



A VISION OF EXCELLENCE!

Blount County Schools

Board of Education

Mr. Rob Webb, Chairman

Mr. Chris Cantrell

Mr. John Davis

Mr. Charles Finley

Mr. Brad Long

Dr. Don McNelly

Mr. Mike Treadway

Director of Schools

Mr. Rob Britt

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction, Vision and Mission Statements</i>	<i>P. 3</i>
<i>Beliefs</i>	<i>P. 4</i>
<i>Sustaining Educational Excellence</i>	<i>P. 6</i>
<i>Characteristics of All High Performing Schools</i>	<i>P. 8</i>
<i>Teaching, Learning & Relationships (T.L.R.)</i> <i>Professional Learning Community (P.L.C.)</i>	<i>P. 9</i>
<i>Principal's Leadership Academy</i>	<i>P. 10</i>
<i>Meeting or Exceeding High Standards</i> <i>Tennessee Diploma Project</i>	<i>P. 11</i>
<i>High Expectations and Measurable Goals</i>	<i>P. 12</i>
<i>Core Academic Priorities</i>	<i>P. 14</i>
<i>Highly Functional School Governance</i> <i>Digital Classrooms for Digital Learners</i>	<i>P.16</i>
<i>Encouraging Innovation</i> <i>Facilities & Funding</i>	<i>P. 18</i>
<i>Summary and Conclusion</i>	<i>P. 20</i>

A VISION OF EXCELLENCE FOR THE BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOLS

Blount County School students are just as bright and talented as any in our state and nation and are capable of achieving high standards. Now more than ever a high quality education is needed for all students to meet the challenges they will face in their post-graduation lives. Therefore, we need a compelling vision to guide us toward providing the very best educational experience to our students. This document is an outline for a vision of excellence in education for the Blount County Schools. As this vision is shared with board members, administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents and community members, it most likely will evolve into a greater vision to guide our school system toward meeting and exceeding higher standards and goals. My hope is that this document will serve as a point of departure and guiding framework as we begin another leg of this journey along the path toward educational excellence for all students.

A Vision Statement:

Educational excellence for all students!

(This vision statement holds the hope that all students will make a personal commitment to excellence through achieving their personal best each and every day. It is our belief that when we perform our best, our best keeps getting better, resulting in excellence.)

Our Mission:

Our mission is to maximize the academic potential of every child in a safe and personalized environment. The Blount County Schools will graduate students who are college and career ready and prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century workplace.

A Vision of Excellence begins with a set of powerful beliefs:

- **Possess a unwavering belief that all children can and will learn**
- **Commit to personalizing the educational experience for all students**
- **Provide uncompromising educational service to all students**
- **Create and maintain a culture of excellence in all schools**
- **Move students up the learning ladder as rapidly as possible**
- **Make partnering with parents a priority**
- **Believe that the number one determining factor in producing positive outcomes in student learning is an outstanding teacher**
- **Deem having exceptional leadership at each school as absolutely essential to accomplish our mission**

- *Hold the **unwavering belief that all children will learn and be successful by reaching their potential.** This belief is reflected in our words and actions. Additionally, we recognize that all students learn in different ways and at different rates of speed. We are committed to adjusting our instructional approach to meet the needs of all students at all levels of learning.*
- *Commit to **personalize the educational experience for every child.** This pledge means that all students have at least one adult in the building who makes a connection with them and consistently shows care, concern and advocacy for them. Research has shown that students who have at least one strong relationship with a caring adult at school are more likely to complete their school work, engage in the life of the school, experience academic success, and graduate on time. Furthermore, the school has a plan for each student's path to success. This plan takes shape as a personal learning plan that includes a student's strengths, weaknesses, goals for improvement and a plan for achievement.*
- *Possess an attitude and commitment to provide an **uncompromising educational service to students, parents and the school community.** All teachers and support staff clearly understand their roles in serving our students and their parents.*

- All members of the school staff choose to perform their roles with enthusiasm, energy, care and commitment to excellence.
- *Create and maintain a **culture of excellence** where all students feel they can be successful and realize their academic potential.* All adults are focused on producing superior results, and all students exhibit an attitude of caring and a desire to strive for their personal best. The culture in each school is one that values student effort and achievement at all levels.
 - *Commit to taking students wherever they are on the **learning ladder** and move them up as quickly as possible.* We must reach and challenge all students at all levels. This mandate requires teachers to identify where students are on the learning ladder, to plan their approach carefully, and to monitor the students' progress along the climbing process.
 - *Believe in the power of **partnering with parents** to ensure all students learn and accomplish their goals.* We are committed to finding new and innovative ways to engage parents in their children's education. We recognize that parents or guardians are engaged in vocations and careers outside the home and we as educators must find ways to maximize their involvement in their child's education.
 - *Believe that for all the complexities of educating today's students there is nothing greater in determining student learning success than an **outstanding teacher**.* A teacher who loves children and has a passion for teaching, learning and building relationships is vital. Such a teacher will assist all students to rise to their level of expectations.
 - *Deem having **exceptional leadership** at the school level as absolutely essential for our schools to realize the vision of excellence for all students.* High performing schools are lead by high performing principals who are able to grow teacher-leaders in their schools.

A Vision of Excellence builds capacity to sustain educational excellence:

- We must embrace high standards and fully implement the Tennessee Diploma Project. All stakeholders must be encouraged to support higher academic standards for students and commit to providing the necessary resources to meet all students' needs and achieve success.
- We must hire, retain, train and support the highest quality and most exceptional principals to lead our schools. These principals must share our common vision, possess the skills, knowledge and decision-making ability to lead a school to successful outcomes, and exhibit a high level of instructional leadership to ensure all students achieve their potential. They accept their responsibility to lead and manage an outstanding school program and establish an environment for building a culture of excellence in their school. These principals must be satisfied with leading a high-performing school as measured by student achievement data, value-added scores and high graduation rates.
- We must hire, retain, train and support the highest quality and most exceptional teachers to instruct our students and ensure their academic success: teachers who accept the awesome responsibility to maximize the academic potential of every student; teachers who care deeply for children and are passionate about teaching, learning and building relationships; teachers who have a skill set to diagnose, prescribe and monitor student learning and produce positive results. Without question, exceptional principals and teachers are absolutely essential and imperative to realizing our vision of excellence.

(The Blount County Schools already possess the human capital with a vast base of exceptional teachers and principals to achieve and sustain educational excellence. It is extremely important that we provide timely and strategic professional development and support as we continue to grow our professional staff.)

- We must hire, retain and train the highest quality and most exceptional supervisory staff to support our teachers, principals and their schools: supervisors/coordinators who accept their role as providing uncompromising educational support to our Blount County School community through assisting principals, teachers,

students and parents in accomplishing their goals and realizing the vision.

- We must support students, parents, teachers and principals by hiring the highest quality, most dedicated and skilled paraprofessionals and support staff including teaching assistants, custodians, administrative assistants, bookkeepers, nurses, school counselors, consulting teachers, instructional coaches, graduation coaches, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, school psychologists, social workers (FRC), and cafeteria team members. This group accepts their role as supporting the vision of excellence by providing uncompromising service to their school community. We must never forget that our students' educational experience is enhanced when they attend a school that is clean, well-maintained, with quality, well-prepared and nutritious food, where they are greeted by a smile from the office staff and assisted by a supportive and skilled teacher aide.
- All in the school organization must understand their role, what part they play and the impact they have on student performance, and realize the vision of excellence for all students.
- We must develop and maintain a student-centered, value-oriented and data-driven school culture.
- We must learn to utilize the data available to inform our school, to develop instructional plans, and to enhance our instructional programs.
- We must develop and maintain a system of accountability where principals are the CEOs of their schools and accountable for all student outcomes. Principals will accept responsibility for leading and managing all aspects of their schools. They will work in concert with the director of schools and the system's goals and priorities.
- We must develop and maintain a school system culture that values collaboration and shared decision-making.
- We must develop and maintain a culture that values collegiality, where teachers work together as a team to resolve issues, support each other by improving pedagogy and meet challenges.
- We must fully engage our community in our schools. Business and industry and the overall community at large have a vested interest in the success of our school system. We need to find

meaningful ways for our community to contribute toward significantly improving our schools.

A Vision of Excellence: All schools organized around the six most common characteristics of all high performing schools:

- Safe and orderly environment
- Highly organized and structured
- High expectations and accountability
- Maximum time on task
- Data-based decision making
- Positive and strong leadership

Safe and orderly environment:

- A culture exists where all students feel physically, mentally, and emotionally safe
- Appropriate levels of adult supervision support the safety and well-being of all students
- There is a coordinated effort between the school's administration and the Safety Resource Officer to develop and implement plans for a safe school environment

Highly organized and structured:

- Procedures and processes exist for all aspects of the school operation
- An instructional plan is in place and carried out each day
- The organization is student-centered

High expectations and accountability

- Clearly defined expectations exist and are consistently communicated
- Expectations are high, but realistic and measurable
- Everyone takes responsibility for the results and outcomes of the school, primarily student performance

Maximum time on task:

- Mitigate and/or eliminate interruptions to instruction
- Teach, assess, evaluate and monitor bell to bell
- Increase instructional minutes and focus on academic priorities

Data-based decisions:

- Use data to inform instructional decisions
- Use data to create a strategic plan for improvement
- Use data to monitor student progress toward goals and adjust instruction

Positive and strong leadership:

- Principals and teachers work in concert with one another
- Principals develop strong teacher leadership to maximize student learning
- Principals and teachers lead through establishing a consistently positive culture for the school community

A Vision of Excellence comes with an emphasis on Teaching, Learning and Relationships (T.L.R.):

- The **T. L. R.** of education must be a primary focus for all educators. Although we deal with many distractions and complexities to educating today's students, we must be committed to placing the majority of our time, talent, energy and attention on effective teaching, quality learning, and building relationships with students. It is important to mitigate and/or eliminate distractions and keep our focus on maximizing the academic potential of every student. We strongly believe that if you place a student in a nurturing environment with a strong teacher who builds a relationship with that student they will learn and achieve success.

A Vision of Excellence means the establishment of a professional learning community (PLC) and commitment to systematic, on-going professional growth for all educators:

- It is far better to see a sermon than to hear one. I think the same is true about great professional development. Educators can learn infinitely more by watching a great teacher teach than they can by hearing them talk about it. We need to find ways for our best teachers to demonstrate their craft while teaching their classes. Furthermore, we believe this strategy is even more effective when done in the content area of the observing teachers. In other words, math teachers should observe a great math teacher teach math. An added benefit of this type of professional development is not only more effective, but also relatively inexpensive.

- We must have our best teachers observe other teachers teach. Then, those teachers provide immediate feedback and coaching to the teacher being observed. This strategy coupled with the above professional growth activity builds the infrastructure for a professional learning community that potentially can transform teacher effectiveness at all levels.
- Each school needs to develop this idea of a PLC around collaboration and collegiality. Principals need to plan professional development time for content-specific activities and discussion. Additional time is needed for collaboration and planning around school improvement and/or reform.
- Technology must enhance our professional growth approach by broadening PLC across the system and opening the possibility of partnering with other systems through watching pod casts of other teachers teaching, and discussing pedagogy, curriculum, classroom management and a host of other specific instructional issues with other teachers through video conferencing.
- Instructional coaches would go to classrooms and work one-on-one with teachers to support growth and improve effectiveness.
- Train-the-trainer concept must be utilized. A team of teachers is sent for specialized training to train others. This team returns to the district to train teachers in individual schools to address specific needs. The trainer is on-site or available for on-going training and follow-up.

A Vision of Excellence means the establishment of a Principal’s Leadership Academy to ensure the appropriate training and professional growth for our school leaders:

- We must provide our principals with high-quality leadership training. This training will be practical and designed to directly impact the practice of the principals in their individual schools. This training will be measured by the development and effectiveness of each principal as it relates to the performance of his/her school.
- Participation in and results from the Principals Leadership Academy will be part of the Principals Performance Contract.
- We need to include several modules/workshops a year for Assistant Principals and those aspiring to become Principals in our system.

- Development of the idea of Assistant Principal Interns in our school system is a priority.

Build the infrastructure and capacity to meet and/or exceed the standards of the Tennessee Diploma Project.

- We must prepare and graduate all students who are college and career ready. We must embrace the new standards and prepare students from Pre-K through grade 12 with a vision for successful outcomes. Our plan will provide academic and emotional support and interventions at all levels to ensure all students have an equal access to a quality education. In addition, we must support and challenge those high performing students with the most rigorous curriculum and move them toward advanced placement and/or dual enrollment courses while in high school.
- We need sufficient resources and supports to fully implement the Tennessee Diploma Project. These resources include instructional materials aligned to the state curriculum standards, along with scheduled diagnostic assessments to monitor the progress of our students, content specific professional development for teachers, principals and counselors, and coordinated interventions for low-performing students. Intense interventions for low-performing students require the additional time-on-task opportunities, which may include after school and summer tutorials. These interventions must be well-designed and coordinated to meet the needs of individual students. Bus transportation is required to ensure that struggling students fully participate.
- Although there is now one graduation track, we must create multiple pathways to graduation and a transition into the workplace or postsecondary education. We need **to expand e-learning, dual enrollment/credit, early college high school opportunities, STEM high school, and advanced placement programs**. Additionally, we need to build into our high schools more flexibility for students to attain and master content. These innovations will come through flexible scheduling, video streaming and use of technologies and other creative possibilities.

A Vision of Excellence sets high expectations and benchmarks in the form of measurable goals:

- 98 percent of our students will complete high school
- 90 percent will graduate with a regular high school diploma
- 75 percent of all students who take the ACT will score a 21 or higher and our overall composite score for Blount County Schools students will be a 22 or higher.
- 95 percent of our 11th graders will score a 4 or better on the writing assessment and our system average will consistently reflect a score of 4.0 or higher.
- 95 percent attendance rate for the system will be attained

Although there is ambiguity with the implementation of new and significantly more rigorous standards, significantly more difficult tests and higher cut scores to determine proficiency, we offer what we believe are realistic goals for the percent of students scoring proficient or higher. These goals are long term and should be looked at in terms of benchmarks for the future and not immediate goals. The 2010 test results will provide a new baseline of proficiency rates across the state of Tennessee. Therefore, the goals below reflect a percentage to work toward as we move forward in the future.

- 90 percent of all students will score proficient or advanced in reading/language arts, math and science
- We will show consistent and steady improvement with all sub-groups

One of the most significant measures of determining if we are reaching all students ***and maximizing their academic potential is the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVASS) Diagnostic Report.*** This report measures students' achievement gains from year to year for the five achievement sub-groups (lowest to highest).

- Our goal will be a minimum cumulative gain score goal in each achievement sub-group of positive 2 or higher in reading/language arts, math and science

Likewise, our overall TVASS goals will be set as a positive 2 for subjects in each grade level.

- Reading/language arts +2
- Math +2
- Science +2

In core academic achievement areas we have a goal of consistently achieving A's in reading/language arts, math and science and a B or higher in social studies.

5-Year Goals for Grades 3-8

Achievement:

Subject	2009 Score	2009 Grade		5-Year Goal Score	5-Year Goal Grade	10-Year Goal Score
Math	50	B		58	A	63
Reading/Language	50	B		58	A	63
Science	50	B		55	A	58
Social Studies	50	B		55	A	58

Academic Growth:
(Value-Added)

Subject	2009 Score	2009 Grade	2009 State Growth Standard	3-Year Goal Score	3-Year Goal Grade
Math	-0.1	C	0.0	>=2.0	A
Reading/Language	-0.8	D		>=2.0	A
Science	0.3	C		>=2.0	A
Social Studies	-1.3	D		>=1.0	B

Writing Assessment in Grades 5, 8 and 11 will consistently score a **4** or higher with a grade of **A**.

Grades 9-12:
ACT Achievement

	2009	3-yr. Avg.		5-yr. Goal	8-yr. Goal
Composite	20.5	20.5		21.2	22
English	20.6	20.5		21.5	22
Math	19.4	19.5		21	22
Reading	21.4	21.3		21.5	22.3
Science	20.2	20.2		21	21.6

A Vision of Excellence is focused on core academic priorities:

- **Intense focus on literacy** including reading, writing and oral communication skills. We believe that literacy is the golden key to academic success and success in the present and future work force. Being fully literate empowers students and provides a strong foundation for college and career readiness.
 - **Reading** must be taught (direct instruction) from pre-kindergarten through the 12th grade with an increased and intense focus on reading skills, fluency and comprehension in grades 4 through 9. Reading for information is a critical skill that must be taught and reinforced throughout a student’s academic career in the Blount County Schools.
 - **Writing** will be a co-partner with the focus on reading in grades kindergarten through 12. Special attention will be given to writing throughout the curriculum. We must possess higher expectations and employ consistent strategies for writing across the curriculum in grades 3 through 12. Specific and goal-directed writing interventions must exist for students struggling with writing skills.
 - **Oral Communication** is the ability to effectively organize and articulate information, directions, thoughts and opinions. This skill is critical in preparing fully literate graduates who can compete for future employment in a global landscape. A concerted effort to align this skill with standards and integrate it throughout the curriculum should occur in grades 3 through 12.
 - Mastery of complex communications as well as other languages will be considered for inclusion in our K-12

curriculum. We need to integrate communication through all core area subjects and begin to teach foreign languages in the lower grades.

- **Focus on math and science** for all students in all grades. With the new and higher standards, we need to raise our expectations and strengthen our instructional delivery systems to reach higher levels of mastery and prepare our students for the increased demands of the math and science curriculum. Our approach must be more systematic to challenge students regardless of their level of proficiency. We need to provide advanced students with a stronger, more complex curriculum while providing intense intervention for those who are behind. Math and science need to be more coordinated and integrated for maximizing instructional time and producing positive results. Through our math and science curriculum, we need to develop the ability to analyze, synthesize and solve problems from which there are no routine solutions.

A Vision of Excellence cultivates and promotes excellence in the arts, athletics, physical fitness and wellness, career technical education, technology, personal finance, foreign languages, and other courses that enhance the educational experience of our students.

- Although these co-curricular areas stand on their own merit, they provide reinforcement and support to the academic areas by providing opportunities to apply knowledge and skills, critical problem solving, team work, stimulate creativity, make application of the core subject skills to the real world and provide a value-added component to our educational offerings.
- They also provide a significant service to our school communities through connecting and engaging many students in life changing ways, career orientation, goal setting and, yes, providing hope for a brighter future by staying in school and matriculating to a successful school outcome, namely graduation.
- Through these classes and other opportunities, our students need leadership experiences, a development of a personal value system, and moral character, an awareness of global issues and concerns, an acceptance and appreciation for other cultures, and a commitment to leading a life of purpose.

A Vision of Excellence includes a highly functional school governance:

- To ensure that our students achieve educational excellence, our Board of Education and Director of Schools must work collaboratively and in concert with each other.
- The Board of Education and Director of Schools must act with a single mindedness and focus on our common goals and priorities.
- The Board of Education and Director of Schools must work to mitigate and/or eliminate any distractions that may take us away from our core educational mission.
- The Board of Education and Director of Schools will work together to develop a solid and collaborative relationship with government executives and the county commission.
- Together the Board of Education and Director of Schools will set the course, establish the goals and provide the resources and infrastructure for all our schools to be high performing.

A Vision of Excellence means digital classrooms for digital learners:

- This may be dreaming, but that is what great vision is all about: dreaming of the possibilities. Our dream is to have 21st century digital classrooms and a highly trained and supported digital educator leading those classrooms for all our digital learners.
- Although technology is ever changing, today we dream of every classroom being equipped with a laptop computer, LCD projector, smart board, a classroom assessment system and three student computers. These are the digital tools necessary to better engage students into a more interactive learning environment. By integrating technology into lessons, we connect with the vast majority of students who are digital learners. In addition, technology allows us to individualize and even customize the educational experience for many students in need.
- Each school will (depending on the number of students) have at least one quality computer lab or more. The lab(s) will have a teacher or paraprofessional assigned to run the lab in cooperation with the teachers. Ultimately, we need to have an adult who runs the lab and is accountable for the computers in its operation.

- All the technology in the world is useless if we do not support it with systematic and on-going training for our teachers as well as proper maintenance and accountability. We need to hire additional technology support staff to provide each school timely and consistent training and support. Additionally, they will support this infusion of technology through maintenance, accountability and care of the tools of technology.
- In addition to more engaging and interactive lessons through the use of technology in the classroom, teachers will have many resources available to students and parents through individual teacher/class web pages that would feature daily lessons, assignments, resources for self-help, opportunities for more in-depth learning, academic support through individualized learning modules, pod casts of lessons, homework help, distance learning, and the list goes on. In fact, the possibilities are endless.
- We see a day, down the road, when students will carry a device the size of a cell phone or itouch that will have the students' textbooks loaded on it, internet access both at home and at school, the ability to register their answers to in-class questions and/or quizzes, look up vocabulary, research, write a paper, prepare a PowerPoint presentation, create a pod cast and upload it to the teacher's web page, and work on an individualized learning plan all on this one device. We are closer to this reality than most would think possible. We need to be open to looking at using cell phones to enhance our instructional environments.
- We need to utilize video conferencing to expand course offerings and provide our students with 21st century learning opportunities.

A Vision of Excellence challenges the status quo and encourages all educators to innovate, address and solve compelling issues, eliminate obstacles to learning, find more effective ways to deliver a rigorous curriculum and raise student achievement.

- If we want superior results, we must turn to our experts to provide leadership. Teachers are the experts, and exceptional teachers find or discover a way to deliver the new curriculum standards and produce outstanding student achievement results.
- We need to create systems to learn from our pockets of excellence and apply those lessons and recommendations in other classrooms and schools system-wide.
- Simply put, we need to do business differently if we are intent on achieving our goals.

A Vision of Excellence means facilities that provide adequate space for the academic program and facilities that are clean, comfortable and well maintained.

- We will continue to implement our building program with the New Prospect Elementary School slated to open in the fall of 2011-12. (Funding approved by the Blount County Commission, November 2009)
- It is prudent to continue to plan for growth. Heritage Middle School is presently overcrowded and Heritage High School will continue to grow larger. These issues as well as others will be studied and a plan will be developed.
- A revised facilities maintenance plan for existing buildings must be developed to address needs across the school system.

A Vision of Excellence includes adequate funding for our schools that supports our vision and mission:

- Over the past ten plus years our school system has been transformed moving from K-8 schools to K-5 elementary, and grades 6-8 middle schools. This process has seen the building of five new facilities and a renovation of the existing 9th grade academy building to solve most of our critical overcrowding issues. The Blount County Schools is grateful for the additional space for our students including the new Prospect Elementary School that will alleviate overcrowding at Porter Elementary and prevent overcrowding issues at Walland Elementary for many

- years. However, a key concern for our district is the funding for our operational budget.
- With the continuation of an economic downturn including unemployment at 10 percent in Blount County and sale tax revenue shortfalls of between 8 and 10 percent coupled with the state cutting funds and mandating new standards and additional expenditures, (TCRS contributions, etc.) the 2010-11 budget may be the worst our system has ever seen, (at least in recent memory).
 - Our vision is to enlist the assistance of our funding body with adequate funding of our operational budget. We must continue to build a relationship of openness and transparency with the commission and focus on the future of the school system.
 - The Board of Education and Commission will work together to formulate an operational spending plan that will provide the human and material resources our teachers and students need to achieve the higher standards and successfully implement the Tennessee Diploma Project. **This plan must include additional revenue for our school system if we are to realize the vision of excellence for all students.** *(It is understood that the Blount County community is suffering from a deep economic recession and additional new revenue would follow improvements in our economic climate).*
 - It is paramount that we as educators impress upon the commission and our community that education is worth the investment to all Blount County residents. The return on the investment will come with a higher standard of living and quality employment opportunities.
 - Another concern is our lack of a fund balance or “rainy day fund”. The BCS has been budgeting most if not all of our fund balance above 3 percent for the past several years in order to balance our operational budget. Those funds have continued to diminish, and as a result, we have little to no reserve above the state required 3 percent of fund balance. This fact is more troubling because we need our rainy day fund now more than ever. Therefore, part of this vision is that we include building our fund balance back to an acceptable level over the next five to eight years as one of our recommendations. Achieving this goal will provide the Board of Education, the County Commission and most importantly the

students of the Blount County Schools a more sound and secure future as we move forward.

In summary, our vision plan includes the following key points:

- High expectations and accountability for all
- Exceptional leadership at the individual school level
- Outstanding teachers for all students
- Emphasis on quality professional development through a professional learning community
- Student-centered, value-oriented and data-driven system that permeates our school culture
- A dominate focus on teaching, learning and building relationships
- Emphasis on literacy and the core academic areas
- Engaging parents and community in significant and meaningful ways

In conclusion allow us to make a few bold statements. We believe that the Blount County Schools is a good school system with pockets of excellence. However, we further believe that we can be a great school system that excels at or near the top of the state and nation. It is no longer acceptable to provide an “average” or “adequate” educational experience for our students. In order for our students to meet the challenges and compete in the 21st century workforce, they must earn a world-class education. Our students will continue to face an uncertain and rapidly changing world where their preparedness for college and career opportunities will have a profound effect on their level of employment and quality of life. Moreover, we are convinced that we have the talent with exceptional educators and staff in place to provide a world-class educational experience for our students. Our students are bright, intelligent and capable learners who can be motivated to achieve higher standards. Our parents are supportive and provide a wealth of untapped opportunities to us in education. Yet, we continue to be in need of more resources and tools to assist our students, especially those who are struggling. All who work, learn and participate in the Blount County School System cannot do it alone. It will take the entire Blount County community working together to realize this vision of excellence for all students. We are confident we can and will succeed.

Finally, we have always been struck and impressed with the extraordinary beauty of Blount County and the extraordinary people that make our community so special. This is why we pose the question, “Why would we settle for ordinary and when we can be extraordinary?” Our students need and deserve an extraordinary educational experience that ultimately leads them to realize their full potential and contribute significantly to their community and the world.

Thank you for taking the time to read this vision document. We hope you have found it informative and helpful in terms of knowing more about where we are going as a school system. Your feedback is welcome. Please feel free to email your comments and/or questions our School Board Members or our Director of Schools.
rob.britt@blountk12.org.