



KCS REIMAGINED

STRUCTURING FOR SUCCESS
2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Students from Bonny Kate Elementary pose for a group photo.

KCS

KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

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“As educators, we are entrusted with preparing the next generation for the future. Our work is not always easy. But so often in life, the hard work is the right work.

At KCS, we are committed to doing the hard work, to improving outcomes, and to preparing every student for success.”

Dr. Jon Rysewyk
Superintendent
Knox County Schools

A student from Maynard Elementary School excited to answer a question posed by his teacher.

From the **SUPERINTENDENT**

For years, I've made it a priority to visit at least one school every week. These visits are a tradition I carried with me into the role of Superintendent and are always one of the highlights of my week. Observing in classrooms, meeting with teachers and administrators, and talking with students never fails to remind why we do what we do.

During a recent visit to Bearden Elementary School, I came across the following words displayed on the wall of a third grade classroom: "You Can Do Hard Things." For the past year, this has been our mantra at KCS. We have committed ourselves to doing the hard work, and to taking on big challenges, because that is what our students deserve.

As a public school system, we exist for one reason: to provide an excellent education that prepares every student to excel academically and graduate ready for their future. At KCS, we take this responsibility seriously because we know what is at stake. We are the only organization uniquely positioned to do this work and—for the sake of our students— we have to get it right.

When I became Superintendent, I challenged our schools and staff to refocus our work, to concentrate on four core priorities to ensure that we are directing our energy and resources to make the biggest impact for students. By delivering on *excellence in foundational skills*, putting *great educators in every school*, and providing opportunities for *career empowerment and preparation*, we are creating an environment to foster *success for every student*.

And, together, we are making progress.

We've restructured the KCS district office and regionalized school supervision to better support our students and educators.

We've reimagined the high school experience and expanded the 865 Academies to 10 schools with the intent of graduating every student 865Ready—ready to succeed in postsecondary enrollment, meaningful employment, or enlistment in the military.

We developed a five-year strategic plan to close persistent achievement gaps in Region 5 schools and we are conducting a thorough analysis of our intervention, special education, and English Language Learner services and supports to identify opportunities to enhance and improve our work.

We have made significant investments in employee compensation and are working on an ambitious retention and recruitment plan to build and develop even stronger teams for our schools throughout the district.

This report highlights the incredible work our schools, district office, and community partners are doing to reimagine public education in Knox County. I can say with certainty that our work is far from over. But, with your support, I am confident we are making a difference in the lives of our students.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF KCS!



Dr. Jon Rysewyk
Superintendent
Knox County Schools



KCS IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE

3X

RECIPIENT OF FORBES
"BEST PLACE TO WORK"
(2021, 2022, 2023)

146,700

HOURS TUTORING 4,890
ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE
SCHOOL STUDENTS

60,000+

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH
SCHOOL, MAKING KCS THE 3RD LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN TENNESSEE

3,967

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

43,000

MEALS SERVED DAILY

\$10.7m

INVESTED IN NEW HIGH-QUALITY
INSTRUCTIONAL CURRICULUM
FOR K-12 MATH



19,532

**POST-SECONDARY (COLLEGE,
TRADE SCHOOL) CLASSES TAKEN
BY 9,247 STUDENTS**

\$24.8m

**INVESTMENTS IN STAFF:
4% INCREASE TO SALARIES,
12% INCREASE FOR DIFFICULT-TO-FILL
POSITIONS AND STEP RAISES**

6,554

**STUDENTS ENROLLED IN
SUMMER LEARNING CAMPS**

1:1

**STUDENT TO
TECHNOLOGY RATIO**

212

**ADVANCED ACADEMIC
COURSES OFFERED**

12 YEARS

**AVERAGE TEACHING EXPERIENCE
OF KCS EDUCATORS**

\$11.3m

INVESTED IN SCHOOL SAFETY

KCS Reimagined

Knox County Schools proudly serves more than 60,000 students at 91 preschool, elementary, middle, and high school campuses where more than 9,000 dedicated staff members work diligently to make school possible for every student every day.

KCS is not only the third-largest public school system in the state, we are the 68th-largest public school system in the nation. As a district, KCS spans more than 508.3 square miles of rural, urban, and suburban communities across the City of Knoxville, the Town of Farragut, and Greater Knox County. Our students speak more than 120 languages and our buses travel more than 2.5 million miles every year transporting students safely to and from school.

To say that KCS is a vast district is an understatement, but that's what makes our schools **ours**, and it's what makes KCS a great place to learn and work.

Dr. Jon Rysewyk began his tenure as Superintendent with a message to the Knox County community: "A one-size-fits-all approach is no longer capable of providing the responsiveness and support our schools and students deserve." Within his first month as Superintendent, Dr. Rysewyk convened a "transition team" comprised of school leaders, educators, parents, students, and community leaders to begin the work of reimagining Knox County Schools.



Students from Bearden Elementary work on some classroom assignments.



Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk with students at Bonny Kate Elementary.

"Everyone is working hard," Dr. Rysewyk said. "Every teacher, every administrator, every member of the KCS team. This is an opportunity for us to take a step back and ask ourselves: are we doing the right work?"

By the time school began in August 2022, KCS had been fully reimagined with schools organized into five regions of support, the district office structured around five divisions of service, and four priorities at the center of everything.

"Before we can deliver on our full potential," Dr. Rysewyk told families and community members, "we have to understand what we are uniquely positioned to do: to prepare every student to excel academically and graduate ready for their future." KCS intends to do just that by focusing on four core priorities:

- **Excellence in Foundational Skills**
- **Great Educators in Every School**
- **Career Empowerment and Preparation**
- **Success for Every Student**

Restructuring the district office into five divisions of service—Academics, Business and Talent, Operations, Strategy, and Student Success—has enabled KCS to more effectively and efficiently organize work and generate momentum in each of our four priorities. Meanwhile, regionalizing schools has enabled district-level support teams to concentrate their time and resources on supporting the unique needs of the schools within their region.

In short, KCS has spent the 2022-23 school year restructuring to ensure that we are positioned to intentionally and proactively prepare every student for success in a future of their choosing.



District Office **DIVISIONS**

The Academics Division cultivates strong school and classroom leadership through intentional professional development and regionalized instructional support to equip every student from preschool through high school with the skills, experiences, and opportunities needed to excel in and beyond the classroom.

Departments: Academic Supports; College and Career Readiness; Learning and Literacy; Region 1; Region 2; Region 3; Region 4



DR. KEITH WILSON
*Assistant Superintendent
of Academics*

The Business and Talent Division retains, attracts, and develops the highly talented and diverse workforce of KCS through innovative training, support, and recruitment and by effectively and efficiently managing and safeguarding public funds with integrity and transparency for the benefit of KCS students and families.

Departments: Human Resource Operations; Talent Acquisition; Finance



JENNIFER HEMMELGARN
*Assistant Superintendent
of Business and Talent*

The Operations Division maintains safe, healthy, and engaging learning environments for all students by equipping every school with the infrastructural and operational support needed to promote and preserve effective classroom instruction.

Departments: Information Technology; Facilities and Construction; Maintenance; Nutrition; Security; Transportation



DR. GARFIELD ADAMS
*Assistant Superintendent
of Operations*

The Strategy Division simplifies complex challenges by building clear and coherent systems and structures to enhance communication, increase meaningful districtwide engagement, and improve data-driven decision-making.

Departments: Communications; Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (REA); Enrollment Office; Office of the Ombudsman



KORI LAUTNER
*Assistant Superintendent
of Strategy*

The Student Success Division creates accessible and effective learning environments for all students through the implementation of intentional and individualized instruction, services, interventions, and supports.

Departments: Student Supports; School Culture; Special Education; Region 5



JASON MYERS
*Assistant Superintendent
of Student Success*





REGIONAL Support Model

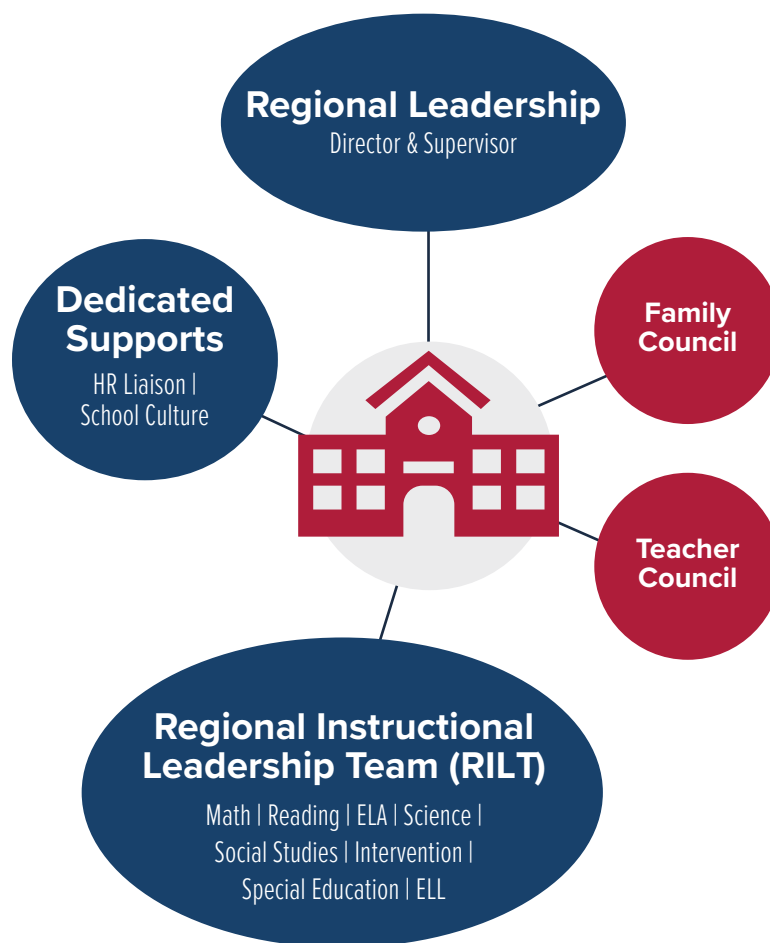
With more than 60,000 students and over 90 schools, KCS made the decision to organize school supervision and support into five regions to more intentionally meet the needs of its various school communities.

Prior to the 2022-23 school year, school supervision and support were organized into “elementary” and “secondary” teams. The elementary team, led by a single director and two supervisors, was responsible for overseeing and supporting the district’s 52 elementary schools, while the secondary team—led by a single director and two supervisors—was responsible for overseeing and supporting the district’s 32 middle and high schools.

Under the Regional Support Model, schools are organized according to feeder pattern and proximity, with no more than 20 schools in a single region, allowing for the implementation of more consistent expectations and individualized supports.

As a longtime KCS principal and now the Director of Region 4 schools, Cindy White has seen the interaction between schools and district-wide leadership from both perspectives. White says the regional support model facilitates more timely support to principals, and gives school leaders a regional cohort of peers to tackle common challenges.

“This structure creates a smaller community of schools within a large district, allowing us to provide more personalized layers of supervision and support,” she said. “Because we know our schools, we can quickly identify solutions that are tailored for their students and communities.”



Under the Regional Support Model, each region is led by a director and supervisor with a mixture of elementary and secondary experience. Instructional support is provided by a Regional Instructional Leadership Team (RILT) composed of content area experts with a mixture of elementary and secondary experience. Every region also receives dedicated, targeted support from an assigned HR liaison and member of the School Culture team.

Region 1

Director - *Danny Trent*
Supervisor - *Dr. Shelly Maddux*

SCHOOLS

A. L. Lotts Elementary, Bearden Elementary, Bearden Middle, Bearden High, Blue Grass Elementary, Farragut Primary, Farragut Intermediate, Farragut Middle, Farragut High, Northshore Elementary, Pond Gap Elementary, Rocky Hill Elementary, Sequoyah Elementary, West High, West Hills Elementary, West Valley Middle, West View Elementary

Region 2

Director - *Nathan Langlois*
Supervisor - *Christy Dowell*

SCHOOLS

Amherst Elementary, Ball Camp Elementary, Cedar Bluff Elementary, Cedar Bluff Middle, Hardin Valley Elementary, Hardin Valley Middle, Hardin Valley Academy, Karns Elementary, Karns Middle, Karns High, Knox County Virtual School, Mill Creek Elementary, Norwood Elementary, Northwest Middle, Pleasant Ridge Elementary, Powell Elementary, Powell Middle, Powell High, Ridgedale, West Haven Elementary

Region 3

Director - *Megan O'Dell*
Supervisor - *Tommy Watson*

SCHOOLS

Bonny Kate Elementary, Carter Elementary, Carter Middle, Carter High, Chilhowee Intermediate, Dogwood Elementary, East Knox Elementary, Gap Creek Elementary, Mooreland Heights Elementary, Mount Olive Elementary, New Hopewell Elementary, South Knox Elementary, Sunnyview Primary, South-Doyle Middle, South-Doyle High, Career Magnet Academy, L&N STEM Academy, Dr. Paul L. Kelley Volunteer Academy





The regional support model also creates avenues for more concentrated input from families and educators. Last year, KCS launched regional engagement councils to better inform and direct the work within each of its five regions. Led by the Regional Director and Supervisor, each Regional Family Council and Regional Teacher Council met quarterly to tackle region-specific challenges and celebrate regional successes.

Regional councils were composed of one representative from each school in the region and included up to five additional at-large representatives per council, per region.

Although the work of each council is driven by specific regional needs, some common themes emerged among both the Regional Family and Regional Teacher Councils. Teacher Councils, for example, focused largely on training and professional development. While recognizing the scope and value of professional development offered within KCS, teachers also highlighted the importance

of training that is relevant, interactive, and hands-on. The councils also emphasized the ongoing need for training regarding behavior supports.

Councils are also a venue to hear guidance on specific initiatives, such as the six early-release days implemented beginning in 2022-23. Teacher Councils highlighted the opportunity to provide more consistency and coherence on those days, and the district gathered additional information through a survey.

In Family Councils, one common topic of conversation during the first year was communication. KCS launched the ParentSquare messaging tool in 2022-23, and council members were able to provide helpful feedback about the user experience, including opportunities where additional training for staff and families would be beneficial.

In addition, family members offered meaningful input about how to ensure consistent levels of communication at every school within the district, and how to provide classroom-specific communication.

Spencer Long, principal of Halls High School, can attest to the benefit of gathering targeted feedback from both teachers and families.

“As district or school leaders, we can become very focused on systems and structures and routines,” he says. “That parent perspective is a constant reminder of why we do what we do, and how our decisions are impacting those that we serve.”

To be sure, this work is only beginning. But after the first year of implementation, we are already seeing the impact of a regional structure on our district’s consistency, accountability, and opportunities for feedback.

“This structure creates a smaller community of schools within a large district, allowing us to provide more personalized layers of supervision and support. Because we know our schools, we can quickly identify solutions that are tailored for their students and communities.”

Cindy White, Region 4 Director
Knox County Schools

Region 4

Director - Cindy White
Supervisor - Adam Parker

SCHOOLS

Adrian Burnett Elementary, Brickey-McCloud Elementary, Central High, Copper Ridge Elementary, Coryton Elementary, Fountain City Elementary, Gibbs Elementary, Gibbs Middle, Gibbs High, Gresham Middle, Halls Elementary, Halls Middle, Halls High, Inskip Elementary, K.A.E.C., Richard Yoakley, Ritta Elementary, Shannondale Elementary, Sterchi Elementary

Region 5

Director - Dr. Dexter Murphy
Supervisor - Sallee Reynolds

SCHOOLS

Austin-East Magnet High, Beaumont Magnet Academy, Belle Morris Elementary, Christenberry Elementary, Fulton High, Green Magnet Academy, Holston Middle, Lonsdale Elementary, Maynard Elementary, Sarah Moore Greene Magnet Academy, Spring Hill Elementary, Vine Magnet Middle, Whittle Springs Middle

Preschool

KCS preschools are supervised and supported by a dedicated director and supervisor to provide for the unique needs of our youngest learners.

Director - Dr. Beth Lackey
Supervisor - Shelli Eberle

PRESCHOOLS

Cedar Bluff Preschool, Fair Garden Family Center, Fort Sanders Educational Development Center, Karns Preschool

4 THE PRIORITIES



Students from L&N STEM Academy chat on their way to class.



At KCS, we prioritize: Excellence in Foundational Skills, Great Educators in Every School, Career Empowerment and Preparation, and Success for Every Student.

These four priorities clearly articulate the values that KCS puts into practice every day, and exemplify our commitment to making KCS an excellent district in which to learn and teach — a public school system focused on academic excellence for all students and developing the next generation of Knox County.

“This is the role of a school system in any healthy community. Only we are uniquely positioned to prepare every student to excel academically and graduate prepared for the future. By remaining focused on these four priorities, that is precisely what we are positioning ourselves to do.”

Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk

Excellence in Foundational Skills

Early literacy and middle school math are **foundational to a student's academic and lifelong success**. By preparing students to read proficiently by third grade and to reach or surpass proficiency in Algebra I by ninth grade, KCS is **equipping every student with the skills needed to succeed in and beyond the classroom**.

Great Educators in Every School

Great educators are core to the mission of KCS. By **investing in meaningful professional development and growth opportunities**, and pursuing **innovative strategies to retain and recruit high quality educators**, KCS is positioning great educators in every classroom.

Career Empowerment and Preparation

At KCS, we are committed to preparing students for graduation and **life after graduation**. By providing students with **early and meaningful opportunities to explore colleges and careers**, KCS is empowering students to approach their future with confidence, prepared for the 3 E's: employment, enrollment, or enlistment.

Success for Every Student

All students have unique abilities, needs, personalities, and ambitions, and KCS is committed to equipping every student with the **individualized services, interventions, resources, and supports** needed to **achieve success**—no matter their zip code, culture, or financial resources.

The Four Priorities in Action at Hardin Valley Elementary

Principal Lynn Jacomen is already seeing the successes of the priority-driven work inside Hardin Valley Elementary.

Excellence in Foundational Skills

Hardin Valley Elementary is connected with Instruction Partners, an organization that works alongside educators to support equitable access to high-quality instruction. The partnership, which includes the school's instructional coach and administration team, is focusing on improving the instruction of foundational literacy in kindergarten through second-grade students in Hardin Valley.

Great Educators in Every School

Veteran teachers in the building are leading a mentoring program called M&M, or Mentor and Mentee.

"It's a nice group that meets monthly with our new teachers to make sure everything's okay with them in their first year," Jacomen said. "We also do a weekly check-in with the whole staff to see where we can lend additional support."

Career Empowerment and Preparation

The elementary school has also partnered with nearby Hardin Valley Academy to begin exposing its students to various career fields. Students in the Encore class "Computer Science and Career Exploration" are introduced to some of the industries that will be presented when they are in high school.

Success for Every Student

All staff at the school are focused on each student reaching their full potential. To do so, teachers and administrators identify students who are struggling and offer supports through daily RTI time, before and after school tutoring, and consistent enrichment.

"We make sure we're meeting every kid's needs and we are being purposeful in the supports we give."

Principal, Lynn Jacomen
Hardin Valley Elementary



ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

The Annual Action Plan serves as KCS's one-year roadmap to accelerate student learning and increase academic outcomes. Organized into five sections—*Leadership of the District*, *Excellence in Foundational Skills*, *Great Educators in Every School*, *Career Empowerment and Preparation*, and *Success for Every Student*—the Annual Action Plan aligns with both the Knox County Board of Education's five-year strategic plan and KCS's four district priorities.

As a tool, the Annual Action Plan occupies a critical space in the district's broader strategic planning framework. "This is where aspirations are converted into actions," Assistant Superintendent of Strategy Kori Lautner explains. "Five-year strategic plans are instrumental in casting a vision for long-term success, but it's tough to make five years from now feel relevant today. The Annual Action Plan connects those dots by identifying what needs to be true this year to ensure we're where we want to be five years from now."

The 2022-23 Annual Action Plan established a total of 36 objectives. Of that number, KCS met or exceeded 27 objectives and made meaningful gains toward accomplishing six of the remaining nine objectives.

Results of the 2022-23 AAP can be found on pages 19-21 of this report.

"...it's tough to make five years from now feel relevant today. The Annual Action Plan connects those dots by identifying what needs to be true this year to ensure we're where we want to be five years from now."

Kori Lautner, Assistant Superintendent of Strategy
Knox County Schools



2022-23 Results

The Annual Action Plan consists of measurable and milestone objectives. **Measurable objectives** are quantifiable measures of success capable of year-over-year monitoring. The results of measurable objectives will be reflected in a comparison of 2022 data to 2023 outcomes. **Milestone objectives** represent significant, one-time achievements or critical progress improvements. As a result, these objectives are not accompanied by measurable data points for year-over-year comparison.

LEADERSHIP OF THE DISTRICT

Action: Build methods to effectively communicate with the Board, staff, families, and other key stakeholders

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Develop a regular method for communicating with families regarding the work and occurrences within the district.	-	-	-	●
Develop strategic relationships with key officials (Board, mayors, community leaders and organizations, etc.).	-	-	-	●
Leverage multiple channels of communication (media, social media, speaking engagements, etc.) to enhance awareness of district work priorities, and mission.	-	-	-	●

Action: Establish channels of community input to support the district's four priorities

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Establish school-based family and community input and engagement opportunities.	-	-	-	●
Establish structures for input and engagement at the regional level.	-	-	-	●
Establish structures for input and engagement at the district level.	-	-	-	●

Action: Establish priorities and strategies to accelerate student achievement and growth. Maximize the budget and resources and align the district office to support the work of the four district priorities

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Develop an annual Return on Investment report.	-	-	-	●
Reorganize Central Office to regionalize schools and concentrate district resources more intentionally around schools.	-	-	-	●

EXCELLENCE IN FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Action: Align resources to introduce highly effective early literacy strategies

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Increase 3rd grade proficiency ¹ rates on TCAP by 1.9%.	38.4%	43.3%	4.9%	●
Decrease percent of 3rd graders performing below the 40th percentile on Aimsweb ² by 1.5%.	45.2%	42.9%	-2.3%	●

Action: Align resources to introduce highly effective early math strategies

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Increase Algebra I proficiency ¹ rates by 2.5%.	19.3%	21.1%	1.8%	●
Increase math proficiency ¹ for 6th-8th graders by 2.2%.	33.6%	38%	4.4%	●

Action: Concentrate resources to ensure highly effective reading and writing strategies are being implemented in every ELA classroom districtwide

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Increase ELA proficiency ¹ for 3rd-8th grade by 1.9%.	38.5%	39.9%	1.4%	●
Decrease percent of students performing below the 40th percentile on Aimsweb ² by 1.7%.	33.2%	34.4%	1.2%	●

¹ **Proficiency:** performance demonstrates that the student has a comprehensive understanding and a thorough ability to apply the grade/course-level knowledge and skills defined by the Tennessee Academic Standards

² **Aimsweb:** RTI2 universal screener that assesses each student's foundational reading skills

- Met or exceeded goal
- Did not reach goal
- Milestone objective, no measureable outcomes



2022-23 Results Continued

GREAT EDUCATORS IN EVERY SCHOOL

Action: Establish innovative strategies to address teacher shortage

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Increase enrollment in EPP ³ by 10%.	15	35	133%	●
Increase enrollment in district GYO programs by 15%.	11	31	181%	●
Increase participation in job-embedded programs by 5%.	45	113	60.2%	●

Action: Recruit and retain highly effective teachers in areas of greatest need

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Increase retention of highly effective teachers ⁴ by 2%.	93.5%	94%	0.5%	●
Increase teacher compensation by 4%.	-	-	-	●
Increase percent of teachers of color by 5%.	268	273	1.87%	●

Action: Create opportunities for educators to grow professionally and to receive exposure to leadership development

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Develop a district plan for intentional professional development based on student data.	-	-	-	●
Identify and pilot innovative and intentional approaches to instruction.	-	-	-	●
Solicit and leverage staff feedback to structure high-quality District Learning Days.	-	-	-	●

CAREER EMPOWERMENT & PREPARATION

Action: Organize and reorganize school processes and structures to ensure all students have access to opportunities and are prepared for success after graduation

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Increase the number of high schools engaged in the 865 Academies ⁵ to 10.	8	10	2	●
Increase the number of counselors trained in the process of developing career-ready students by leveraging the Ford NGL network.	7	42	35	●
Increase the percent of students who have completed an aptitude assessment to 75% in 7th grade and 77% in 9th grade.	9th Grade 64.5% 7th Grade 81.5%	9th Grade 76.2% 7th Grade 63.5%	9th Grade 11.6% 7th Grade -17.9%	●

Action: Advance local business partnerships for every school within the district

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Establish a formal, districtwide committee of business leaders to support schools.	-	-	-	●
Enhance relationships between local businesses to support the work of The 865 Academies, Partners in Education, the Clothing Center, the Teacher Depot, and other initiatives.	-	-	-	●

Action: Implement processes to equip every student with the characteristics defined in the KCS Portrait of a Graduate: lifelong learner, effective communicator, collaborative teammate, creative problem-solver, and community-minded citizens

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Increase the percent of students enrolled in EPSOs ⁶ by 1.6%.	57.4%	60.1%	2.7%	●
Increase the percent of students awarded industry certifications ⁷ by 2.8%.	12.7%	13%	0.3%	●
Increase post-secondary enrollment in tnAchieves by 2.5%.	64.3%	60%	-6.7%	●



SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Action: Establish plans to address achievement gaps for underperforming student groups

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Increase math achievement among state identified groups by 2.7%.	11.8%	14%	2.2%	●
• Black/Hispanic/Native American	13.1%	15.7%	2.6%	
• Economically Disadvantaged	11.2%	12.9%	1.7%	
• English Learners	14.1%	16.5%	2.4%	
• Students with Disabilities	8.4%	10.5%	2.1%	
Increase ELA achievement among state identified groups by 2.5%.	17.2%	17.6%	0.4%	●
• Black/Hispanic/Native American	20.4%	21.6%	1.2%	
• Economically Disadvantaged	17.8%	18.3%	0.5%	
• English Learners	14.9%	14.2%	-0.7%	
• Students with Disabilities	10.2%	10.4%	0.2%	

Action: Initiate processes to address mental health obstacles and challenges

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Establish a Whole Child Support Team ⁸ in every elementary, middle, and high school.	-	-	100%	●
Decrease chronic absenteeism ⁹ by 2.1%.	27%	21%	-6%	●
Establish a process for local law enforcement to review and collaborate on state-mandated safety plan.	-	-	-	●

Action: Develop a strategic plan to address needs for underperforming schools

Objective	2022	2023	Change	Met
Establish a formal plan for community involvement and engagement in development of multi-year plan.	-	-	-	●
Increase ELA achievement for underperforming schools ¹⁰ by 2.8%.	28.7%	30.1%	1.4%	●
Increase math achievement for underperforming schools ¹⁰ by 3.0%.	20.4%	24.7%	4.3%	●

³ **Education Prep Provider (EPP):** post-secondary institution approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education to train students to become certified teachers

⁴ **Highly effective teacher:** a teacher who receives a 4 or higher on their annual TIGER Evaluation (Teacher Instructional Growth for Effectiveness and Results)

⁵ **The 865 Academies:** cohort of high schools that are launching career-themed academies (or small learning communities), which will enable students to: participate in authentic, work-based learning; receive opportunities for job shadowing and other career exploration activities; work closely with professions in their field of interest; and create stronger connections between classroom knowledge and workplace success

⁶ **EPSOs:** Early Post-Secondary Opportunity, such as Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International Examinations, College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Dual Enrollment, International Baccalaureate (IB), or Student Industry Certification

⁷ **Industry Certification:** Industry credentials are state-approved certifications recognized by certain industry sectors as a measure of general workforce readiness or emerging competency in a specific career-field.

⁸ **Whole Child Support Teams:** school-based teams that provide an efficient structure through which schools can gather information, identify needs, and plan supports for students and staff to facilitate student success

⁹ **Chronic absenteeism:** Students are considered chronically absent if they are absent 10% or more of the days they have been enrolled in the district

¹⁰ **Underperforming Schools :** schools that have received a designation of TSI, ATSI, or CSI from the Tennessee Department of Education

- Met or exceeded goal
- Did not reach goal
- Milestone objective, no measureable outcomes



Early literacy and middle school math are foundational to academic and lifelong success - and KCS is making progress in both areas.

When Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk set out to reimagine KCS, one of the first decisions he made was to reframe a longstanding department within the district office. For decades, the KCS Curriculum and Instruction Department had been responsible for overseeing curriculum development, selection, and implementation and instructional best practices for core content areas such as math, reading, science, and social studies.

Today, the department continues to oversee curriculum and instruction throughout the district, but now, they carry out their work under the banner of “learning and literacy”—challenging educators and school leaders to look at curriculum and instruction through the lens of the **impact** they are making on student learning and literacy.

The shift is a nuanced but important one, especially considering the stakes.

IN EDUCATION, THE STAKES HAVE NEVER BEEN HIGHER

In May 2021, the Tennessee General Assembly voted to pass legislation requiring that third graders either test proficient on the ELA (English Language Arts) section of the TCAP or participate in a state-approved intervention program, such as tutoring or summer learning, to be eligible for promotion to the fourth grade. While the decision catapulted “third grade literacy” into everyday conversation virtually overnight, the truth of the matter is that—even without a “third grade retention” law—the stakes around student learning and literacy have never been higher.

Last year, the Knoxville Chamber projected that by 2031 half of all newly created jobs in Knox County would be in STEM (science, technology, engineering, math)-related fields, more than doubling growth projected for any other career fields. This means, to be competitive in the workforce, students

will likely need to be able to illustrate proficiency in Algebra I by ninth grade. It can be tempting to think about Algebra I as a strictly high school—and perhaps middle school—problem, but the reality is that the path to algebraic proficiency begins long before ninth grade.

Students who are not reading on grade level by third grade struggle to make the pivotal transition from learning to read to reading to learn. At this point in a student’s academic career, it is no longer enough to successfully recognize how letters and sounds combine to make words. Students must be capable of interpreting and applying the words they are reading. It is this skill that ultimately enables students to read independently and to digest more complex problems—not just in reading, but in every subject. In fact, research indicates that students who are not proficient readers by third grade are four times less likely than their peers to graduate from high school.

Algebra I marks a similar turning point, serving as the gateway to higher-level reasoning and problem-solving in more advanced math, science, business, engineering, and construction classes—just to name a few.

With a proficiency rate of 21.1% in Algebra I and 43% in third grade reading, KCS students are performing better than many of their peers across the state, but our work is far from over.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS TO STUDENT LEARNING AND LITERACY

Under the leadership of Dr. Erin Phillips, the Learning and Literacy Department is making a concerted effort to ensure every student is equipped with the foundational skills they need to excel academically and in life. This means looking beyond curricular material and instructional best

practices and focusing on how these resources can be leveraged to accelerate the learning taking place in classrooms.

It also means starting earlier.

In 2023, KCS opened two new preschools: Karns Preschool and Cedar Bluff Preschool. Together with Fair Garden Community Center and Fort Sanders Educational Development Center, these schools are dedicated to preparing the district’s youngest learners for kindergarten and beyond. Director of Preschool Dr. Beth Lackey notes the critical role early childhood education plays in a student’s academic journey: “In preschool, we’re working on letters and sounds, answering questions, building vocabulary, and learning to love books—all the things that set children up for success.”

Students can count on putting those kindergarten readiness skills to good use.

“We want every student to be immersed in grade-level material,” Dr. Phillips explains. This means encouraging students to engage in productive struggle, to foster perseverance, and to take on complex learning with confidence. “We’re saying to teachers: let’s have high expectations for every kid and let’s support them along the way.”

The support Dr. Phillips is referring to comes in a variety of forms.

HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

At KCS, classroom instruction is anchored in high-quality instructional material, or HQIM. By leveraging evidenced-based, standard-aligned materials in every classroom, the district is creating a consistent framework for foundational learning for every student. The Learning and Literacy Department has also created a comprehensive framework to provide HQIM implementation support to



teachers. The district established Instructional Practice Guides, or IPGs, last year to outline criteria for the type of high-quality instruction and assessment that should be taking place in every classroom throughout KCS. According to Dr. Phillips, IPGs work by “modeling a concept with teachers, then moving on to guided practice and application.” The process should feel familiar to educators—it’s the same process they use to build competency with their students!

HIGH-DOSAGE TUTORING

Even with the best materials and best instruction, students sometimes need additional support. This is where high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring and tiered instruction comes into play. Over the course of the 2022-23 school year, KCS hired more than 200 tutors to provide school-day instructional support

for more than 4,800 students. The district also partnered with United Way of Greater Knoxville, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley, and the YMCA to provide additional tutoring for students after regular school hours.

According to Alicia Jones, Director of Student Supports, “the KCS intervention model leverages tutoring as the structure for small group instruction beyond core classroom instruction.” In other words, tutoring gives students an opportunity to reengage with the material they are learning in class in a small, guided environment. And—for many students—that added time and additional support makes all the difference.

Reflecting on the 2022-23 school year, Assistant Superintendent of Academics Dr. Keith Wilson noted: “We’re committed to doing

more than closing gaps in instruction. Over the last year, we’ve worked to proactively create structures and systems that put student growth and achievement at the center of our work—and that effort is already paying dividends.”

HIGH EXPECTATIONS

The stakes may never have been higher in public education than they are now, but KCS is up to the task of preparing every student to excel in—and beyond—the classroom. By holding students to high expectations and relying on high-quality instruction led by great educators equipped with intentional and meaningful supports, we are making progress.



A student uses her Chromebook to finish up an in-class assignment.

“We’re doing more than closing gaps in instruction, we are accelerating student learning. Over the last year, we’ve worked to proactively create structures and systems that put student growth and achievement at the center of our work—and that effort is already paying dividends.”

Dr. Keith Wilson, Assistant Superintendent of Academics
Knox County Schools



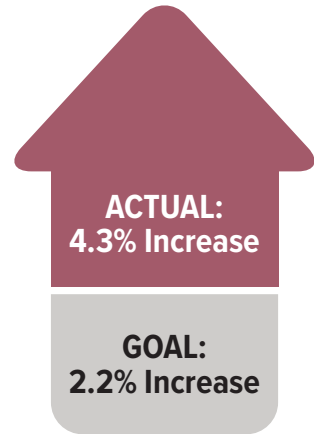
Students at Central High School prepare for a group activity.

STRENGTHENING OUR FOUNDATION

IN 2022-23, KCS...

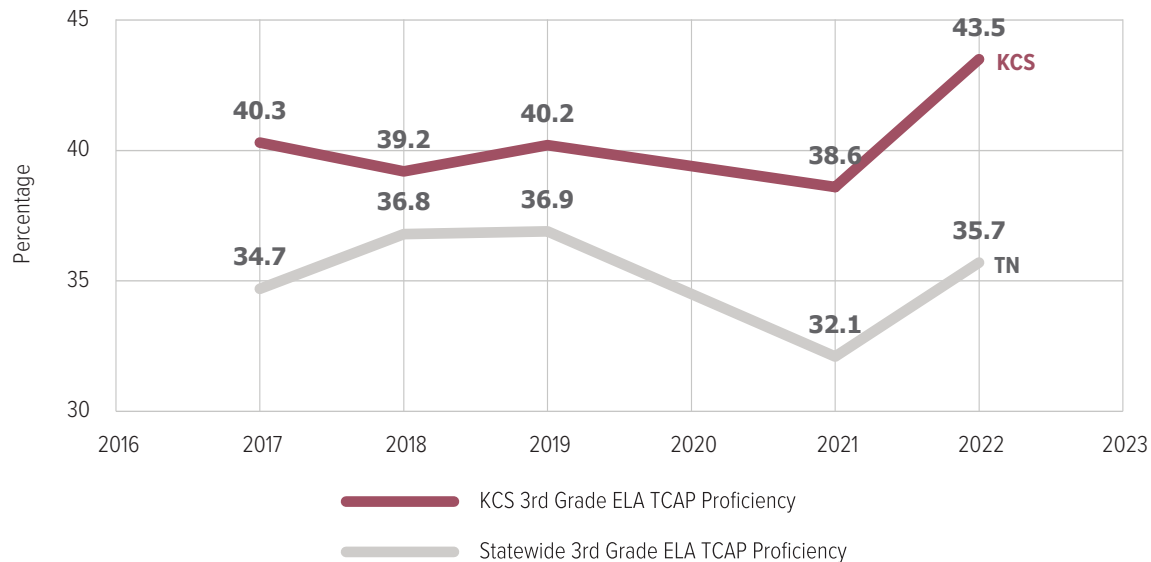
Invested
\$10.7 million
 in new high-quality instructional
 material for K-12 math

DOUBLED
 our goal to
 increase
 proficiency in
 middle school
 math



Dedicated
146,700 hours
 tutoring 4,890 students in
 early literacy and middle school math

Closed learning gaps for the
6,554 students
 enrolled in
 Summer Learning Camps



At **43.5%** KCS's third grade reading proficiency is the highest it's ever been.



Teaching is the heart of our mission - and KCS is pursuing innovative strategies to retain and attract great educators

Fulton High School teacher Griffin Vann began her career in nursing. For more than twenty years, she cared for patients in pediatrics. But in 2022, Vann decided to make a change.

“I decided to switch to teaching because I wanted to help students learn more about the field of nursing as a career,” Vann said. “There are so many options in a nursing career and so many different kinds of jobs nurses can do, and I wanted to share the knowledge I have obtained with others.”

Fortunately, KCS is one of only two districts in Tennessee qualified to serve as its own EPP, or Education Preparation Provider. EPPs are certified to train and endorse aspiring educators through on-the-job training and state-approved coursework.

For Vann, it was access to the KCS Educator Prep Program that made her transition from the hospital to the classroom possible. Now, students at Fulton High School learn health sciences, medical therapeutics, and nursing education from a career professional. Meanwhile, Vann is learning from her students and fellow educators.

The results, according to Vann, are amazing: “Our students get the opportunity to learn from someone who has actually done the work, and I had no idea how much behind-the-scenes work goes into a lecture or lab or class session. This is teaching you how to do that, so that when I stand up in front of a classroom, I am confident and organized and I know what I’m doing.”



Griffin Vann poses for a photo during a break at a recent training session.

In five months, Vann will graduate from the KCS Educator Prep Program with her teaching certification. A month after that, her students will walk across the stage to get their diploma.

Moments like these have never been more important. Nationwide, more teachers are exiting the profession while colleges and universities are graduating fewer education majors each year. The result? Fiercer competition for talented educators like Griffin Vann.

In 2022, as part of a strategic restructuring of the KCS district office, Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk established a dedicated Talent Acquisition Department within the Business and Talent Division to oversee initiatives like the KCS Educator Prep Program. Led by Executive Director of Talent Acquisition, Alex Moseman, the newly created department

is responsible for finding, developing, and retaining great educators for every KCS classroom.

For Moseman and his team, that means opening new doors for prospective educators and investing intentionally and meaningfully in KCS’s more than 4,000 talented teachers. According to Moseman, the Talent Acquisition Department is “committed to using every tool we can to keep our great educators, and to raise awareness about the amazing opportunities available for educators who are considering our district.”

OPENING NEW DOORS

The Talent Acquisition Department officially opened its own doors in August of 2022. Since that time, the department has increased enrollment in teacher preparation pathways by more than 150%, providing more opportunities than ever before for prospective educators to enter the classroom.

Programs like the KCS EPP and KCS’s Grow Your Own partnership with the University of Tennessee provide financial assistance and flexible scheduling options for second-career professionals and teaching assistants to become fully certified teachers.

The district’s Grow Your Own initiative even caught the attention of the White House, inspiring a visit from First Lady Dr. Jill Biden and Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona in the fall of 2022. During a surprise visit to Sarah Moore Greene Magnet Academy and the University of Tennessee,

“The education job market is intensely competitive. At KCS, we’re committed to creating clear, accessible, and well-supported pathways from the community to the classroom for anyone interested in joining our team.”

Jennifer Hemmelgarn, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Talent
Knox County Schools



Interested in joining the KCS team?

Scan to get started!



Dr. Biden and Dr. Cardona met with KCS Grow Your Own candidates Karol Harper, Monica Angelelli, and Dion Dykes. At the time, all three candidates were in teaching apprenticeships, taking classes outside of school hours to earn their license. Today, Harper teaches special education at Ball Camp Elementary; Angelelli teaches special education at Farragut Middle and is on track to earn her master's; and Dykes is an educational assistant at Sarah Moore Greene, who is on track to get his master's.

But enrolling candidates in high-quality teachers prep pathways is only half the challenge. Choosing to become a teacher is a big decision, and the prospect of navigating licensure and degree requirements can feel daunting to any aspiring educator. This is why the Talent Acquisition Department launched an online interest portal capable of connecting anyone interested in becoming a teacher to a KCS recruiter in 30 seconds or less.

During its first hiring season, the department received more than 170 leads for potential educators through the online interest form, with more than 20% of the prospective applicants identifying as candidates of color. The team also conducted over 150 early interviews with

prospective teaching candidates to identify the highest-quality candidates and make job offers before the usual hiring season.

By focusing its efforts on intentional and early recruitment, KCS is working to close vacancies and position great educators in every classroom.

INVESTING IN EDUCATORS

At the same time, KCS is committed to investing in the dedicated and talented teachers responsible for leading instruction throughout the district each and every day. This is a priority of particular significance to Superintendent Dr. Rysewyk, who has made his position clear: "Our people make learning possible, and we will continue to prioritize improving pay, benefits, and professional development for educators, staff, and school leaders."

In the spring, KCS budgeted more than \$24.8 million to fund a 4% increase to teacher salaries and 12% increases to salaries for educational assistants, custodians, security officers, and front office assistants. These investments are in addition to the 73% of employee health insurance premiums covered by the district, and in addition to signing bonuses for difficult-

to-fill positions, including the \$5,000 signing bonus offered to math teachers and the \$7,000 signing bonus offered to special education teachers.

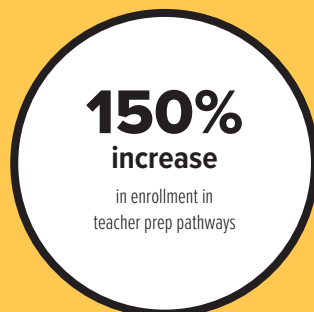
Beyond the budget, KCS has committed to investing in meaningful opportunities for professional development, growth, and advancement for classroom leaders. This work began in the fall of 2022 with the establishment of Regional Teacher Councils. Last year alone, more than 109 teachers served on a Regional Teacher Council, representing every school in the district.

"There are so many options in a nursing career and so many different kinds of jobs nurses can do, and I wanted to share the knowledge I have obtained with others."

Griffin Vann, Fulton High School Teacher



KCS educators Karol Harper, Monica Angelelli, and Dion Dykes with First Lady Dr. Jill Biden and Secretary of Education Dr. Miguel Cardona.



GREAT EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT



Eddie Courtney stands on the Farragut football field.

THE LONGEST-TENURED TEACHER

The town of Farragut was mostly farmland when Eddie Courtney began working at the high school in 1976, but he has witnessed quite an evolution during his 47-year career as a teacher and coach.

As a young person entering the profession, he was excited to serve the community in such an integral way.

“Coaching and teaching is very respectable, especially when you’re trying to be an example and positive role model,” he said. “That’s why I got started and what’s kept me here for so long.”

In the near half-century Courtney has been teaching, he’s developed a firm set of beliefs that he applies inside the classroom and out

– a standard for presenting yourself as a professional, conscientious citizen.

This Code of Conduct is proudly displayed on the wall of his office and he says it’s not just for his athletes and students, but also for him and his coworkers.

Time has granted Courtney the opportunity to meet hundreds of teachers – all at different points in their careers. His best advice on getting started is to “have a passion for helping kids.” To have a career as long as his, earn the trust and respect of your students.

“Just be consistent. When things are going good or when they’re going bad, you have to continue to be the same person.”

THE NEWCOMER

Googling “how to become a Tennessee teacher,” provides a pretty clear path: go to an accredited college, earn a bachelor’s degree, complete an approved educator prep program, and pass appropriate Praxis exams.

Knox County is committed to finding innovative ways to recruit new teachers, something that has benefitted Jayla Huddleston, who started her career just one year after becoming a legal adult.

Huddleston has always been drawn to kids. After graduating high school early, she took time off to become a family nanny and a tutor at Gresham Middle.

“After starting as a tutor, I knew I wanted a bigger role here, so I started school and finished faster than normal because I took some accelerated courses,” she said.

A Gresham alumni, she said it was easy to come back to her old school and community—it was familiar because some of her current coworkers were her teachers when she was at the school just a few years ago.

“I’m leaning on the veteran teachers and learning a lot about the importance of building relationships with students,” Huddleston said.

“The other math teacher I work with has a connection with almost every student she has and I’m learning that makes teaching easier. I know what I’m doing with math and instruction, but I’m learning how to build relationships like that with my own students.”

Still, she says her biggest learning curve has been reminding herself of her ‘why’ each day, especially the challenging ones. “In the end,” she says, “it’s all worth it because of what I get to do.”



Jayla Huddleston, a math teacher at Gresham Middle School.



Isidro Rodriguez (middle) celebrates graduation from Field artillery BOLC (basic officer leadership course) with classmates.

THE SECOND-CAREER VETERAN

Isidro Rodriguez also had a unique path to his current role as an ESL instructor. After high school, Rodriguez joined the Army National Guard, where he's been serving for 12 years.

It was when he felt the calling to help students like him find their own path that he decided to become a teacher, while still serving his country.

"I feel like a lot of kids who are Hispanic or aren't from this country take a long time to learn about the opportunities available," Rodriguez said. "My dad, being an immigrant himself, didn't understand that there are different doors you can open after high school instead of just going straight to work."

Now a middle school ESL teacher at Gresham Middle, he hopes to use his past experiences to open the eyes of his students to career options they may not have been exposed to before.

"They enjoy my stories and getting to know me because I've been very fortunate. I've traveled all over the world with the Army. I've gotten to see a lot of beautiful places, a lot of places that they wish they could one day see," he said. "I tell them they just need a little bit of education and they can go wherever they want."

KCS NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FOR SUPPORT OF GUARD, RESERVE EMPLOYEES



Dr. Rysewyk and members of the KCS leadership team at the Pentagon to accept the Freedom Award.



Knox County Schools was one of 15 organizations from across the nation to receive the 2023 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award, the highest U.S. government honor to employers for support of National Guard and Reserve employees.

According to ESGR, recipients distinguished themselves by going far beyond the requirements of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, or USERRA, to support their National Guard and Reserve employees.

In receiving the award, Knox County Schools was recognized for:

- Human Resources policies that exceed federal requirements, including a recent increase in the accrued military leave for service members from 20 to 30 days;
- Student participation in events including the annual Veterans Day parade;
- School participation in the national Medal of Honor convention; and
- Recognition of veterans at athletic events and other gatherings.

"Guard and Reserve Service members are valued employees of Knox County Schools, and their excellence in teaching, leading, and supporting students will make a difference for generations to come," said Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk. "One of our educational goals is to help students understand the importance of giving back to their community, and these employees are living examples of that dedication."

Major Michael Hicks, who serves in the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tennessee Army National Guard and is a social studies teacher at Hardin Valley Academy, nominated the district for the award. "I have taught for 10 years in Knox County Schools and have been placed on orders or had extended drill weekends multiple times," he said. "HVA and KCS have given me and my family 100% support while serving my country and are very deserving of the Employer Support Freedom Award recognition."



Career Empowerment and Preparation



KCS is preparing graduates for what comes next - enrolling in a post-secondary school, finding high-wage employment, or enlisting in military service.

Hardin Valley Academy student Peyton Jones was “absolutely certain” she wanted to be a veterinarian. She even signed up for HVA’s Advanced Life Sciences pathway to prepare for that future. But, somewhere along the way, Peyton changed her mind. “I realized that, from all these experiences I can be someone who works anywhere in the health field,” she explained.

Rather than veterinary medicine, Jones realized she wanted to study psychology. So after graduating from HVA in May with a CNA license, Jones set off for Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. One of only 1,800 students nationwide to win a QuestBridge full-ride scholarship, Jones asserts that her classes in the Life Sciences pathway at HVA have “for sure” prepared her for what comes next. “I have all these connections now,” she remarked. “I think my CNA experience will make my search for summer internships a bit easier, too!”

Easing the transition from high school to whatever comes next is precisely what KCS wants to do for graduates. With a rapidly shifting workforce and an increasingly competitive collegiate landscape, preparing students for life after graduation requires more alignment between classroom experiences and postsecondary and workforce opportunities than ever before.

REIMAGINING HIGH SCHOOL

In 2022, in partnership with Ford Next Generation Learning, Knox Education Foundation, and the Knoxville Chamber, KCS began the work of fundamentally reimagining the high school experience.

The goal? To prepare every student to enroll in college, enlist in service to their country, or find high-wage employment after graduation.

“Time and time again, students have told us they want to be more prepared for what comes after graduation,” explains Shannon Jackson, Executive Director of one of KCS’s

newest departments—the College and Career Readiness Department. “Offering a variety of advanced academic and industry-specific opportunities in high school gives students a chance to experience some aspects of college and the workforce while still providing a safety net of sorts.”

Established in 2022, the College and Career Readiness department is responsible for creating a rigorous program of advanced academic offerings, diverse Career and Technical Education pathways, and college- and career-focused counseling services for every student.

The 865 Academies Fall 2022

AUSTIN-EAST MAGNET HIGH
BEARDEN HIGH
CENTRAL HIGH
FARRAGUT HIGH

FULTON HIGH
HARDIN VALLEY ACADEMY
KARNS HIGH
L&N STEM ACADEMY

Onboarded Spring 2023

CARTER HIGH

SOUTH-DOYLE HIGH





Freshmen at eight KCS high schools experienced this change firsthand with the launch of the 865 Academies in 2022. Beginning with the establishment of dedicated ‘Freshman Academies,’ the 865 Academies are a new take on the high school experience: a way to make the expansive high school environment feel more personal—and more relevant to each individual student.

That sense of relevance and belonging comes from the creation of ‘small learning communities’ of students. For ninth graders, that means beginning their high school years in a dedicated Freshman Academy. In addition to taking traditional classes, ninth graders participate in a year-long Freshman Seminar course, designed to give them exposure to a broad array of prospective careers through industry visits, college tours, guest speakers from the business community, and YouScience—a comprehensive interest and aptitude assessment that provides freshmen with an in-depth analysis of their unique talents and professional interests.

At the end of the school year, freshmen at each school declared for a career-themed academy aligned to their interests or aspirations. For 10th through 12th grade, students will take traditional high school classes alongside peers who share their long-term interests, while also engaging in industry-specific courses and workforce experiences, such as job shadowing and apprenticeships.

Each of these academies, or small learning communities, will be staffed by a dedicated administrator, counselor, and team of teachers, ensuring that students are consistently supported by a network of educators who know them—making the large high school environment feel just a little bit smaller, and more personalized to each student’s unique needs and interests.

According to students like Chloe Ellis, the 865 Academies are off to a promising start.

“It’s really helping you start to think about your future,” explains Ellis, a Bearden High School student ambassador. “People are excited about it because they get to have a more specialized path through high school and it feels more unique.”

Fulton High School Academy Coach Kensey Zimmerman agrees. “When you have a small group of teachers that are connecting with you on a daily basis, it allows students to not fall through the cracks.”

partners engaging with schools and students to provide meaningful, relevant workforce and postsecondary experiences for future graduates.

To that end, every 865 Academies school is supported by an Academy Coach, who serves as a liaison between the school and business community. Academy Coaches coordinate guest speakers, industry and college visits, job shadowing opportunities, and student apprenticeships. They also organize ‘externships’ for educators to visit job sites to see firsthand how their classroom content is applied throughout the workforce that awaits their students.

These experiences give students a firsthand look at the world after graduation, providing invaluable opportunities for students like Peyton and Chloe to discover what they like—and what they don’t like—long before they are required to declare a college major or commit to a lifelong profession. And, hopefully, that knowledge will make the transition from high school to what comes next just a little bit easier.

PARTNERING FOR IMPACT

Reframing the high school experience through the lens of college and career readiness also requires the support of the greater Knox County community. The success of the 865 Academies relies on business and community



Students from South-Doyle High celebrate their recent graduation with a ceremonial toss of the cap.





THE
865
 ACADEMIES

10

high schools onboarded to
 The 865 Academies

76.2%

of ninth graders participated in
 YouScience assessments, an almost
 12% increase from 2021-22

60.1%

of students enrolled in Early
 Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs),
 a 2.7% increase from 2021-22

200

teachers participated in
 industry externships

“66

Over the next two and a half years, KCS plans to invest more than \$10 million in grant funding to make state-of-the-art improvements to middle and high school facilities. These upgrades will create high-quality learning environments that provide students with hands-on opportunities to develop the skills and trades they need to be competitive in the future job market.”

Dr. Garfield Adams, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
 Knox County Schools



CLASS OF
2023

3,967

students graduated from
 KCS high schools

\$167m+
 earned in scholarships

17,322

postsecondary
 (college or trade school)
 classes taken

83

students committed to
 military service





Scan to learn
more about
The 865
Academies



A welding student from Carter High School works on his latest project.



Every learner is unique - and KCS is creating a path to success for every student

The promise of a great public education is an exemplary academic experience for every student—regardless of zip code, circumstance, and unique learning needs. For educators, that promise is more than a mandate; it's a heartfelt determination to provide the best possible education for each and every student.

At KCS, the centerpiece of this effort is the Student Success Division. Established as part of the districtwide reorganization in 2022, the Student Success Division is responsible for overseeing and maintaining an integrated network of interventions, services, and supports to ensure every student is able to access a high-quality, exemplary education.

"By taking innovative approaches to leadership and planning and individualizing student supports, we are creating an

excellent educational environment for all students," says Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk.

Led by Assistant Superintendent of Student Success Jason Myers, the division includes three departments—Special Education, School Culture, and Student Supports—and is also responsible for the direct supervision and support of Region 5 schools, providing the region with more rapid access to the student-focused services and supports within the division.

"At KCS, we believe that every student is capable of learning and capable of succeeding," says Myers. "It's our responsibility to ensure that high-quality, engaged learning is taking place in every classroom."

THE REGION 5 WAY

KCS and the Student Success Division are taking that commitment seriously. Shortly after his appointment as Superintendent, Dr. Rysewyk announced the launch of a full-scale strategic planning process to close persistent achievement gaps in Region 5. Located in and around downtown Knoxville, Region 5 includes many of the district's most historic schools, but students in this region are often faced with unique challenges and obstacles to learning. "Too often, many of our students do not fully reach their own personal level of greatness," Director of Region 5 Dr. Dexter Murphy explains, "because they lack clear and guided support in maximizing their talents."

The Region 5 Way aims to change that. A five year strategic plan designed to accelerate learning and improve student



A teacher at Lonsdale Elementary works on a lesson with students.



outcomes, the Region 5 Way is the result of a months-long strategic planning process that engaged more than 250 stakeholders in one-on-one interviews and focus groups, including more than 130 students, more than 50 families, and more than 50 educators—all with deep roots in Region 5.

Angel Bowman, an active member of the Lonsdale community and a KCS parent for 21 years, recalls receiving a phone call from the district, asking her to participate in an in-depth interview regarding the needs and assets in Region 5. “I have never been asked at the regional level what I thought about anything,” Bowman remarks on the experience. “For the region to be asking makes me feel like they want to hear from parents.”

Thanks in large part to the input provided by parents and community members like Bowman, KCS established the Region 5 Way, a five-year plan to dramatically increase academic outcomes for students at all 13 schools in the region. Aligned to the district’s four priorities, the Region 5 Way is built around four core strategies: high academic expectations for all students, recruiting and retaining elite educators, providing career and college pathways for K-12 students, and

establishing systems to meet whole-child needs for academic success. “The goals are high,” according to Sarah Moore Greene Magnet Academy Principal Robin Curry. “But they are attainable with a lot of intentionality, dedication, and work—and it’s the work that is needed for our kids.”

Dr. Murphy and Region 5 Supervisor Sallee Reynolds are confident their schools are up to the task. “By setting ambitious, tangible goals and carefully measuring our progress toward them,” Dr. Murphy believes, “the Region 5 Way will be our community’s transformative call to action.”



A student celebrates graduation at Gibbs High School.

STUDENT SUCCESS “DEEP DIVE”

While Region 5 schools work to transform outcomes in their region, the Student Success Division is also looking for opportunities to better support students throughout the district. In February 2023, Superintendent Rysewyk announced the district’s intention to perform a “deep dive” analysis of its various student-focused services, supports, and interventions.

Specifically, the deep dive is aimed at identifying opportunities to improve RTI (Response to Intervention), ELL (English Language Learner), and special education (504 and IEP) services and supports. The process began with a district-wide survey to garner initial feedback from families of students who qualify for those services and progressed with more targeted input-gathering in the spring.

In March, KCS contracted with a third-party firm to facilitate a series of regional family focus groups, and in April, the district announced the formation of a community-led Special Education Task Force charged with generating meaningful and actionable recommendations to improve special education services and supports for students and families.

As a result of this work, the Student Success Division has already announced a number of improvements to its RTI programming, including: 1) the identification of high-dosage, low-ratio tutoring as the primary mechanism for academic intervention; 2) the implementation of a universal screener three times a year to identify student needs; and 3) the piloted extension of dedicated intervention time in Region 5 schools.

A comprehensive and complex undertaking, the district’s “deep dive” into Student Success supports will continue into the 2023-24 school year with more intentional feedback from ELL families, the establishment of a dedicated Special Education Council, and the development of a “KCS Way”—or dedicated plan—to improve special education outcomes.

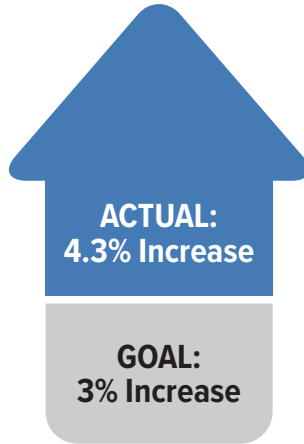
According to Myers, this work is far from over: “We will continually seek to get better. We are determined to make KCS a model for special education in our state, but there will never be a time when we stop improving—there will never be a time we say, ‘we’ve arrived.’”

CREATING A PATH TO SUCCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

IN 2022-23, KCS...

INCREASED

math achievement at state designated schools by 4.3%



Reduced chronic absenteeism by

6%

more than 3x our goal!

Established the **REGION 5 WAY**

in partnership with 250+ stakeholders— including 130+ students, 50+ families, 50+ educators and 20+ community leaders.

The Region 5 Way creates a five-year path to grow:



Scan to keep up with the progress of Region 5

3x

the number of third graders reading at or above grade level

6x

the number of eighth graders at or above grade level in math

4x

the number of students graduating high school ready for college or career



“At KCS, we believe that every student is capable of learning and capable of succeeding. It’s our responsibility to ensure that high-quality, engaged learning is taking place in every classroom.”

Jason Myers, Assistant Superintendent of Student Success
Knox County Schools

WHOLE CHILD SUPPORT TEAMS



Students from Pond Gap Elementary pose for a photo during a class visit.

Every student carries unique needs, talents, and challenges with them into the classroom. More often than not, those needs, talents, and challenges manifest differently from student to student and from classroom to classroom.

That's why the KCS Department of School Culture has created "Whole Child Support Teams" at every school throughout the district.

When staff at the school notice a change in a student or sense a concern, they are encouraged to make a referral to the school's Whole Child Support Team, which generally consists of the school's administration, social workers, counselors, nurse, and school psychologist. Once referrals are received, counselors conduct a root-cause analysis to determine what supports might be needed. The team then coordinates and implements the most appropriate resources and supports for each individual situation. For one student, that might mean scheduling daily check-ins

with a trusted staff member. For another student, that might mean creating 'calming corners' in strategic spaces.

"In a sense, this work is simply about paying attention at a deep level," Janice Cook, Director of School Culture, explains. "We're working hard to make sure every child is seen within the district, and that attention allows us to provide the additional supports that are needed for success."

When the concept of the Whole Child Support Team was introduced to Holston Middle School last year, counselors welcomed the process with open arms. In just over a year, the school has already seen significant improvements in student behavior and academics.

Anjelica Nichols, Holston's seventh grade counselor said that—at one point last year—35 seventh graders were failing at least one class. After just two weeks of Whole Child Support Team meetings, 70% of those students were no longer failing and were on the path to continuing to improve their grades.

"If we hadn't had everyone at the table with those different ideas or reached out to the students' families, I don't think we would have seen that much of a turnaround," Nichols said of the school's results last year. "Everyone's insight is needed to help the child be successful."

"We're working hard to make sure every child is seen within the district, and that attention allows us to provide the additional supports that are needed for success."

Janice Cook, Director of School Culture
Knox County Schools

Leadership of the District



STRUCTURING FOR SUCCESS

Dr. Jon Rysewyk began his tenure as Superintendent with a full-scale reimagining of Knox County Schools. Beginning with the reorganization of the KCS district office into five operational divisions—Academics, Business and Talent, Operations, Strategy, and Student Success—and continuing with the implementation of a regional model for school support and supervision, Dr. Rysewyk has restructured the district to ensure that students are placed at the center of every decision and schools are positioned to do what only they can do: prepare every student for success in—and beyond—the classroom.

The change has signaled a shift in focus throughout the district. At every level, KCS leaders have been tasked with turning their attention to the district's four priorities: *Excellence in Foundational Skills*, *Great Educators in Every School*, *Career Empowerment and Preparation*, and *Success for Every Student*. Over the course of the 2022-23 school year, these priorities have become the cornerstone of work throughout KCS.

ENGAGING FOR OUTCOMES

Standing in front of the more than 40 parents, educators, and private- and public-sector leaders who serve on the district's Council on Accelerating Student Learning (CASL), Dr. Rysewyk explained that the goals KCS has established for itself are ambitious—but, with the support of the community, achievable. "We cannot do this work alone. With the support of our business community, our non-profit and post-secondary partners, and with the support of KCS families, we know that we can make a difference for kids."

Last year, KCS engaged more than 300 community members on 16 councils dedicated to improving outcomes for students. Regional Teacher Councils, Regional Family Councils, and the Council on Accelerating Student Learning organized their work around the district's four priorities, identifying areas of focus and problems of



Students at Beaumont Magnet Academy talk with Superintendent Dr. Rysewyk during a school visit.

They are reiterated and communicated in the superintendent's weekly message to KCS families. They are apparent in the district's funding priorities for the 2023 fiscal year; they serve as the strategic framework for the KCS Annual Action Plan; and they drive the work of the district's multiple engagement councils.

practice to tackle—all through the unique lens of each individual council. Meanwhile, the industry and post-secondary leaders serving on the CEO Champions Council and 865 Academies Steering Committee lent their expertise and business acumen to preparing KCS students for the workforce, advising on critical skill gaps in the field and identifying opportunities for meaningful industry experiences for students and teachers alike.

"This is only the beginning. With these systems and councils in place, we're ready for the hard work."

Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk

Weekly

family messages from Superintendent Dr. Jon Rysewyk shared in English and Spanish

1.3m+

ParentSquare messages shared with families

300+

members on 16 engagement councils representing students, families, educators, community leaders, and regions

4 PRIORITIES

5 DIVISIONS

5 REGIONS

1 GOAL:

To **graduate every student** ready to succeed in the future of their choosing, through:

- **Enrollment** in a post-secondary institution;
- **Enlistment** in the military; or
- **Employment** in a high-wage, high-demand career.

KCS



A student from Bearden High celebrates graduation.



YEAR IN REVIEW

2022-23



AUGUST

At the start of the school year, KCS announced the “Safe Schools, Safe Students” initiative. At a news conference with our law enforcement partners, district leaders highlighted additional investments in school security funding, and announced actions including upgraded body cameras for school security officers, and upgraded video surveillance capabilities throughout the district.

SEPTEMBER

The district broke ground on Mill Creek Elementary in northwest Knox County. The school opened a year later, in August 2023, for K-2 students. The district also celebrated other capital improvements including the opening of replacement buildings for Lonsdale and Adrian Burnett elementary schools.





OCTOBER

The inaugural meetings of the Regional Teacher Councils and the Regional Family Councils marked a significant milestone for our district. Composed of smaller groups representing each of the district's five regions, their collective purpose is to advocate on behalf of educators and families while offering valuable perspectives and insights to inform the district's decision-making process—a crucial step in the maintenance and cultivation of more inclusive, informed, and effective learning environments.



NOVEMBER

The Council on Accelerated Student Learning (CASL) convened for its first meeting. The group, along with five Regional Family and Teacher councils, the Principal Advisory Council, and the CEO Champions committee, is helping strengthen the district's relationships with key stakeholders across the county.



DECEMBER

The Knox County Board of Education approved a \$1.8 million partnership with the McNabb Center to provide mental health and crisis intervention services in all middle and high schools in 2023, supporting the district's three-tiered mental health framework.





JANUARY

Eight high schools launched the 865 Academies initiative to support the reimagining of the high school experience and better prepare students for life after high school. The district also joined the recently launched 70 x 2024 initiative, which aims for 70% of KCS students to attend a college or trade school after graduation by 2024.

FEBRUARY

Nearly 200 peer-nominated educators were recognized during the annual Teacher of the Year Banquet at the Knoxville Convention Center. Mooreland Heights Elementary's Jill Wise, Holston Middle's David Gornto, and Bearden High's Rebecca Nutter were selected as the district's overall grade band winners.



MARCH

KCS and The 865 Academies hosted the first College & Career Expo at the World's Fair Exhibition Hall. The event welcomed local businesses, colleges, trade schools, and military branches to enable the exploration of postsecondary opportunities by 8th- and 11th-graders.





APRIL

Hardin Valley Academy hosted a signing day for future educators who participated in the district's Teaching As A Profession (TAP) program. In addition to their studies, TAP students get the chance to work in actual classrooms – providing valuable experience and a better understanding of the strategies and practices behind effective teaching and learning. By offering this opportunity, HVA and other high schools are raising up the next generation of great educators who will shape Knox County.



MAY

Walking across the graduation stage is the end of a student's academic journey – and the first step toward pursuing their next dream. We were thrilled to celebrate this milestone with nearly 4,000 graduating seniors from the Class of 2023. These students achieved a graduation rate of 90%, a college-going rate of 60%, and an average ACT score of 20.4—higher than the state average in every case.

JUNE

The district launched the Region 5 Strategic Plan, a five-year roadmap developed with significant stakeholder input to improve educational outcomes in all Region 5 schools. As part of the plan, preschool access is being expanded, cultural competency training provided, and individual learning plans created for students who need them.



LOOKING AHEAD

At KCS, we are committed to identifying and pursuing opportunities to continuously improve our work while simultaneously preserving our most meaningful traditions. During the 2023-24 school year, students and families can expect to see a renewed focus on the district's four core priorities of *Excellence in Foundational Skills*, *Great Educators in Every School*, *Career Empowerment and Preparation*, and *Success for Every Student*.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR:



A new, high-quality math curriculum for students in K-12 grade



A new marketing and recruitment initiative to attract prospective educators to KCS



The launch of Freshman Academies at four new 865 Academies Schools



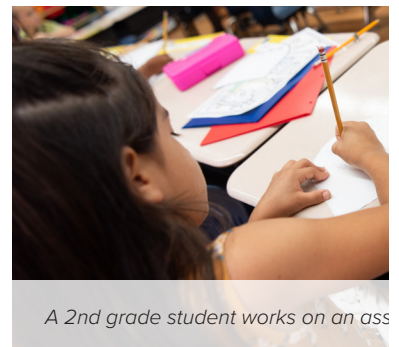
Expanded student and family supports at the district office



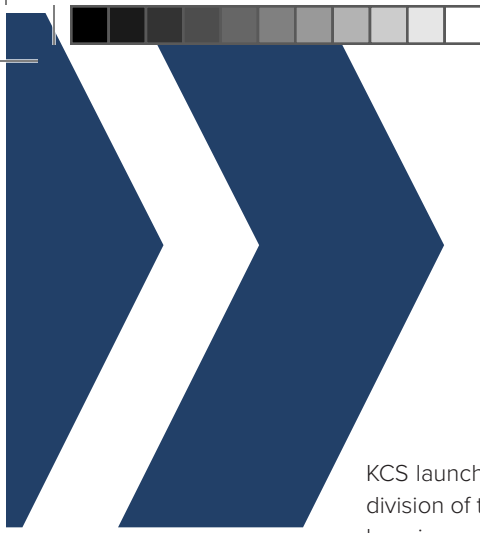
A KCS tutor works with a student at Green Magnet Academy.



School Security Office Joe Odom talks with students during lunch at Bonny Kate Elementary.



A 2nd grade student works on an assignment.



2023-24 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

KCS launched five strategic initiatives over the course of the 2022-23 school year. Each of these initiatives was led by a division of the district office, aligned to one or more priorities, and designed to better support schools' work to accelerate learning and improve outcomes for all students. Next year, KCS is launching eight additional strategic initiatives to enhance our work and support our students, staff, and families throughout the district.

ACADEMICS DIVISION

<p>The 865 Academies Reimagining the high school experience to prepare students for success in the 21st Century workforce</p>	<p>Literacy Landscape Analysis* Districtwide analysis of the early literacy landscape to identify opportunities for targeted support in reading instruction</p>	<p>ALIGN Network* Partnering with aftercare and afterschool enrichment providers to align resources and support</p>
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BUSINESS AND TALENT DIVISION

<p>Teach Knox* Investing in current and future KCS educators by promoting clear pathways to the classroom and offering meaningful opportunities for professional growth</p>	<p>Salary Schedule Study* Conducting a comprehensive assessment of salary schedules to inform budget-making</p>	<p>Leadership Development Series* Exploring and offering development opportunities for school and district office administrators to enhance business and project management capacity</p>
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OPERATIONS DIVISION

<p>Facilities Assessment* Conducting a comprehensive review and assessment of all existing facilities to direct maintenance, renovation, and capital improvement schedules</p>	<p>Safe Schools Safe Students Partnering with local law enforcement to maintain safe learning environments for all students</p>
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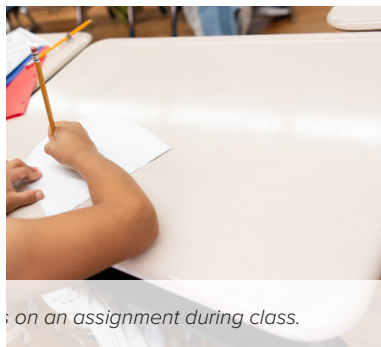
STRATEGY DIVISION

<p>District and School Planning Creating alignment between school and districtwide improvement plans</p>	<p>Communication Reimagined* Reimagining communication to increase understanding of, access to, and engagement with KCS</p>	<p>Student and Family Support Center* Launching a center dedicated to assisting students and families in navigating district information, services, and supports</p>
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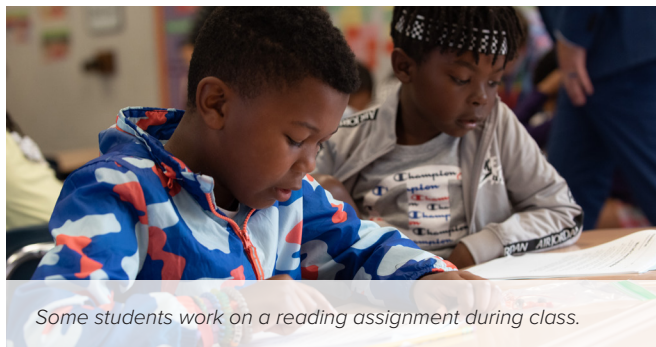
STUDENT SUCCESS DIVISION

<p>Region 5 Strategic Plan Implementing Year One of the "Region 5 Way" to accelerate student learning and improve student outcomes in Region 5</p>	<p>Student Success Deep Dive Analysis Improving RTI and Special Education services, interventions, and supports in response to deep dive analysis, and continuing analysis into ELL services, interventions, and supports</p>
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*Launching in 2023-2024



A student working on an assignment during class.



Some students work on a reading assignment during class.



Students from West High pose for a photo during their graduation ceremony.



Fiscal Year 2024

BUDGET Snapshot

\$660.7 MILLION Revenue

The General Fund pays for the day-to-day operations of Knox County Schools. The single largest portion of the district's annual funding comes from the state, followed by local option sales taxes.



An elementary student knows the answer to her teacher's question.



A School Security Officer at Mill Creek Elementary welcomes a student on the first day of classes.



Administrators from Farragut Primary welcome prospective teachers at the 2023 KCS Hiring Fair.



A senior from Austin-East Magnet High School celebrates during the 2023 commencement.

LOCAL

Just over 72% of the Local Option Sales Tax collected in Knox County and the City of Knoxville; 50% collected in the Town of Farragut; and 35% of the \$1.55 county property tax rate are allocated to the KCS General Purpose fund. Other sources include portions of the wheel tax, litigation tax, and license and permit fees.

50.38%
\$332,900,000



STATE

Tennessee Invest in Student Achievement (TISA) funds represent the single largest source of revenue for the KCS General Fund budget and allocations are based on the total amount of money available, prior year student enrollment, and local government authority to raise taxes. Other state sources include driver education fees, Medicaid reimbursements, and the mixed-drink tax.

47.85%
\$316,100,000



OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Includes revenues from individual school receipts, attorney fees, leases and rentals, and other miscellaneous items like reimbursements and operating transfers from school nutrition, indirect costs charged to federal funds, and federal ROTC salaries.

1.77%
\$11,700,000



Federal Funding

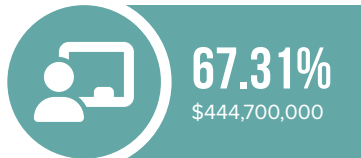
Most of the approximately \$60.8 million of federal funding received by the district comes from grants for Title I, II, III, and IV programs; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) services; school nutrition reimbursements; and a few other sources. Additionally, over the last few years, the district has received a share of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) provided by Congress to support schools in preventing, preparing for, and responding to the impact of COVID-19. The \$114.1 million from ESSER 3.0 will sunset in September of 2024 and will not be available for FY25.

School Nutrition

The district's school nutrition budget is managed independently of the General Fund and Capital Fund Budgets. The revenues come from the sale of breakfast and lunch to students and staff and from reimbursement from the federal government for meals served to students in 37 schools as part of the Community Eligibility Schools.

\$660.7 MILLION General Purpose Budget

- Net increase of \$69.2 million
- Budgeted Per Pupil Expenditure: \$11,269
- More than 70% of district spending goes directly to classroom and student supports



CLASSROOM AND STUDENT INVESTMENTS

Includes new investment of almost \$31 million in compensation through step raises for eligible employees and a **4% salary increase for all staff with an additional 8% (total 12%) for difficult-to-fill positions such as custodians, educational assistants, school clerical staff, and school security officers**, as well as dollars to address the rising cost of medical insurance premiums. Includes funds for additional behavioral and academic supports; professional development opportunities for advanced academics programming; and start up materials for the new Mill Creek Elementary.



A student prepares to work on an assignment.



ADDITIONAL STAFFING INVESTMENTS

Includes the cost for 34 positions (teachers and support personnel) needed to open the new Mill Creek Elementary; 16 elementary and two middle school teaching positions; five assistant administrators, and a middle school counselor; as well as 10 behavioral and 10 academic interventionist positions for a pilot program focused on elementary and middle school support. Also pays for several critically needed, unbudgeted school-level positions including special education teachers and educational assistants, alternative school teachers, and ELL assistants.



Students from Green Magnet enjoy some time outside.

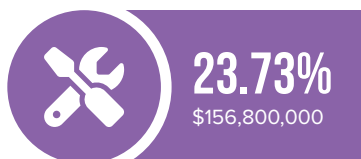


CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

Includes annual principal and interest costs from the the General Purpose Operating Budget to Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects (\$11 million for FY24). For 2023-24, the district is scheduled to incur \$2 million in additional annual debt requirements associated with energy management initiatives; investing in the project allows the district to avoid issuing bonds and saves an estimated \$14 million in interest charges over a 20-year



A teacher at Fountain City Elementary poses a question.



MAINTENANCE/OPERATIONS

Includes \$500,000 for playground upkeep and maintenance and funds for project start-ups as well as investments in transportation equipment, security, IT, and communications; and addresses inflationary cost increases for building upkeep; maintenance contracts, supplies, and equipment; and student transportation.

Safe Schools, Safe Students

In the 2023-24 school year, KCS is investing nearly \$9 million in school safety funding – as well as additional grant dollars – on security measures including perimeter fencing enhancements and upgrading every school with security window film. In addition, the district is providing School Security Officers with an unprecedented salary increase of 12%.

Prioritizing People

The 2023-24 budget includes \$24.8 million in additional compensation for staff: \$16.8 million to provide 4% base salary increases to all certified and classified staff, and \$3.2 million in funding will provide an additional 8% base salary increase (for a total of 12%) to all custodians, school clerical staff, educational assistants, and school security officers.

THANK YOU

REGION 1

REGIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL

Megan Burton, A.L. Lotts Elementary
Miller Foutch, Bearden Elementary
Sheena Musinovic, Blue Grass Elementary
Gitashree Goswami, Farragut Primary
Courtney Childers, Farragut Intermediate
Brittany Ford, Northshore Elementary
Kristopher Ross, Pond Gap Elementary
Olivia Parton, Rocky Hill Elementary
Jonathan Fortner, Sequoyah Elementary
Amanda Paletz, West Hills Elementary

Esmeralda Contreras, West View Elementary
Holly Williams, Bearden Middle
Stephanie Thompson, Farragut Middle
Rochelle Mayes, West Valley Middle
Heather Casciano, Bearden High
Wendy Edwards, Farragut High
Jessica Legg, West High
James Ervin, At Large
Shane Horner, At Large
Wade Hulsey, At Large

REGIONAL TEACHER COUNCIL

Rachel Minardo, A. L. Lotts Elementary
Amy Cox, Bearden Elementary
Lauren Rosenbush, Blue Grass Elementary
Lindsey Alley, Farragut Primary
Christy Davis, Farragut Intermediate
Ali Thompson, Northshore Elementary
Macy Mitchell, Pond Gap Elementary
Madeline Morgan, Rocky Hill Elementary
Hillary Hudson, Sequoyah Elementary
Kelly Boyd, West Hills Elementary
Amanda Garrett, West View Elementary

Corey Dugan, Bearden Middle
Elizabeth Choi, Farragut Middle
Antoinette Williams, West Valley Middle
Logan Peterson, Bearden High
Chris Hampton, Farragut High
Valerie Schmidt- Gardner, West High
Jami Aylor, At Large
Meghan Bennett, At Large
Sarah Fortney, At Large
Steven Jones, At Large
Laura Roberts, At Large
Kelly Shanton, At Large

REGION 2

REGIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL

Nicole Merrifield, Amherst Elementary
Shaneece McClendon, Ball Camp Elementary
Sarah Stamp, Cedar Bluff Elementary
Beth Braden, Hardin Valley Elementary
Rachael Barwick, Karns Elementary
Annette Longhurst, Norwood Elementary
Cassy Guzzo, Pleasant Ridge Elementary
Allison Malone, Powell Elementary
Timothy Buss, West Haven Elementary
Erin Herrington, Cedar Bluff Middle

Chris Keim, Hardin Valley Middle
LaToya Myles, Karns Middle
Rachel Shaver, Northwest Middle
Steven Goodpaster, Powell Middle
Traci Greene, Ridgedale
Kristy Casey, Hardin Valley Academy
Johnny Coffey, Karns High
Charity Elliott, Powell High
Christopher Eaker, At Large
Darcy Olander, At Large
Holly White, At Large

REGIONAL TEACHER COUNCIL

Emily Spangler, Amherst Elementary
Jennifer Manges, Ball Camp Elementary
Kristen Creswell, Cedar Bluff Elementary
Chelsea Gillis, Hardin Valley Elementary
Kristin Rayment, Karns Elementary
Kelli Smith, Norwood Elementary
Julie Leathers, Pleasant Ridge Elementary
Lee Doane, Powell Elementary
Myra Pickett, West Haven Elementary
Kristi Bailey, Cedar Bluff Middle
Jill Nelson, Hardin Valley Middle

Jordyn Horner, Karns Middle
Marcy Allen, Northwest Middle
Nicole Magee, Powell Middle
Ronnah McClure, Ridgedale
Laura Shands, Hardin Valley Academy
Anne Hudnall, Karns High
Kristi Jeffers, Powell High
Laurie Smith, At Large
Kathleen Smith, At Large
Ani Roma, At Large
Rachel Monday, At Large
Kristi Radocesky, At Large

REGION 3

REGIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL

Jason McLemore, Bonny Kate Elementary
Jason Sharp, Carter Elementary
Lacey Lyons, Chilhowee Intermediate
Kara Finger, Dogwood Elementary
Amber Lindsey, East Knox County Elementary
Brittney Haynes, Mooreland Heights Elementary
Andrew Schoenecker, Mount Olive Elementary
Jill Maples, New Hopewell Elementary
Amy Brooks, South Knoxville Elementary
Karen Pilkington, Sunnyview Primary
Stacy Palado, Carter Middle

Justin Jackson, South-Doyle Middle
Keith Lindsey, Career Magnet Academy
Sheila Wolford, Carter High
Sarah McGraw, South-Doyle High
Katie Van Dyke, L&N STEM Academy
Carrie Grey, At Large
Jenny Henderlight, At Large
Amanda Snyder, At Large
Libby White, At Large
Porshe Wynn, At Large

REGIONAL TEACHER COUNCIL

Lauren Fewrier, Bonny Kate Elementary
Kim Sveska, Carter Elementary
Scarlett Hopkins, Dogwood Elementary
Bekah Parrott, East Knox County Elementary
Rebecca Ratledge, Gap Creek Elementary
Christina Chapman, Mooreland Heights Elementary
Stacy Davis, Mount Olive Elementary
Randa Stinnett, New Hopewell Elementary
Susan Parker, South Knoxville Elementary
Ana Zambrana, Sunnyview Primary
Jason France, Carter Middle

Jeremy Lorenz, South-Doyle Middle
Jamie Scott, Career Magnet Academy
Heather Wade, Carter High
Kimberley Nixon, South-Doyle High
Stephen Blythe, L&N STEM Academy
Beth Sewell, Kelley Volunteer Academy
Laurie Griffin, At Large
Brandi Carr, At Large
Jani Chollman, At Large
Daniel Owen, At Large
Mandy McNeely, At Large

REGION 4

REGIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL

Shelley Ashe-Haun, Adrian Burnett Elementary
Devin DeBusk, Brickey-McCloud Elementary
Chelsea Cunningham, Copper Ridge Elementary
Amber Foster, Corryton Elementary
Coral Turner, Fort Sanders Educational
Development Center
Kristina Howard, Fountain City Elementary
Tara Calfee, Gibbs Elementary
Sarah Fusion, Halls Elementary
Kenny Pryor, Inskip Elementary
Talesha Littlejohn, Ritta Elementary
Charles Waller, Shannondale Elementary

Kendall Martin, Sterchi Elementary
CH Qualls, Gibbs Middle
Jessica Buttram, Gresham Middle
Christina Stockwell, Halls Middle
Lanna Smith, Central High
Lori Turner, Gibbs High
Allison Oaks, Halls High
Adam Gossage, Richard Yoakley
Matthew Gent, At Large
Nita Sexton, At Large
Daniela Laws, At Large
Sola Aduloju, At Large
Sheena Smith, At Large

REGIONAL TEACHER COUNCIL

Christina Leeth, Adrian Burnett Elementary
Korry Allen, Brickey-McCloud Elementary
Jennifer Kitts, Copper Ridge Elementary
Melissa Biggs, Corryton Elementary
Victoria Peña, Fort Sanders Educational
Development Center
Sherry Sakleh, Fountain City Elementary
Julie Long, Gibbs Elementary
Jennifer DePew, Halls Elementary
Kara Townsend, Inskip Elementary
Chris Douglass, Ritta Elementary
Maegan Lay, Shannondale Elementary
Heather Presley, Sterchi Elementary

Shanda Anderson, Gibbs Middle
Jack Fornadel, Gresham Middle
Caleb Horner, Halls Middle
Andrea Turner, Central High
Jennifer Williams, Gibbs High
Lauren Whittington, Halls High
Abby Ketron, KAEC
Jesse Horton, Richard Yoakley
Jade Jernigan, At Large
Cheri Siler, At Large
Elizabeth Pavelchek, At Large
Constance Henley, At Large
Alyssa Lane, At Large

REGION 5

REGIONAL FAMILY COUNCIL

Mabern Wall, Beaumont Magnet Academy
Heather Glossup, Beaumont Magnet Academy
Karen Daugherty, Belle Morris Elementary
Sam Walker, Christenberry Elementary
Philip Ems, Christenberry Elementary
Andrew Righter, Fair Garden Family Center
Jennifer Alayo-Aguilar, Lonsdale Elementary
Brittany Bonds, Maynard Elementary
Amber Brubaker, Sarah Moore Greene Magnet
Joy Parks, Sarah Moore Greene Magnet

Leah Clouse, Spring Hill Elementary
Erin Keck, Holston Middle
Brittney Womack, Holston Middle
Rhonda Daies, Vine Middle Magnet
Michael Monday-Hines, Whittle Springs Middle
Juanita Thomas, Austin-East Magnet High
Shawn Scarbrough, Fulton High
Juan Gomez Lucas, Fulton High
Daria Turner, Knox County Virtual School
Jennifer Rose, At Large
Emily Raugust, At Large

REGIONAL TEACHER COUNCIL

Olivia Cates, Belle Morris Elementary
Michele Genova, Christenberry Elementary
Shelby Prince, Fair Garden Family Center
Jaime Ogle, Green Magnet Academy
Adrienne Toro, Lonsdale Elementary
Anitra Selmon, Maynard Elementary
T.J. Eubanks, Sarah Moore Greene Magnet
Megan Wallace, Sarah Moore Greene Magnet

Linda Holtzclaw, Holston Middle
Sonya Kyle, Vine Middle Magnet
Michelle Gardner, Whittle Springs Middle
Sarah Edge, Austin-East Magnet High
Chris Ottinger, Fulton High
Tarah Karczewski, Knox County Virtual School
Mitchell McGill, Knox County Virtual School
David Newwine, Knox County Virtual School

DISTRICT ENGAGEMENT COUNCILS

COUNCIL ON ACCELERATING STUDENT LEARNING

Daryl Arnold, Overcoming Believers Church
Dr. John Bartlett, Farragut High School
Tomma Battle, Region 5 Family Member
Matthew Best, Change Center
Sam Brown, NAACP
Brandon Bruce, Techstars
Claudia Caballero, Centro Hispano
Dr. David Cihak, University of Tennessee,
Knoxville - College of Education, Health, and
Human Sciences
Jay Cobble, Providence Commercial Real Estate
Sharon Davis, 4-H
Krissy DeAlejandro, tnAchieves
Allie Dempsey, Farragut Middle School
Jim Dickson, YMCA
Steve Diggs, Emerald Youth Foundation
Rick Dunn, Fellowship Church
Kristin Elliot, KCS Parent
Sasha Foust, Region 4 Family Member
Melissa Glover, Gresham Middle School
Angie Goethert, Region 2 Family Member
Dr. Jody Goins, LMU
Paula Hancock, KCEA
Melody Hawkins, Austin-East Magnet High
Hallerin Hilton Hill, WOKI Radio
Beth Killen, TN Plumbing Heating & Cooling
Contractors
Kori Lautner, Knox County Schools
Dr. Charles Lomax, Knoxville Area Urban League
Jeff McMurray, Halls High School
Janet Morgan, Region 1 Family Member
Nancy Nevander, Trane Energy
Crystal Pennell, Mount Olive Elementary
David Reynolds, Home Federal Bank
Dr. Sharon Roberts, SCORE
Adrian Rucker, Knox County Schools
Frances Vineyard, Region 3 Family Member
Patrick Wade, TCAT
Dr. Marianne Wanamaker, University of
Tennessee, Knoxville - Baker Center
Dr. Patty Weaver, Pellissippi State Community
College
Andy White, Toyota/Lexus Knoxville
Caleb Whitworth, Karns High School
Kristi Woods, East Knox County Elementary

PRINCIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dr. Amy Brace, West View Elementary
Dr. Andrew Brown, Central High
Brad Corum, Carter High
Dr. Keith Cottrell, Northshore Elementary
Wes Edmonds, Farragut Middle
Rachel Evans, Karns High
Joann Gardner, Northwest Middle
Candace Greer, Gibbs Middle
Michelle Harper, Mount Olive Elementary
Jessica Holman, Green Magnet Academy
Emily Jellincorse, Chilhowee Intermediate
Kamau Kenyatta, Austin-East Magnet High
Ina Langston, Fountain City Elementary
Chris Layton, Knox County Virtual School
Katie Lutton, Holston Middle
Aaron Maddux, Corryton Elementary
Tenisha Marchbanks, Bearden Middle
Anthony Norris, South-Doyle Middle
Dr. Sunny Scheafnocker, Mill Creek Elementary
Seth Smith, Fulton High
Dr. Ashley Speas, West High
Dr. Rob Speas, Hardin Valley Academy
Trina Spista, Amherst Elementary
Tiffany Watkins, Spring Hill Elementary

CEO CHAMPIONS

Dr. Jon Rysewyk, Knox County Schools
Mike Taylor, Knox Education Foundation
Gabriel Bolas, Knoxville Utilities Board
Kelli Chaney, Tennessee College of Applied
Technology - Knoxville
Dr. Keith Gray, UT Medical Center
Glenn Jacobs, Knox County
Indya Kincannon, City of Knoxville
Matthew Kittrell, CGI
Bart McFadden, Boys & Girls Clubs of the
Tennessee Valley
Lisa New, Zoo Knoxville
Matt Ryerson, United Way of Greater Knoxville
Rob Stivers, Regions Bank
Wes Stowers, Stowers Machinery Corporation
Dr. Anthony Wise, Pellissippi State Community
College

865 ACADEMIES STEERING COMMITTEE

Rev. John Butler, Knox County Board of Education
Lauren Butler, DeRoyal
Alfonso Cruz, Qivira Group
Krissy DeAlejandro, tnAchieves
Courtney Durrett, Knox County Commission
Gordon Heins, A.G. Heins
Christine Horwege, CGI
Shannon Jackson, Knox County Schools
Dr. Polly Johnson, Boys & Girls Clubs of the
Tennessee Valley
Ellie Kittrell, United Way of Greater Knoxville
Lauren Longmire, Knoxville Chamber
Kathy Mack, YWCA
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Laura Overstreet, TN Small Business
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VISION

Grow lifelong learners who contribute their talents, strengths, and skills to build a stronger community.

MISSION

Provide excellent, accessible learning opportunities that empower all students to realize their full potential.



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