

Executive Summary

**The Academies of Nashville:
A Five-year Plan for the Implementation
and Sustainability of High School Reform**



Created in Partnership with:

MNPS Achieves: First to the Top

The Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies

Alignment Nashville

The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce

Nashville Career Advancement Center

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

MNPS Teachers and Parents

September 14, 2010

Executive Summary

The Academies of Nashville are the primary initiative to achieve the district's vision and mission for students in its twelve zoned high schools. The Five-year Plan for the implementation and sustainability of The Academies of Nashville is a community-supported plan that aligns local and state initiatives to achieve the district's mission to provide every student with the foundation of knowledge, skills and character necessary to excel in higher education, work and life.



In The Academies, all students take **Rigorous** core academic subjects, electives and specialized courses in a career-focused area in order to achieve academically at high levels and prepare for college, work and active citizenship. Teachers incorporate real-

world examples from the academy career area into all academic and specialized courses to show the **Relevance** of coursework. With these smaller learning communities, students work with classmates that share their interests and a common team of teachers, building stronger **Relationships** and promoting a sense of belonging. Local business and community partnerships provide students with interactions that ensure **Readiness** for post-secondary education and career options.

The Academies of Nashville offer:

- *Preparation for college AND high-demand, high-wage careers*
 - *Opportunities for students to find and follow their passions*
 - *Increased parent and community involvement*
 - *Personalized learning environment for ALL students*
 - *More engaging curriculum and instruction*
 - *Increased student achievement and graduation rates*
 - *Highly educated workforce and regional economic growth*
 - *Focus on 21st Century Skills such as critical thinking, communication, and technological literacy*
 - *Closer relationships with teachers and advisors*
 - *Practical work experiences such as job shadowing and internships*
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Grounded in the research of the Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies, the Five-year Plan is structured around the three pillars of Next Generation Learning: Transforming Teaching & Learning, Redesigning High Schools and Sustaining Change through Business & Civic Leadership. By focusing on these goals, the district will align its resources with those of the business community in order to achieve the state's graduation benchmark of 90%,

The Five-year Plan is structured around the research of the Ford Partnership for Advanced Learning and addresses the three pillars of Next Generation Learning:

- *Transforming Teaching & Learning*
 - *Redesigning High Schools*
 - *Sustaining Change through Business & Civic Leadership*
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meet the educational standards of the Tennessee Diploma Project, improve each of the twelve schools' standing with No Child Left Behind and seek National Career Academy Coalition accreditation for each academy. Most importantly, all students will benefit from personalized environments, rigorous curricula and career-focused academies that prepare them for the high-skill, high-wage workplace opportunities in the Nashville area.

The Academies of Nashville will align with the business community and post-secondary institutions to create a pipeline of talent into high-demand career areas. Equipped with the 21st-Century Skills necessary for higher education, work and life, students will experience academic success, improve the local workforce talent pool

and promote regional economic development. In Nashville, an educated workforce is critical for long-term economic vitality.

Strong community support is critical to the ongoing success of The Academies of Nashville. The Director of Schools' High School Transformational Leadership Group (TLG) has adopted the Five-year Plan for The Academies of Nashville as the primary initiative for reaching the district's goals for zoned high schools. The Mayor of Nashville co-chairs the CEO Champions, an advocacy group of business and community leaders for The Academies of Nashville, and coordinates many support structures through the Mayor's Office of Children and Youth. Alignment Nashville has been a principal convening agency in seeking grant funding and achieving a coordinated community effort to accomplish efficient and effective reform. The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and the PENCIL Foundation have facilitated business engagement through Partnership Councils and Academy Partnerships that

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provide sustainable resources and establish relevance for students. The Nashville Alliance for Public Education identifies areas of need and directs private resources to accelerate academic achievement.

The Academies of Nashville is a broad reform initiative that will lead to fundamental, systemic changes in secondary education in Nashville. The Academies realign existing funding and resources for sustainability. Frequent reviews ensure continuous alignment with economic and workforce demands as well as student interests. The structural and instructional changes implemented through The Academies of Nashville will play a critical role in fulfilling the district's vision and mission for the twelve zoned high schools.

***By cutting the dropout rate in half,
we can greatly impact the local
economy:***

- ***\$30 Million:*** Annual increase in earnings by new graduates
- ***48%:*** Percentage of new graduates who pursue post-secondary education
- ***\$22 Million:*** Additional annual spending of new graduates
- ***\$3 Million:*** Annual increased state and local tax revenue due to increased earnings and a higher level of spending of new graduates
- ***250:*** Annual additional jobs supported by the increased spending and investment of new graduates
- ***\$41 Million:*** Economic growth by the time these new graduates reach the midpoint of their careers

*~Alliance for Excellent Education. "The
Economic Benefits of Halving Nashville's
Dropout Rate: A Boom to Regional Business."
January 2010.*