future. Higher academic standards, significant resource constraints, and unacceptable gaps in student achievement represent considerable challenges for the future.

We must continue to implement our strategic plan with fidelity, urgency and discipline, maintain our focus squarely on high quality instruction and student learning, and continue to recognize that it is our people -- our teachers, parents, students, leaders, staff, community members, and partners -- that make the difference in our ability to achieve our ambitious goal of *Excellence for All Children*.





# Performance Targets

100/90/90/90	For the graduating class of:								
	Actual					Targets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012	2013	2014	2020
% of Entering Freshmen Completing high school on time	84	85	88	87	91	90	93	96	100
% of Entering Freshman graduating with a regular diploma	79	83	87	87	90	85	89	93	90
...% of those having taken the ACT exam	71	73	88	93	91	77	79	80	90
.....% of those scoring a composite 21 or higher on the exam	62	58	49	48	49	71	73	76	90
100/90/90/90 Composite Index	35	34	37	38	40	46	51	57	73

Percentage of students...	For the school year:								
	Actual					Targets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012	2013	2014	2020
Successfully completing 9th grade	79	84	85	87	83	83	84	85	90
Scoring a composite 19 or higher on PLAN	36	36	39	35	37	48	52	56	80
Scoring a composite 17 or higher on EXPLORE	37	37	42	41	41	47	51	54	75
Completing 5th grade on track to score a composite 21 or higher on ACT	46	34	31	31	29	57	60	63	80

Percentage of students...	Actual					Targets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012	2013	2014	2020
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012	2013	2014	2020
Scoring proficient or advanced in end of course exams in:									
U.S. History	59	64	98	98	97	68	70	72	85
English II	78	78	70	70	68	80	81	81	85
Biology	69	69	64	60	66	74	76	77	85
Algebra 1	51	42	42	45	55	62	65	68	85
Scoring proficient or advanced on TCAP Math in:									
Grade 5	61	58	45	56	58	69	71	73	85
Grade 8	49	49	32	41	38	63	66	70	90
Scoring proficient or advanced on TCAP Reading/Language Arts in:									
Grade 3	48	48	50	47	51	62	65	69	90
Grade 5	58	53	55	60	65	67	69	71	85
Grade 8	63	61	50	57	57	72	74	76	90
Completing at least one AP or dual credit course while in high school	29	36	31	40	39	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					Targets			
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012	2013	2014	2020
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012	2013	2014	2020
Attendance Rate	94	94	93	94	94	95	96	96	97
% of schools with at least one year student growth in V-A scores	89	69	36	87	90	92	93	94	100
% of students with at least one year student growth in V-A scores	62	56	45	58	64	75	78	81	100

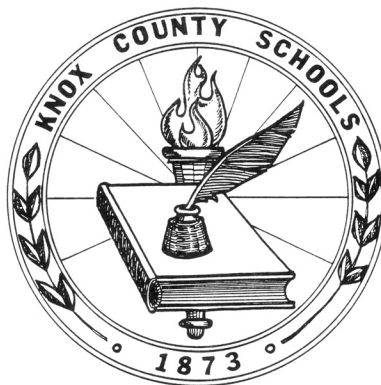
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