

KCS | KNOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

Region 5

Strategic Plan

2023 - 2028



knoxschools.org/region5

SUPERINTENDENT MESSAGE

Some of our community's most historic schools are located in Region 5, and their commitment to students is a crucial part of our educational legacy.

Unfortunately, schools in Region 5 have performed inconsistently over the years and many have faced significant and persistent gaps in student achievement. Recognizing that KCS has not always articulated a clear vision of success for its Region 5 schools, we have spent months working alongside students, families, community partners and educators, to develop the Region 5 Way – a five-year strategic plan to transform outcomes – and futures – for every student in Region 5.

This plan is our commitment to taking intentional and concerted action to ensure that our students excel in the district's four priorities – excellence in foundational skills, providing great educators in every school, career empowerment and preparation, and success for every student.

It will serve as a road map for our schools, providing a set of guiding principles and tangible action steps that include:

- High academic expectations;
- Retaining and recruiting elite educators;
- Providing career and college pathways for all students;
- Systems to meet whole child needs for academic success; and
- Establishing strong foundations for family and community partnerships.

The goals within this plan are ambitious but achievable. By creating a clear vision of the path forward, I believe we can give these amazing students and outstanding educators the support, instruction, and high expectations they need for success.

I'm grateful to everyone whose input shaped this plan, and I'm excited about the future of Region 5!



Dr. Jon Rysewyk
Superintendent
Knox County Schools



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Having served in leadership at several Region 5 schools, I have witnessed the enormous talent and limitless potential our students possess. Too often, many of our students do not fully reach their own personal level of greatness because they lack clear and guided support in maximizing their talents. Thus, we must match their potential and talent by providing a clear and compelling action plan to help them achieve greatness. By setting ambitious, tangible goals and carefully measuring our progress toward them, the **Region 5 Way** will be our community’s transformative call to action. With this plan, we succeed by championing our students with the courage and skills to move forward and thrive in tomorrow’s world!

Dr. Dexter Murphy
 Region 5 Director
 Knox County Schools



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Knox County Schools (KCS) serves more than 60,000 students across 90 preschool, elementary, middle, and high schools. As a district, KCS is committed to preparing every student in Knox County for success in a high-wage, high-demand career of their choosing. As the third largest public school system in Tennessee, however, KCS recognizes that a one-size-fits-all approach to education is insufficient to meet the diverse academic needs of a vast and ever-growing student population.

To more intentionally and effectively meet the needs of its various school communities, KCS organized schools into five regions at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year. Each region is supported by a team of content area experts (math, science, reading, social studies, intervention, English Language Learner, and special education) and led by a regional director and supervisor. Rationalizing schools according to proximity and feeder pattern has allowed for the implementation of more consistent expectations and individualized supports across school communities.

Region 5 includes 13 elementary, middle, and high schools in the Austin-East and Fulton feeder patterns. Students in this region are often faced with unique challenges and obstacles to learning, and KCS has not historically articulated a clear vision of success for the schools in this region. As a result, schools in Region 5 continue to struggle to close persistent achievement gaps and students consistently perform significantly behind their peers.

Elementary Schools

Beaumont Magnet Academy
Belle Morris Elementary
Christenberry Elementary
Green Magnet Academy
Lonsdale Elementary
Maynard Elementary
Sarah Moore Greene Magnet Academy
Spring Hill Elementary

Middle Schools

Holston Middle
Vine Magnet Middle
Whittle Springs Middle

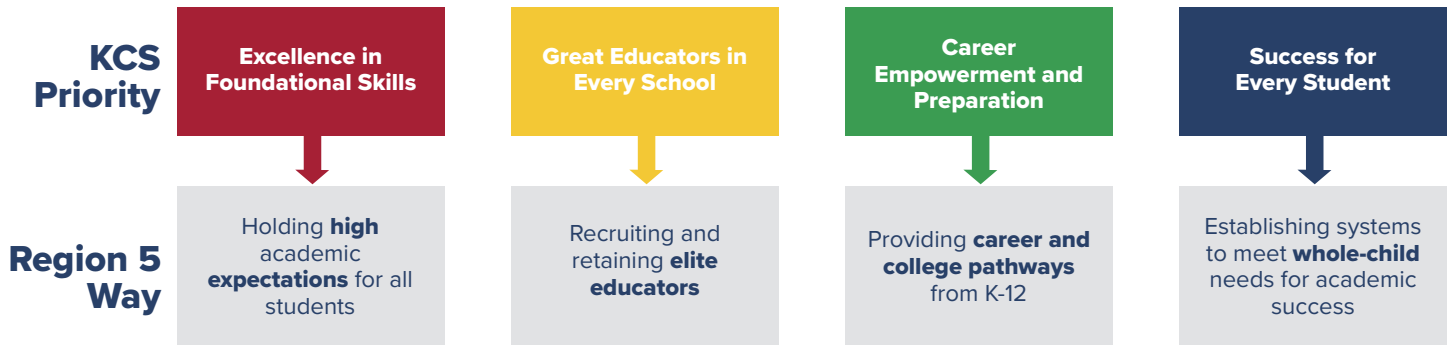
High Schools

Austin-East Magnet High
Fulton High

In the Fall of 2022, KCS enlisted the support of a third-party consultant, Kitamba, to facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategic plan to transform outcomes--and futures--for every student in Region 5. Beginning in December of 2022 and concluding in March of 2023, this strategic planning process consisted of concentrated community engagement, data analysis, and responsive research. Over the course of the strategic planning process, more than 250 stakeholders (including 130+ students) participated in one-on-one interviews and focus groups in English, Spanish, Kirundi, and Swahili. A number of themes emerged:

- **High expectations matter.** Students in Region 5 are resilient learners capable of achieving at a high level, and educators must build their expectations accordingly.
- **Preschool is invaluable.** Expanded access to preschool is critical to long-term success.
- **High teacher turnover hinders student growth.** KCS must invest its time, energy, and resources in retaining and recruiting highly effective, diverse educators to Region 5.
- **Region 5 teachers are here for their students.** Relationships with students are the primary reason Region 5 teachers choose to work in Region 5.
- **Region 5 needs more aligned programming.** Specialized programs (STEM, performing arts, advanced academics) are wanted and are currently unevenly and inconsistently distributed through the region.
- **Students want more career exposure.** Students are eager to engage with and learn more about their future workforce opportunities.
- **Schools lack consistency in behavior expectations.** Behavior supports are implemented differently from school to school and sometimes from classroom to classroom. Some are working, some are not.
- **Meeting the needs of the whole child is essential.** Social workers, counselors, and behavior specialists are critical to student success.

The **Region 5 Way** is the comprehensive, five-year action plan that emerged from the strategic planning process. Designed for--and developed by--students, families, community partners, and educators in Region 5, the **Region 5 Way** establishes a set of ambitious and achievable **ACTIONS, METRICS, and MILESTONES** within each of the district's four priority areas.



The **ACTIONS, METRICS, and MILESTONES** outlined in the **Region 5 Way** are designed to ensure every student in the region has the opportunity to:

- learn from elite educators
- enter first grade school-ready
- read and perform math on or above grade level
- graduate high school ready to pursue a high-wage, high-demand career of their choosing

By 2028, schools in Region 5 should expect:

- 3x** the number of third graders at or above grade level in reading
- 6x** the number of eighth graders at or above grade level in math
- 4x** the number of students graduating high school ready for college and career



REGION 5 SNAPSHOT

Region 5 includes 13 elementary, middle, and high schools in the Austin-East and Fulton feeder patterns. Surrounded by a community that takes great pride in its neighborhood schools and is deeply committed to education, Region 5 schools have enjoyed a long history of support from community members and partner organizations. While the size and demographics of the student body population vary from school to school, every school in Region 5 is fortunate to serve a diverse population of resilient learners capable of achieving at a high level.

Elementary Schools

Beaumont Magnet Academy
 Belle Morris Elementary
 Christenberry Elementary
 Green Magnet Academy
 Lonsdale Elementary
 Maynard Elementary
 Sarah Moore Greene Magnet Academy
 Spring Hill Elementary

Middle Schools

Holston Middle
 Vine Magnet Middle
 Whittle Springs Middle

High Schools

Austin-East Magnet High
 Fulton High

TOTAL STUDENTS
6,640

Black 45.7%
White 29.3%
Hispanic 23.8%

Special Education 18.2%
Economically Disadvantaged 44.5%

Students in Region 5 are often confronted with unique challenges and obstacles, and KCS has not historically articulated a clear vision of success for its schools in the region. As a result, students in Region 5 continue to perform significantly behind their peers in all measures of academic success.

Region 5 students have not consistently been held to high academic expectations

Region 5 consistently experiences wider gaps in academic achievement among its economically disadvantaged students and black and Hispanic students. Overall, too many Region 5 students are leaving elementary and middle school without the foundational skills they need to succeed.



Only **22%** of third graders in Region 5 were skilled readers in 2022, according to TCAP data.



Only **14%** of third - eighth graders met or exceeded expectations in math, according to TCAP data.

Region 5 has struggled to recruit and retain elite educators

High rates of teacher turnover hinder student growth and academic achievement. Students in Region 5 deserve to learn from teachers who are experienced, effective, and understand their cultural context.



25% OF EXPERIENCED TEACHERS LEFT REGION 5 AT THE END OF LAST SCHOOL YEAR

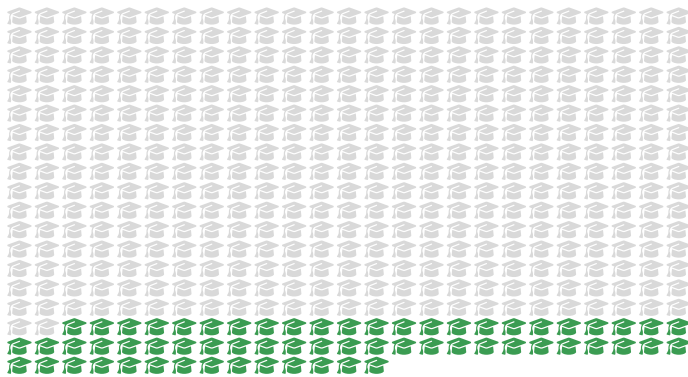
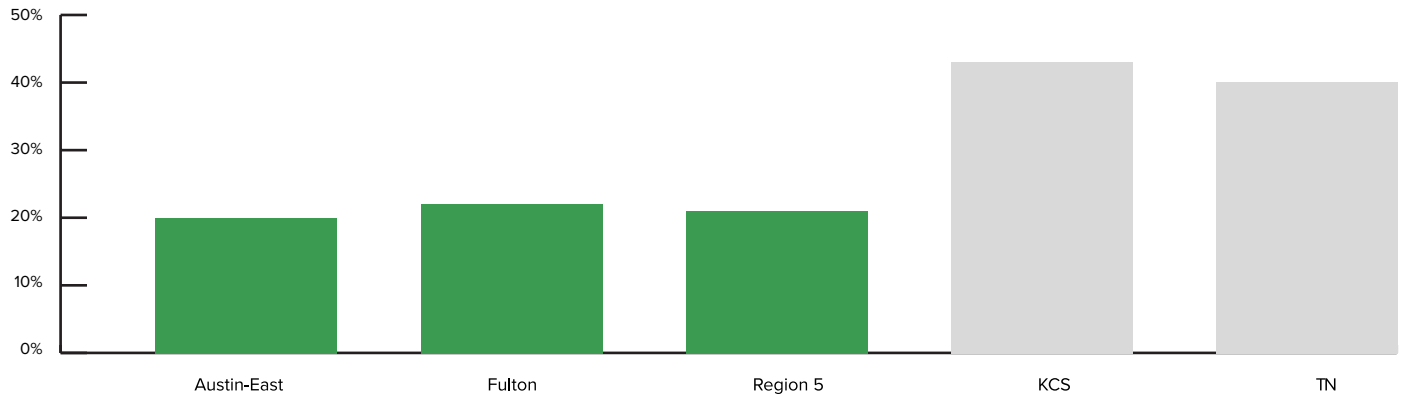
12%

OF TEACHERS identify as Black or Hispanic compared to 67% of students

Region 5 students have not had adequate career and college pathways to prepare them for high school and beyond

Region 5 enrollment rates in community, four-year, or technical colleges are less than half that of the rest of the district.

2021 Ready Graduate Rate



Of the 314 students who graduated from Austin-East and Fulton in 2021, **only 62 were considered prepared for college or career**, according to the TN Ready Graduate Indicator.

Region 5 students do not have sufficient systems to meet their whole-child needs for academic success

Region 5 students face challenges that can impact school attendance and their ability to gain the skills they need to be successful; addressing these challenges is key to keeping students in the classroom and engaged in learning.



34% of students missed at least 10% of instructional days in 2021-22.



19% of students received an out-of-school suspension at least once in 2021-22.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In partnership with Knox Education Foundation, KCS enlisted the support of a third-party consultant, Kitamba, to facilitate a comprehensive strategic planning process centered on concentrated community engagement, targeted data analysis, and responsive research. From December of 2022 to March of 2023, Kitamba conducted interviews and focus group sessions with more than 250 community stakeholders with deep roots in Region 5 schools.

Community Stakeholders included:



130+ Students



54 Families



53 Teachers



18 Non-profit Leaders



15 Faith Leaders



14 Principals



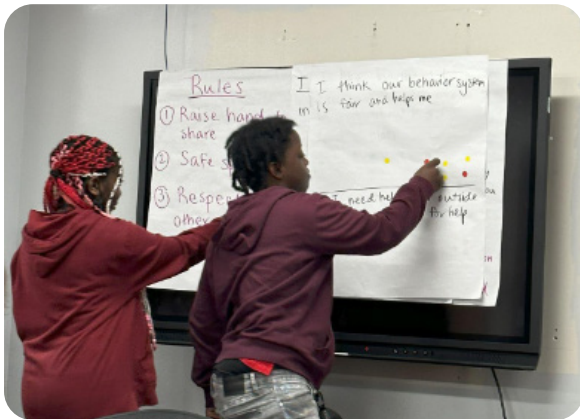
10 Public Officials



9 Business Owners



6 Higher Ed Leaders



Family focus groups were conducted in **4 languages:**

English, Spanish, Swahili, and Kirundi

...and **convened in partnership** with:

Centro Hispano de East Tennessee
The Change Center
Emerald Youth Foundation

The data analysis and research phases of strategic planning were aimed at identifying **best practices** and ensuring **ACTIONS, METRICS, and MILESTONES** in the Region 5 strategic plan would have a **meaningful and lasting impact** on the students of Region 5. Data analysis included surveys of school and statewide assessments, trends in teacher recruitment, retention, and demographics, and high school graduation and ready graduate rates. Research included analysis of national studies on best practices in education, peer-reviewed journals and articles on trends in education.



KEY FINDINGS

The community engagement phase of strategic planning focused on elevating community voices, vision-setting, and leveraging the knowledge and expertise of community members to inform decision-making.

Bold change requires a bold vision, and KCS has relied on the input and insight gathered from students, families, community partners, and educators in Region 5 to establish the series of ambitious **ACTIONS, METRICS,** and **MILESTONES** that are defined in the Region 5 strategic plan.

A number of consistent and compelling themes emerged over the course of the months-long strategic planning process:



Students in Region 5 are resilient learners capable of achieving at a high level.

Parents, teachers, and community members emphasized that challenges facing students should not lead to lower expectations of what they can achieve. Students are eager to learn and families are eager for more early academic supports to prepare students for rigorous instruction.

1 in 3 community leaders expressed the need for more preschools



Research says: Students who are instructed with a high-quality curriculum in preschool not only perform better in school but also have higher graduation and college success rates.

63%

OF PARENTS WANT MORE CONVERSATIONS WITH THEIR CHILD'S TEACHER

Families would like more frequent updates on how their child is doing academically. Many families expressed concern that their child was moving on through grade levels while not having mastered foundational skills.

“Even if a kid isn’t doing well, they still get passed on to the next class, so it is hard to know whether or not our kids are being successful in school.”

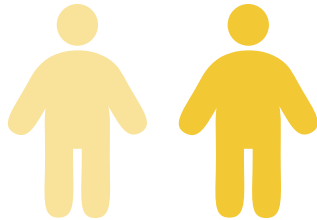
-- Region 5 Parent

Students deserve to learn from highly effective, empathetic teachers.

Families, students, teachers, and community leaders overwhelmingly agreed that KCS should prioritize recruiting and retaining highly effective educators to fill every teaching position, but had varying ideas as to how teacher recruitment and retention should be approached.

“Retention of teachers is going to require more pay but also more respect for us and more support.”
-- **Region 5 Teacher**

Most **teachers** and **families** thought that teachers should be paid more than they currently are, but some families expressed concern that higher pay may attract teachers who are not passionate or excited about teaching in Region 5.



50% OF PARENTS WANT MORE TEACHERS TO REPRESENT THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF STUDENTS THEY TEACH

While half of the families who participated in strategic planning believed it was important to hire teachers who looked like the students in their classroom, another half felt it was more important that KCS hire highly effective instructors who understand students' cultural context.

“If teachers can understand your background, they care more. Kids here are different, you have to have a passion to come here to work and be open minded.”
-- **Region 5 Student**



96%

OF REGION 5 TEACHERS ASKED FOR DIFFERENTIATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Research says: Students perform better when their teachers set high expectations. The single most important factor in a student's success is whether they have at least one trusted adult in their school who they believe is rooting for their success.

100%

OF COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

expressed the need for high-quality teachers who understand students' cultural context

Early college and career exposure is crucial to long-term success.

Students, families, teachers, and community leaders expressed the desire for more opportunities for students to engage in college and career exposure at an earlier age.

*"It's important to get kids dreaming from an early age. They need to be exposed to a lot of different types of jobs to learn what they like and what is even possible."
-- Region 5 Parent*

84% OF COMMUNITY LEADERS WANT MORE EQUITABLE EXPOSURE TO A WIDE VARIETY OF PATHWAYS

72% OF STUDENTS WANT MORE GUEST SPEAKERS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

68% OF TEACHERS WANT MORE PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

54% OF PARENTS WANT MORE CAREER EXPOSURE STARTING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Research says: Students are more likely to achieve success in employment if they have opportunities to explore careers early in life.

Students require consistent behavior expectations and supports.

Families and students believed schools should have positive, restorative behavior systems but also felt that the way these systems were implemented is often unfair and ineffective.

Although most stakeholders agreed that strong behavior systems and expectations are essential for learning, there was disagreement as to which systems were most effective: restorative practices, trauma-informed schooling, or positive behavioral interventions and support (PBIS).

*"I understand where the rules are coming from, but they don't make sense how they work in action--the rules don't apply to everyone."
-- Region 5 Student*

23%
OF STUDENTS FEEL THEIR SCHOOL'S BEHAVIOR SYSTEM HELPS THEM

96% OF TEACHERS want designated behavior support staff members on campus

THE REGION 5 WAY

After months of research, data analysis, and concentrated stakeholder engagement, KCS developed the **Region 5 Way**: a five-year strategic plan to transform outcomes--and futures--for every student in Region 5.

The **Region 5 Way** tailors KCS's four district priorities--*excellence in foundational skills, great educators in every school, career empowerment and preparation, and success for every student*--to meet the specific needs of students, families, and teachers in Region 5.

In this sense, the **Region 5 Way** is more than a strategic plan. It is a set of core beliefs intended to guide and direct the work of teachers and students in every Region 5 school. These guiding principles are simple but profound:



In Region 5...

Excellence in Foundational Skills means that all students are held to **high academic expectations**.

Great Educators in Every School means **retaining and recruiting elite educators**.

Career Empowerment and Preparation means **providing career and college pathways for all students**.

Success for Every Student means that there are **systems to meet whole-child needs for academic success**.

Partnerships with families and community members are **essential**.

These five priorities are further defined within the Region 5 strategic plan through specific **ACTIONS, METRICS, and MILESTONES** intended to accelerate learning, increase academic achievement, and ultimately ensure every student has the opportunity to:

- learn from elite educators
- enter first grade school-ready
- read and perform math on or above grade level
- graduate high school ready to pursue a high-wage, high-demand career of their choosing.

Taking this work from plan to action will require a foundation of strong family and community support with frequent opportunities for input, involvement, partnership, and communication. The goals established within this plan are ambitious but achievable, and KCS is committed to full-scale implementation of the **Region 5 Way** beginning with the 2023-24 school year.

2028: VISION FOR SUCCESS

Successful implementation of the **Region 5 Way** will be measured by annual benchmarks and 3 ambitious but achievable five-year goals:

2022

On TCAP:

- 256 third graders (50%) were below grade level standard
- 142 third graders (28%) were approaching grade level standard
- 73 third graders (14%) met grade level standard
- 39 third graders (8%) exceeded grade level standard



2028

At least 400 third graders² are **approaching** grade level standard or above in **ELA**, with **300** students³ **meeting** or **exceeding** grade level standard, as measured by TCAP



On TCAP:

- 254 eighth graders (69%) were below grade level standard
- 89 eighth graders (24%) were approaching grade level standard
- 22 eighth graders (6%) met grade level standard
- 2 eighth graders (0.5%) exceeded grade level standard



At least 200 eighth graders⁴ are **approaching** grade level standard or above in **Math**, with **150** students⁵ **meeting** or **exceeding** grade level standard, as measured by TCAP



According to TN Ready Graduate Indicator:

- 302 high school students graduated, with 74 students considered “ready graduates”



At least 350 high school students⁶ **graduate**, with **300** students⁷ considered “**Ready Graduates**”



² 80% of students

³ 60% of students

⁴ 60% of students

⁵ 40% of students

⁶ 90% of students

⁷ 80% of students

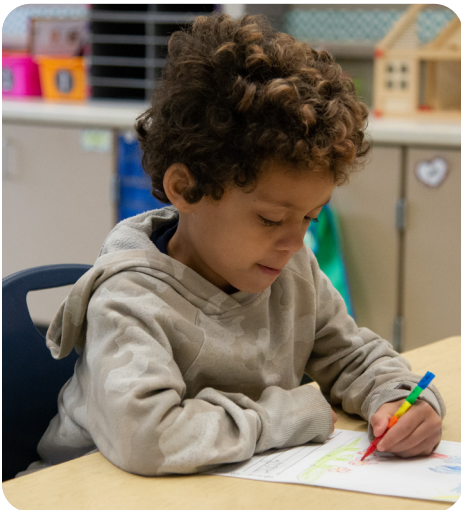
HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

What We Heard:

Parents, teachers, and community members expressed that, although students in Region 5 are often facing additional challenges and obstacles to learning, **those challenges should never lead to a lower expectation of what students can achieve.**

Families are especially concerned that students might be progressing through grade levels before acquiring the foundational skills needed to succeed in the next grade. Most families considered **heavy investments in early literacy and math** to be a top priority, with investments in reading and writing being their number one priority.

Students were just as eager to learn. Many expressed the desire for more opportunities to learn individually and in small groups, especially in math.



According to the Research:

- Students perform better academically when their teachers have high expectations.⁸
- Students of color are less likely to be exposed to grade level work in the classroom than their white counterparts. This difference in exposure leads to a difference in learning and ultimately impacts student achievement.⁹
- Teachers often have lower achievement expectations for students of color, resulting in a self-fulfilling prophecy where students of color are given less challenging material, which then impedes their academic growth. This starts as early as preschool.¹⁰
- Students who were prepared with high-quality curriculum in preschool not only performed better in school but also had higher graduation and college success rates.¹¹

The Region 5 Way

KCS believes that all students are capable of achieving academic success. KCS expects teachers to:

- hold students to high expectations
- engage students in collaborative discussion around high-quality, grade-level instructional materials
- provide appropriate support and opportunities for advancement
- utilize high-level questioning in the classroom.

Excellence in foundational skills can only be realized when schools hold students in Region 5 to high academic expectations.

⁸ "The effects of teacher expectation interventions on teachers' expectations and student achievement: narrative review and meta-analysis" (2018)

⁹ "The Opportunity Myth" (2018)

¹⁰ "The Power of Teacher Expectations: How racial bias hinders student attainment" (2018)

¹¹ "The Long-Term Effects of Universal Preschool in Boston" (2021)

In Region 5, the majority of students are not yet performing on grade level in math and reading. Through the following research-based actions, students will be held to high academic expectations while given the appropriate support to meet those expectations and excel:

Actions

Metrics of Success

1 Focus on Early Grades Student Preparedness in Literacy

Expand preschool and establish a quality, consistent science of reading model in preschool through third grade

80% of third graders are approaching grade level standard or above in **ELA**, with **60% meeting or exceeding grade level** standard, as measured by TCAP

2 Implement Instructional Best Practices in Math

Ensure consistent math instruction and use of high-quality, research-proven math curriculum across all schools

60% of eighth graders are approaching grade level standard or above in **Math**, with **40% meeting or exceeding grade level** standard, measured by TCAP

3 Establish Consistent Academic Interventions

Teach students at their current level in small groups to help them achieve grade level expectations

60% of students in kindergarten through third grade will be above the **50th percentile of student growth** and **85% of students in fourth through eighth grade** will meet or exceed their **TVAAS growth projections**

Implementation Milestones

Action	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Focus on Early Grades Student Preparedness in Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create plan to expand preschool access Generate buy-in across schools for science of reading early literacy model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new seats in preschool classrooms Implement new research-aligned early literacy curriculum and PD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new preschool classrooms Implement new research-aligned early literacy assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create standalone preschool Establish preschool seats for all students Adjust implementation of new early literacy model, based on results 	
Implement Instructional Best Practices in Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold Region 5-specific training day Develop annual scope and sequence of leader and teacher training and coaching Choose high quality, research-based math curriculum and establish consistent usage across schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement year long curriculum training for teachers and leaders Align on expectations for Region 5 professional learning communities (PLCs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement year long curriculum training for teachers and leaders Adjust implementation based on early data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement year long curriculum training for new teachers and leaders Track implementation through walk-throughs, coaching cycles, and PLCs 	
Establish Consistent Academic Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop expectations for Response to Intervention (RTI) Map resources and staffing to ensure schools have time and staff to implement RTI Establish intervention and/or enrichment for all Review Aimsweb data for ES at a district level 3x a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Aimsweb testing with fidelity at all MS campuses Provide ongoing coaching to all Tier 2 and 3 teachers Review Aimsweb data at a district level 3x a year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Aimsweb data at a district level 3x a year Evaluate gaps in RTI effectiveness and plan to address them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ongoing coaching and training to all Tier 2 and 3 RTI teachers Review Aimsweb data at a district level 3x a year 	

RETAIN AND RECRUIT ELITE EDUCATORS

What We Heard:

*The importance of retaining effective educators in Region 5 was highlighted in every conversation. Students, parents, teachers, and community members all agreed that educators in Region 5 must have a **commitment to their students** and understand and appreciate a wide array of student cultures.*

*Teachers cited their **relationships with students as the primary reason they teach** in Region 5 schools. Barriers to remaining in Region 5 included challenges such as inconsistent systems, low pay, and overwhelming workload.*

*Students reported feeling most supported in school when they had **strong relationships** with teachers.*

According to the Research:

- The single most important factor in a student's success is whether they have at least one adult in their school building who they trust and believe is rooting for their success.¹²
- Students perform better when they learn from teachers who look like them and speak their native language.¹³
- Teacher turnover has a direct impact on student achievement. Competitive compensation packages can be an effective way to ensure that great teachers come to and want to stay in schools, particularly historically under-served schools.¹⁴



The Region 5 Way

KCS believes high-quality, passionate educators are crucial to student success. KCS will employ uniquely and highly effective educators and retain them in Region 5 by providing strategic, ongoing support. Filing every vacancy alone is not enough to ensure success. KCS is therefore committed to intentionally recruiting high-quality educators who:

- understand the needs of Region 5 students
- are passionate about student success
- have the skills to help students succeed

KCS will then develop and support the establishment of strong school cultures to inspire elite educators to grow, thrive, and remain in Region 5 schools.

¹² "Developmental relationships and school success: How teachers, parents, and friends affect educational outcomes and what actions students say matter most" (2020)

¹³ "Language of instruction matters for learning foundational skills" (2022)

¹⁴ "Teacher Turnover: Why It Matters and What We Can Do About It" (2017)

Effective educators are essential to student success, but 25% of the teachers in Region 5 chose to leave their schools last year. The following actions will ensure that students in Region 5 are taught by elite educators who are passionate about teaching and learning, understand students’ cultural contexts, and are committed to teaching in the region:

Actions

Metrics of Success

1 Recruit a Highly Effective, Diverse Teacher Pool
Recruit talented candidates who understand students’ cultures through a comprehensive hiring and PR campaign

100% of new teachers hired in Region Five meet the **criteria for an ideal Region Five educator**, with **25%** of new teachers being **bilingual and/or teachers of color**

2 Retain Teachers Through Strong School Culture
Set a strong vision with principals, mentor new teachers, and support veteran teachers’ growth

80% year over year **retention** of highly effective teachers (3.75+ LOE) in Region Five, with **10%** of teachers **promoted** to leadership positions

3 Build Teacher Effectiveness
Provide Region 5 specific professional development to build teacher capacity in implementing high-quality instruction

80% of teachers are rated at least a **3.75/5 in level of effectiveness (LOE)**

Implementation Milestones

Action	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Recruit a Highly Effective, Diverse Teacher Pool	Launch Region 5 PR and recruitment campaign Implement extended contracts for all teachers in Region 5	Review data to adjust and refine PR and recruitment campaign Improve and expand partnership programs with local organizations to develop pathways for diverse educators	Maintain PR recruitment strategy Improve and expand partnership programs with Tennessee universities to establish pathways for talented educators	Sustain and support partnerships and PR campaign Evaluate and refine partnerships with universities and local organizations	
Retain Teachers through Strong School Culture	Vision setting with school leaders Training for school leaders in staff culture Establish distributed leadership opportunities	Develop leader training pipeline Partner with local organizations to develop teacher-leader fellowships	Implement leader training pipeline and teacher-leader fellowships Respond to culture survey data to develop Region 5-specific teacher supports	Vision setting with school leaders, responsive to culture survey data Recruit teacher leaders to be school leaders	Recruit teacher leaders to be school leaders Support new school leaders to build strong school culture
Build Teacher Effectiveness	Develop training plan for extended contract, including PLCs, induction, coaching, and professional learning Create plan for new teacher mentor program Norm on teacher evaluation with school leaders	Implement new teacher mentor program Provide ongoing, job-embedded training, differentiated to teacher needs Norm on teacher evaluation with school leaders, adjusted based on knowledge from Year 1	Monitor teacher effectiveness through walk-throughs Provide ongoing, job-embedded training, differentiated to teacher needs and provide training, support, and evaluation to coaches Review teacher evaluation data to improve accuracy of evaluation; determine school, grade-level, and teacher needs; and structure support for professional learning appropriately		

COLLEGE AND CAREER PATHWAYS

What We Heard:

Families and students alike acknowledged the benefits of programs like STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and performing arts, but noted that these programs are currently being implemented unevenly and inconsistently. Students who develop a passion for STEM or performing arts programs in elementary school have no consistent through-line to pursue those interests through middle and high school.

Students similarly expressed a desire for more opportunities to explore the workforce. In fact, **career exposure and exploration was the topic that resonated most with students**. Families and community likewise agreed, citing a need for more equitable exposure to career pathways for students. Teachers also concurred, stating that students should have opportunities to begin exploring careers as early as elementary school.



According to the Research:

- Students are more likely to have employment success if they have opportunities to explore careers outside of the traditional classroom, especially early in their education.¹⁵
- Employers cite soft skills—including self-regulation, ownership, and problem solving—as the most important factors for employability.¹⁶
- Early exposure to STEM education and rigorous curricula are critical to building soft skills and preparing students for college.¹⁷
- Students who are prepared for college by the time they leave high school are far more likely to enroll in and graduate from college in four years compared to their non-college-ready peers.¹⁸

The Region 5 Way

Preparation for life after graduation begins long before a student enters high school. In Region 5, KCS will provide career exposure and experiences for students beginning in preschool and continuing through twelfth grade. Through the expansion and implementation of specialized programs, all students in Region 5 will also have access to advanced academics from elementary through high school. KCS will develop partnerships with businesses and entrepreneurs throughout the community to expose students to a diverse range of careers, including guest visits, field trips, and after-school opportunities. In addition to career exposure, students will have access to rigorous curricular opportunities beginning in elementary school to prepare them for the skills and critical thinking necessary to excel in middle and high school.

In high school, The 865 Academies will further prepare students for:

- employment in a high-wage, high-demand career
- enrollment in a post secondary institution
- enlistment in the United States armed forces

¹⁵ "Career ready? How schools can better prepare young people for working life in the era of COVID-19" (2020)
¹⁶ "The High Demand for Durable Skills" (2021)

¹⁷ "Considerations for STEM Education from PreK through Grade 3" (2018)
¹⁸ "Fixing America's College Attainment Problems" (2016)

While 41% of graduates in Region 5 enroll in post secondary education, only 20% of those graduates were considered college or career ready by the Tennessee Department of Education’s “ready graduate” standards. The following actions and metrics will ensure that students in Region 5 receive the career opportunities and rigorous curricula they need to prepare them for a successful life after high school:

Actions

Metrics of Success

1 Develop Specialized Programs

Build rigorous curricular options, including STEM, IB, and AP, that extend from elementary to middle to high school

90% of high school students **graduate**, with **80%** of students considered **“ready graduates,”** as defined by Tennessee designation of career or college ready

2 Expand and Support Existing Models

Strengthen and expand existing specialized models (STEM, performing arts, SLCs, etc.) to challenge students to set ambitious future goals

3 Ensure Early Career Exposure

Build career exposure programs starting in elementary school and build partnerships to support these programs

100% of schools score at least “meets expectations” on the **KCS career readiness rubric** (to be developed)

Implementation Milestones

Action	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Develop Specialized Programs	<p>Launch process of bringing IB to Austin-East feeder pattern</p> <p>Explore Pre-AP model in Fulton feeder pattern</p> <p>Identify additional opportunities to implement new STEM and advanced placement curricula</p>	<p>Introduce AP Human Geography for ninth graders at Austin-East and Fulton</p> <p>Launch Pre-AP in ELA and Algebra 1 in Fulton feeder pattern</p> <p>Expansion of honors in middle school</p> <p>Pilot new STEM specialized programs</p>	<p>Launch IB in Austin-East feeder pattern: Primary Years Programme at Sarah Moore Greene, Middle Years Programme at Holston, and IB Diploma Programme at Austin-East</p> <p>Roll out new specialized and advanced placement programs for all students</p> <p>Support implementation of AP in Fulton feeder pattern</p>	<p>Review data and adjust new specialized programs as needed</p> <p>Evaluate transfer and enrollment systems and plan for changes</p> <p>Support implementation of Advanced Placement for All</p>	<p>Implement new specialized programs in response to data</p> <p>Support implementation of Advanced Placement for All</p>
Expand and Support Existing Models	<p>Extend STEM feeder pattern across Green, Vine, and Austin-East</p> <p>Evaluate specialized programming for opportunities to expand</p>	<p>Develop community partnerships to support specialized programming</p> <p>Establish 865 Academies aligned enrichment</p>	<p>Monitor current specialized programs, adjust as needed</p> <p>Provide specialty-specific training to school staff</p> <p>Explore programming options at Fulton that align to the arts programming at Beaumont Magnet Academy</p>		
Ensure Early Career Exposure	<p>Create career exposure scope and sequence</p> <p>Review current curriculum and scope and sequences to find opportunities for career-learning alignment</p> <p>Develop community partnerships to provide career opportunities</p>	<p>Build on community partnerships to provide career opportunities</p> <p>Ensure schools have sufficient resources to provide career exposure</p>	<p>Implement career exposure and preparation based on scope and sequence</p> <p>Hold annual Region 5 Career Expo</p>		

SYSTEMS TO MEET WHOLE-CHILD NEEDS

What We Heard:

*Classroom culture and individualized supports are critical to student success. Students who felt supported in their school cited **strong relationships with teachers, clear and equitable discipline systems, and access to counselors and support staff** to provide individual support. Students who felt unsupported similarly cited inconsistencies in discipline systems and a lack of connection to their teachers.*

*Families likewise called for a shift in discipline practices to ensure that **behavior is addressed fairly** and that **a safe learning environment is maintained** in all schools. Parents across the board were also eager for more individualized supports for their children.*

According to the Research:

- A restorative approach to student behavior that focuses on building, maintaining, and restoring positive relationships will create more supportive learning environments for students.¹⁹
- Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) can help students succeed academically and prepare them for college and career by addressing each student's unique needs.²⁰
- Whole-child support leads to increased academic achievement, lower rates of chronic absenteeism, narrowed achievement gaps, higher graduation rates, and increased student engagement. The more customized, comprehensive, coordinated, and continuous that support is, the more students gain positive academic impacts.²¹



The Region 5 Way

Students in Region 5 enter the classroom with unique strengths and challenges. As a result, schools must tailor their support to address the whole child: academically, behaviorally, physically, and socially. KCS will therefore develop partnerships and implement student-centered structural changes to:

- help meet students' needs,
- deploy sufficient mental health supports, and
- develop individualized learning plans (ILPs) for each student.

Through these actions, KCS will ensure that each child receives the individualized support needed to excel in and beyond the classroom.

¹⁹ "The Starts and Stumbles of Restorative Justice in Education: Where Do We Go from Here?" (2020)

²⁰ "Promoting Quality Individualized Learning Plans Throughout The Lifespan" (2013)

²¹ "The Impact of Integrated Student Support on Outcomes" (2019)

Students in Region 5 are losing valuable instruction time. Last year, 34% of Region 5 students were chronically absent and 19% received an out-of-school suspension. Students cannot learn if they are not in class, which is why KCS will commit to the following actions to individualize learning supports to meet the needs of the whole child and inspire every student in Region 5 to excel:

Actions

Metrics of Success

1 Implement Individualized Academic Support

Develop individual learning plans (ILPs) for all students

85% of all students K-12 **meet their ELA, Math, and social goals**, as outlined on their ILP

2 Build Out Behavior Support Systems

Implement restorative practices to proactively address behavior

80% of all students K-12 describe their school as a **safe learning environment**, as measured by school climate survey with at least a 90% response rate

3 Provide Whole Child Support

Engage teams at each school to provide support to the most at-risk students

All schools in Region 5 will have an average **daily attendance** of at least **93%**

Implementation Milestones

Action	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Implement Individualized Academic Support	Develop literacy-focused ILPs for kindergarten and third grade Develop math-focused ILPs for sixth and ninth graders	Expand literacy ILPs to first and second grades Expand math ILPs to seventh and tenth grades	Expand literacy ILPs to fourth and fifth grades Expand math ILPs to eighth, eleventh, and twelfth grades	Maintain literacy ILPs to all students preschool through fifth grades Maintain math ILPs to all students sixth through twelfth grades	Develop literacy, math, and social goals for all students' ILPs
Build Out Behavior Support Systems	Evaluate current implementation of restorative practices and PBIS Create plan for addressing gaps in implementation	Codify best practices at most effective schools Provide ongoing coaching and monitoring of behavior systems	Review school culture survey data and plan for adjustments as needed Provide ongoing coaching and monitoring of behavior systems		
Provide Whole-Child Support	Map out support staff allocation at each school Plan for ideal staffing structure and support system at each school Audit additional non-academic supports, including school transportation and food options	Hire sufficient support staff Mental health support training for all staff Codify whole-child best practices at most effective schools Address non-academic support needs, based on audit	Plan for scaling of whole-child best practices across all schools Mental health support training for all staff Maintain non-academic support needs	Monitor implementation of whole-child supports Mental health support training for all staff Maintain non-academic support needs	

FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

KCS cannot achieve the bold goal outlined in this plan without support from families, community leaders, and community partners.

Intentional family and community engagement is a fundamental element of the **Region 5 Way**. The following principles will serve as a guiding framework through which KCS and Region 5 schools engage with families and community partners:

- **Families as Partners.** Families know their children best, and partnering authentically with families (in English and in their native languages) will provide students with strong networks of support.
- **Community as Partners.** Schools are extensions of the communities in which they reside, and leveraging the powerful resources and wisdom of community partners will give students their best chance at success.
- **Compassionate Leadership.** KCS and Region 5 schools must lead with compassion and empathy, and must engage with families and community partners proactively rather than reactively.
- **Collaborative Leadership.** Involving families in decision-making as it relates to their students is crucial to authentically partnering with families to support students.

These guiding principles will serve as the basis for building trusting relationships with families and community partners in Region 5. Over the next five years, Region 5 will move to an intentional, systemic approach to authentic engagement to:

Actions

Metrics of Success

1 Establish Consistent Communication
between schools and families and a clear, consistent pathway for communication from the district to families

85% of families will report having **productive relationships with their child's teacher**

90% of families will report having a **clear understanding of the district's vision and plan for their child**, as measured by parent surveys with at least a 70% completion rate

2 Create Accessible Community Input Opportunities
in school and district decision making

60% of families in Region 5 will be engaged in **parent organizations or family councils**, as measured by attendance at meetings and events

3 Leverage Strategic Partnerships
to support the needs of students and families

All schools in Region 5 will have a **community liaison** with a working relationship with at least **10 community partners**

*Through partnerships and ongoing communication, Region 5 families, organizations, and schools will work together to ensure students are successful **in and beyond** the classroom.*

OUR COMMITMENT

Through the implementation of the **Region 5 Way**, KCS is committed to:

High Academic Expectations for All Students

Expanded Early Literacy

More access to high-quality
Preschool

Effective Math Curriculum

Research-based math curriculum in
every math class

Enhanced Intervention

Every student will receive the
instructional support needed to
reach grade level

Retention and Recruitment of Elite Educators

Higher Pay

Region 5 educators will be paid
more through extended contracts

Visionary Leadership

Region 5 educators will be led
by and supported to become
visionary leaders

Targeted Recruitment and Development

Educators will be recruited and
developed to embody the Portrait
of a Region 5 educator

Career and College Pathways for All Students

Advanced Academics

All students will have access to IB,
Pre-AP, AP, and/or STEM from
Preschool-twelfth grade

Academic Acceleration

All students will be challenged to
set ambitious academic goals and
will receive structured support to
meet their goals

Career Exposure

All students will receive
opportunities to experience
and learn about career paths,
beginning in elementary school

Systems to Meet Whole-Child Needs for Academic Success

Individual Learning Plans

Every student will have a unique,
priorities-aligned learning plan that
evolves to meet grade level goals

Behavior Support

Every student will have
consistently high expectations for
behavior with high-quality support

Whole-Child Support Teams

Every student will have access to a
team to support their holistic well-
being and learning

Partnerships with Families and Community Members

Consistent Communication

Families will receive consistent
and regular communication from
their schools

Opportunities for Input

Community members will have
accessible and sustainable ways to
provide insight

Community Partnerships

Schools will facilitate partnerships
with community organizations to
provide additional resources and
supports to students

REGION 5 SUPPORT

KCS has assembled a team of highly qualified, passionate content-area experts to execute the plan set forth in the **Region 5 Way**. This team and full-scale implementation of this strategic plan will be led by:



Jason Myers

Assistant Superintendent of Student Success



Dr. Dexter Murphy

Region 5 Director

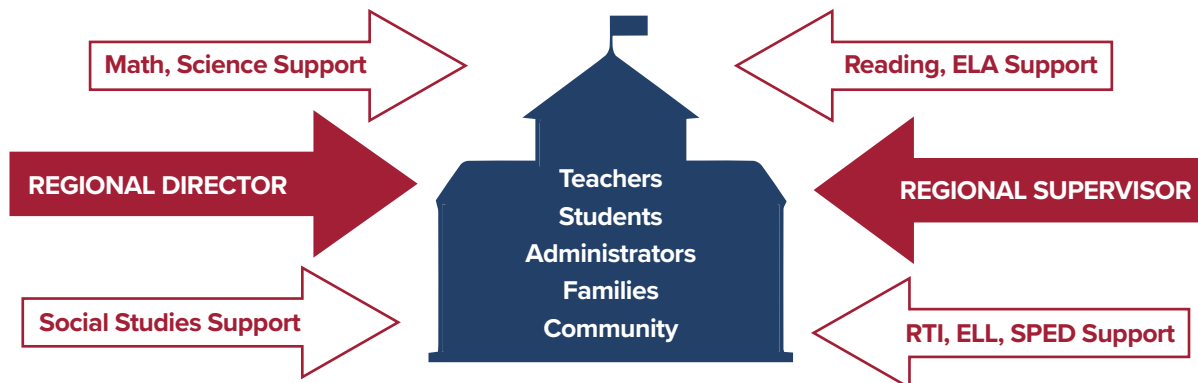


Sallee Reynolds

Region 5 Supervisor

Regional Support Model

Every region in KCS is supported by a Regional Instructional Support Team. These teams consist of content experts and school support specialists who work with their assigned region to provide schools with consistent, targeted, and efficient support.



Region 5 Instructional Support Team

The Region 5 Instructional Support Team will ensure that teachers, students, and administrators in Region 5 have the support they need to meet the ambitious goals established by the **Region 5 Way**.

- **English Language Arts (6-12):** Riley Brewer
- **English Language Learners:** Dr. Inna Slisher
- **Human Resources Liaison:** Casey Robison
- **Math:** Anne Stinnett, Kelly Dugger
- **Special Education:** Michelle Flynn, Carrie Baughman, Elena Smith, Kelly Jones
- **Reading (K-5):** Sarah Kosak
- **RTI:** Paula Sarver, Judy Fugate
- **Science:** Andrea Berry
- **Social Studies:** Katherine Shultz
- **Pre-K:** Dr. Beth Lackey, Preschool and Early Childhood Supervisor

PORTRAIT OF A REGION 5 EDUCATOR

By 2028, every classroom in Region 5 should be taught by an elite educator. Beginning in 2023, KCS will hire and develop educators in Region 5 to embody the characteristics of an elite **Region 5 Educator**.

HIGHLY SKILLED

- Growth mindset, willing to learn and grow from coaching
- Experts in their content area
- Strong classroom management skills
- A track record of improving student academic outcomes, particularly for high-need students
- Experienced educators



RELATIONSHIP BUILDERS

- Support the whole child, addressing their holistic needs
- Present and visible in the school's community
- Lead with empathy and compassion
- A track record of building strong relationships with students and families
- Humble, patient, and enthusiastic
- Committed to staying and growing in Region 5

CULTURALLY UNDERSTANDING

- Believe that all students, regardless of race, background or ability, are capable of academic success
- Value the cultural, racial, and/or language backgrounds of students & commit to support those with varied backgrounds
- Understand/value the neighborhood they work in and build relationships with those in the school community
- Culturally responsive
- Understand and respect people of all cultures and races
- Excited and passionate about teaching in Region 5



THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING

Implementation Teams

To successfully implement the **Region 5 Way** and achieve the ambitious goals established within this plan, KCS will establish working groups to drive each priority action item. These small working groups, or Implementation Teams, will consist of KCS teachers, administrators, and families, as well as community members. Implementation Teams will work together to:

- define the strategies and tactics needed to reach annual implementation milestones;
- support schools to implement the **Region 5 Way**;
- monitor progress and ensure regular communication with families and the broader community.

In short, Implementation Teams will guide and drive the **Region 5 Way** forward.

- Preparing Students for Excellence in Early Literacy
- Implementing Instructional Best Practices in Math
- Providing Consistent Academic Interventions



- Recruiting a Highly Effective, Diverse Teacher Pool
- Retaining Teachers through Strong School Culture
- Building Teacher Effectiveness



- Developing Specialized Programs
- Expanding and Supporting Existing Programs
- Planning for Early Career Exposure



- Providing Whole-Child Support
- Building Behavior Support Systems
- Implementing Individualized Academic Support



- Establishing Consistent Communication Systems
- Creating Accessible Channels for Community Input and Involvement



THE PATH FORWARD

Our work is just beginning. Families, students, community partners, and educators in Region 5 can expect to see evidence of the **Region 5 Way** as early as next school year.

High Academic Expectations for All Students

- **High quality math curriculum** in all schools
- Plan to **expand Preschool** access in 2024

Retention and Recruitment of **Elite Educators**

- **Extended contracts** for teachers
- **Staff culture training** for school leaders

Career and College Pathways from K-12

- Exploratory committee for expansion of advanced academics:
IB and Pre-AP
- **STEM program** alignment

Systems to **Meet Whole-Child Needs** for Academic Success

- **Individualized learning plans** for students in Kindergarten, third grade, sixth grade, and ninth grade

FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS



Board of Education

Kristi Kristy (Chair)

District 9

Daniel Watson

District 3

Betsy Henderson (Vice Chair)

District 6

Katherine Bike

District 4

Rev. Dr. John Butler

District 1

Susan Horn

District 5

Jennifer Owen

District 2

Steve Triplett

District 7

Mike McMillan

District 8

Dr. Jon Rysewyk

Superintendent

Vision Statement

To grow lifelong learners who contribute their talents, strengths and skills to build a stronger community

Mission Statement

To provide excellent and accessible learning opportunities that empower all students to realize their full potential