

Bob Thomas

January 13, 2017

Ms. Amber Rountree, Chairwoman, Superintendent Search Committee  
Ms. Susan Horn, Superintendent Search Committee  
Mr. Tony Norman, Superintendent Search Committee  
Knox County Schools  
P. O. Box 2188  
Knoxville, TN 37901

Dear Chairwoman Rountree, Ms. Horn, Mr. Norman:

It is with sincere dedication and great enthusiasm that I submit my "Letter of Interest" expressing my desire to serve as Superintendent of the Knox County Schools. Knox County Schools has established high expectations for students and is committed to a culture of excellence for all children. If selected as superintendent, I will work diligently with the Board of Education to further improve the well-documented successes of the school system.

I have devoted my entire career to public education in Knox County and have demonstrated that I am a person of integrity, honesty and trust. I believe in leadership that is participatory, collaborative and situational. Throughout my career, I have shown that I am a good listener who is willing to consider and have compassion for others with differing views. I am passionate about the positive impact that outstanding educators create for students and I believe that if we are to further improve upon our successes, every school must have well defined achievement goals that are adhered to and continuously measured.

I believe that my past experiences have prepared me to lead our district to greater successes. While serving as an Assistant Superintendent, I have had the responsibility for the operational areas of our school district. These areas include finance, human resources, technology, maintenance and operations, child nutrition, security, facilities and construction, and transportation. Over time, I have worked collaboratively and strategically with each department head to implement efficiencies so that financial resources could be focused on teaching and learning. Prior to serving in the central office, I was a teacher, assistant principal, and principal. My school level experiences, combined with my diverse work in the central office, have made me keenly aware that successful leadership involves building meaningful relationships and holding employees accountable.

Throughout my career, I have worked effectively with both elected and appointed officials. I have established positive working relationships and I have demonstrated that I have an understanding of the challenges facing our office holders. The political environment is an integral part of the success of public education, and I value the importance of fostering constructive relationships with all stakeholders.

If selected as the Superintendent, I am prepared, committed and eager to lead our district in a direction that serves our Board of Education, our employees, our community, our families, and most of all, our students. Thank you for your time and consideration and I look forward to speaking with the members of the search committee about this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

Bob Thomas

# Robert M. Thomas

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## Experience

- 2016-Present** *Assistant Superintendent - Administrative Services, Knox County Schools*
- Engage with community partners and develop a potential operational and funding plan for a Recovery High School
  - Provide Charter Schools oversight to ensure accountability and compliance
  - Assist with the implementation of the MUNIS Human Resources/Payroll System
  - Work with the Human Resources Department regarding challenging and time-consuming employee related issues
- 2011-Present** *Professional Educators Collaborative Conferencing Act (PECCA) Team Member*
- Serve as chair of the KCS administrative team
  - Helped develop the Board approved Memorandum of Understanding with the Knox County Education Association
- 2010-Present** *Executive Director of the Distinguished Professionals Education Institute (DPEI)*
- Recruit Distinguished Professionals (DPs) to teach specialized courses which require teachers with critical, hard to find skills for KCS and for the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools
  - Meet with prospective teacher candidates for KCS and work with principals to set up interviews and secure recommendations for hiring
  - Work with the KCS Curriculum and Instruction Department regarding the approval of school requests and assignments of DP courses.
  - Perform various administrative duties associated with the program
- 2014-2016** *Assistant Superintendent - Administrative Services, Knox County Schools*
- Oversight and responsibility for Finance and Human Resources Departments
  - Facilitated the reorganization of the Finance Department
  - Directed the development and adoption of a Finance Comprehensive Plan
- 2005-2014** *Assistant Superintendent - Administrative Services, Knox County School*
- Oversight and responsibility for the following departments: Finance, Technology, Human Resources, Transportation/Zoning/Attendance, Maintenance and Operations, School Nutrition Program, Security, and Facilities and New Construction
  - Facilitated implementation of online applicant tracking system, supported implementation of online parent payment system for student meal payments, supported expansion of technical support specialists for schools
  - Directed implementation of a district-wide cafeteria Point of Sale System
  - Directed development and implementation of school level staffing model for certified and classified employees
  - Facilitated and expedited partnership agreement between Knox County Schools and the Distinguished Professionals Education Institute, which resulted in the approval of adjunct teaching licenses in critical shortage areas.
  - Facilitated implementation of online applicant tracking system, supported upgrade of payroll system, supported implementation of Parent Portal for

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accessing student grades and attendance, supported implementation of online parent payment system for student meal payments, supported expansion of technical support specialists for schools

## 1990-2010 *Negotiations Team member - Knox County Schools*

- Instrumental in implementing interest-based bargaining with Knox County Education Association

## 1990-2005 *Assistant Superintendent - Finance and Human Resources, Knox County Schools*

- Oversight and strategic planning/budgeting of general purpose school fund, school nutrition fund, capital fund; management responsibilities including all areas of Finance, Human Resources, and Information Technology
- Oversight of development of monthly financial reports for general purpose school fund, school nutrition fund and capital fund
- Initiated procedures for the analysis of district debt capacity and revenue forecasting
- Devised staffing and budgeting strategies to ensure Knox County Schools' compliance with BEP mandates; coordinated hiring over 500 teachers to lower pupil/teacher ratios
- Initiated an annual statistical comparison of financial information with TN Metropolitan School Systems and school districts adjoining KCS
- Restructured salary schedules for all categories of classified personnel and implemented new compacted and more marketplace competitive salary schedules
- Oversaw the development and implementation of a payroll system when the district assumed the responsibility for issuing paychecks in 1993
- Managed the development of the school district budget and presented it to the school board and county commission
- Led effort to provide equitable benefit offerings for classified employees
- Developed and implemented a retirement incentive program that led to a reduction of 20 central office administrative and support personnel positions

## 1988-1990 *Supervisor - Personnel Department, Knox County Schools*

- Responsible for all areas of staffing, evaluation, placement of middle and high school certified and classified personnel for district of 6000 plus employees
- Initiated Knox County Schools' participation in the research-based Gallup Teacher, Principal and Support Services Perceiver
- Facilitated coordination of Knox County Schools participation as a field test site for Gallup's Urban Teacher Perceiver
- Negotiated agreement and managed project with Hay Management Consultants to analyze all categories of classified employee compensation
- Implemented a substitute teacher training program
- Represented the district at unemployment hearings
- Conducted teacher and principal interviews

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- 1985-1988**     *Personnel Specialist - Knoxville City Schools/Knox County Schools*
- Interviewed and coordinated the hiring of educational assistants, custodial employees and food service personnel
  - Conducted teacher interviews
  - Employed certified and classified substitute teachers
- 1983-1985**     *Principal - Rule High School - Knoxville City Schools*
- Formulated programs to recognize and celebrate honor roll students each grading period
  - Developed and conducted teacher in-service sessions using research from Creating Effective Schools
  - Oversaw efforts to increase the number of seniors passing the state's proficiency test required for graduation (led all city high schools with 99% of seniors passing the test in 1985)
  - Initiated strategies to increase ninth grade proficiency test scores (increase of 23.7% in mathematics and 11.2% in language arts)
  - Launched Rule High School's first computer lab and computer-based curriculum (1984)
- 1982-1983**     *Assistant Principal - Rule High School, Knoxville City Schools*
- Responsible for student discipline, conducting teacher evaluations, managing physical plant
- 1974-1982**     *Teacher - Bearden High School, Knoxville City Schools*
- Taught General Business, Accounting, Business Law, Business Math and Health classes
  - Supervised and managed financial activities of all athletic programs as Athletic Director
  - Assistant Coach for football and track
- 1973-1974**     *Teacher - Bearden Junior High School, Knoxville City Schools*

## Education

- 1983             Masters +30 hours - Education Administration & Supervision, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- 1977             MS - Education, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- 1973             BS - Business Administration, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

## Professional Memberships and Community Activities

- 2004-2008     Served as a member of the East Tennessee Chapter - National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame, Inc.

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- 2002-2004 President/Vice-President, Beverly Oaks Homeowners' Association
- 1990-2014 Tennessee Association of School Business Officials
- 1990-2014 Southeastern Association of School Business Officials
- 1990-2014 American Association of School Business Officials International
- 1985-1989 Tennessee Association of School Personnel Administrators
- 1983 Phi Delta Kappa Professional Education Fraternity
- 1980 Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
- 1975 University of Tennessee Letterman's Club (Lifetime Membership)

## Selected Accomplishments

- 2012-2013 Certificate of Completion awarded by the College of Business Administration - Consortium for Social Enterprise Effectiveness - University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- 2008 Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association A. F. Bridges Award- School System Administrator of the year for Athletic District 2
- 2007-2008 CORRE Team Member (Central Office Review for Results and Equity)
- 1997-2008 National Forum on Education Statistics - Local Education Agency member for the State of Tennessee
- 2004-2008 Board of Directors, East Tennessee Chapter - National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame, Inc.
- 2007 National Association of Secondary School Principals - Interactive 21<sup>st</sup> Century Principal Development Program Assessor Training
- 1984 Principal's Institute - Peabody College at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN
- 2003-2004 Mayor's Governmental Efficiency Committee - review County government and KCS to examine opportunities for operating efficiencies
- July, 2003 National Forum on Education Statistics, Task Force member for the Development of the Handbook "Facilities Information Management: A Guide for State and local School Districts"
- 1999-2000 President, Metropolitan Area School Systems- responsible for coordinating presentations and programs for monthly meetings of officials from eleven largest school districts in Tennessee
- 1997-1998 "Notes from the Field" Budget Development Booklet & Presentation for The Tennessee Executive Development Program, Tennessee School Boards Association
- 1990-1993 Earned Interview/Perceiver Specialist certification with Gallup, Inc. for the areas of Teacher, Urban Teacher, Support Services, and Principal
- July, 1985 National Association of Secondary School Principals- State of Tennessee Assessment Center Certification
- 1981-1982 Bearden High School Teacher of the Year

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## Certifications and Endorsements (State of Tennessee Professional Teaching License)

Superintendent (090)

Administrative Supervision 7-12 (110)

Prof. Admin. PreK-12 (482)

Supervisor of Attendance (094)

Business Arithmetic 7-12 (033)

Business English 7-12 (034)

Business Law 7-12 (035)

General Business 7-12 (039)

Salesmanship 7-12 (040)

Health Instruction 7-12 (020)