

RESOLUTION

**A RESOLUTION OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE
IN OPPOSITION TO LETTER
GRADES FOR SCHOOLS**

**PROPOSED BY:
AMBER ROUNTREE**

WHEREAS, the Knox County Board of Education is responsible for providing a local system of public education; and

WHEREAS, the State of Tennessee, by March 2016 legislative approval and signature of Governor Bill Haslam of House Bill 155 and Senate Bill 300, has directed the Tennessee Department of Education to develop a grading system for assigning letter grades A through F on the state report cards for Tennessee schools, implementation of which will begin with the 2017-18 school year; and

WHEREAS, after operating under federally-mandated No Child Left Behind guidelines, Tennessee received a waiver of NCLB standards and adopted Race To The Top guidelines, which were subsequently replaced by the new federally-mandated Every Student Succeeds Act in an effort to close achievement gaps for economically disadvantaged students; and

WHEREAS, a rating system utilizing A through F grades for schools, and districts creates a false impression about students, ignores the unique strengths of each school, and unfairly reduces each student's worth to the school's assigned grade; and

WHEREAS, at least 16 states have implemented a similar rating system utilizing A through F grades for schools and districts and, to date, there is no definitive research that suggests these ratings have improved student or school performance; and

WHEREAS, the 2016-17 school year is already set to be a transition year for the Tennessee Department of Education to seek input for developing an accountability system for federally-mandated ESSA requirements, it is now additionally tasked with developing a letter grading system at the same time;

WHEREAS, we embrace meaningful accountability that informs students, parents, and teachers about the learning needs of each student and each school; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE KNOX COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION AS FOLLOWS:

The Knox County Board of Education hereby urges the Tennessee General Assembly to repeal legislation reducing schools to a single letter grade designation and, instead, in the best interest of students and schools, allow schools to publish multiple measures alongside any summative designation, as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act Final Regulations, which were not available at the time this legislation was passed. (ESSA, Final Regulations, pg. 101).

