

# KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

ANDREW JOHNSON BUILDING

*Dr. James P. McIntyre Jr., Superintendent*



## Appendix A

### **Significant Academic Investments in the FY2012 Budget Proposal**

#### *STEM Academy*

A focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and branding the Knox County Schools as a STEM district and incubator are key objectives within the five year strategic plan. In the FY 12 budget we have been able to use a combination of state, federal and local resources to establish a STEM Magnet Academy to serve a representative population of our high school students. The availability of these state and federal funds has allowed us to move the project forward a few years ahead of our planned timeline. While we have STEM focused programs in a number of our high schools, this academy will serve and the incubator and hub for STEM related instruction. In addition to offering a rigorous STEM learning experience, it will also serve to identify and share best practices across the district and throughout the region.

#### *Leadership Academy*

The Leadership Academy established last year as a partnership between the Knox County Schools and the University of Tennessee will see its second cohort of aspiring school administrators beginning this summer. The Leadership Academy is preparing the next generation of outstanding school principals for the Knox County Schools through an intensive 15-month immersion in school leadership. The FY12 budget supports this effort to provide a pipeline of extremely well qualified leaders who will be the future principals of our schools. This year we expect have 10 fellows who will participate in the program and to emerge ready to assume leadership roles in our schools. We recognize the importance of leadership to student and teacher success

and in creating great schools. This continuing investment in our budget is an investment in the future of our school system.

#### *Formative Assessment*

This capacity to conduct meaningful formative assessment is critical to a teacher's ability to analyze and implement instructional strategies that will improve student learning. Last year we initiated a formative assessment program through Discovery Education that has been well received by teachers and is enhancing our ability to assess student progress. The formative assessment has proven to be of such value that we are examining expanding the assessments to include grades 1 and 2 for FY12. While formative assessment was not a specific line item in the FY 11 budget, we have included it in the FY 12 budget proposal to help ensure that this very valuable tool remains available to our teachers

#### *Excellence Through Literacy*

We continue our investment in ensuring and enhancing literacy at all levels that began three years ago. While we remain unable to commit resources to expand the initiative fully to what we envisioned as Phase II, the "Excellence Through Literacy" initiative remains protected. We are continuing to commit about \$2.5 million annually which includes personnel and materials specifically to address the needs of our students who may be under performing in any of the components of literacy such as reading, comprehension, oral communication and writing. Many of our students make significant progress in a very short time as we have implemented various interventions including the "Language!" program, learning centers and assigning literacy coaches for teacher support and training.

#### *Human Capital*

Outstanding people are at the heart of what we do. Quality instruction requires a commitment to recruiting, selecting, inducting, developing, supporting, compensating, promoting, challenging and valuing talented professionals,

particularly our teachers. While this budget does not make substantial gains on the compensation front, it will support:

- Ongoing efforts to reorganize our Human Resources department to allow for greater efficiency, customer service and strategic partnership with our schools
- Enhancements to instructional quality through greater teacher collaboration - made possible through our continued support of parallel block scheduling at all elementary schools
- Continuing investments in the successful Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) and program expansion to 14 additional schools
- Maintains a significant level of investment in instructional coaching, which builds the capacity and enhances the effectiveness of our teachers.

### *Early Education*

Providing educational experiences to our youngest residents is a *very* wise and forward-thinking investment. Early education is a critical area where every dollar we spend provides a significant return in student learning both at the early elementary years and throughout a student's education experience. Over the past few years, the Knox County Schools has offered three highly successful early education programs: 1) the birth-to-Kindergarten initiative, 2) the Governor's voluntary pre-Kindergarten program, and 3) our Kindergarten Intervention program.

While we are not expanding our early education offerings in FY12, we are budgeting with an eye to maintaining the levels of service that currently exist.

### *Project GRAD*

Project GRAD provides a framework for urban school reform focusing on academic success, student support and an intense emphasis on college-going. Our relationship with the Project GRAD model continues to be supported in this budget. We are in the ninth year of our 12 year engagement, and while in recent years we have had to trim

costs a bit, we are budgeting to continue to fund the school system's portion of the work that Project GRAD is doing in 14 of our urban schools at the same level as in FY11. After reimbursements, net costs to KCS within the Project GRAD budget should total approximately \$1.15 million.

*Education Management Information System (EMIS)*

We continue the implementation and development of our Education Management Information System or data warehouse. The information available through the system and our ability to better analyze both instructional and operational data is growing steadily. We have provided training to administrators and building level data analysts who work with school improvement and strategic plan goals.

While the information currently available is of great value, the user interface for the system does require some work to make it more accessible for teachers and school level administrators. This is a concern we are addressing with the contractors, and we expect to have a more user friendly interface for final implementation of the EMIS.