High School Reform
Reflecting on the past and
Looking to the Future...

a look at the reform work of
Hamilton County’s high schools

Public Education Foundation
100 East 10th Street, Suite 500
Chattanooga, TN 37402
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The 2005-2006 school year began by celebrating the news that Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) was met by Brainerd High School toward No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goals. This placed Brainerd one step closer to being recognized as a school in Good Standing.

The task of submitting a revised School Improvement Plan was taken on by the administrators, faculty, and staff by reviewing school-wide data, survey information, and the goals of the five grants that were in place for the 2005-2006 school year. The grants that served Brainerd in 2005-2006 were the Schools for a New Society (SNS), Magnet School Assistance Program (MSAP), Small Learning Communities (SLC), Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) and Title I. Both the SLC and CSR grants were in their final year. In order to move Brainerd High forward the School Improvement Plan was revised. The four goals and action steps were focused on the necessary steps to meet AYP in 2005-2006 and becoming a school in Good Standing. The goals of the School Improvement Plan were to increase the number of students scoring at the proficient or advance level in Language Arts and Mathematics, to improve student attendance, and to increase the graduation rate. Periodic reviews of the action steps by accountability personnel served as a reminder of the goals of the School Improvement Plan and the importance of meeting those goals.

Brainerd High School operated in wall-to-wall academies for the third year. Each year improvements are made in the operation of wall-to-wall academies and career pathways of study. Once again, Brainerd’s 9th Grade Success Academy provided a stable foundation for advancing students into upper-level career academies. The after-hours Twilight Academy operated for the third year also. Each academy was again structured to provide the foundation of a common college-core curriculum along with a career-focused pathway course of study based on a student’s interests and abilities. The small learning communities enable teachers to establish relationships with their students that facilitate trust and learning. Students are no longer a number or a “familiar” face, but a student who has a name and a history with their teachers.

The career pathways of study in the upper-level academies were revised during the year for implementation in the 2006-2007 school year. It was important that each pathway have an effective sequence of courses and a clear career focus. In 2006-2007 the ACE Academy will focus on two career pathways – Allied Health and Legal & Protective Services. Special course requests were written for these two pathways for implementation in the 2006-2007 school year to enhance the current course offerings. In 2006-2007 the ITBS Academy will continue with its three career pathways – Automotive Technology, Culinary Arts & Hospitality, and Information Technology. The course sequencing for Culinary Arts & Hospitality and Information Technology career pathways were revised so that students have more opportunities for focused career study.

A revision to scheduling that has been developed this year is the creation of cohort groups of students for the 2006-2007 school year. The cohorts will take career pathway electives in conjunction with core curriculum. The cohort will travel as a group between their electives and core classes which will enable teachers to offer more integrated curriculum.

2005-2006 was the second year for operating an Advisory program in the upper-level academies. Advisory classes met weekly throughout the year. This year the Advisory curriculum was refocused so that students were in grade-level classes. Each grade had a curriculum that was structured toward College Preparedness. Also, through the Advisory program students, along with their advisor, tracked their progress toward graduation. One of the first lessons for Advisory was a review and interpretation of student transcripts. Each student was provided with their transcript at the beginning of each term. Students and advisors were provided periodic review sheets, when
progress reports and report cards were issued, to keep everyone aware of progress toward completion of classes and graduation.

**Professional development** throughout the year focused on the development of curriculum maps, creation of theme-based interdisciplinary lessons, literacy, and successful teaching strategies. The Strategic Literacy program at Brainerd included meeting four days a week in 45-minute classes. Strategic Literacy focused on Gateway preparation for tenth grade and ACT and writing assessment preparation for eleventh grade.

**Ongoing communication** to all stakeholders through various channels was a key factor in the continued development of our smaller learning communities. Throughout our reform efforts during the past four years, we have seen the importance of establishing and maintaining open lines of communication both within and outside the school building. Once again, our school Leadership Team (made up of teachers, administrators, parents, students, business and community partners) served as the nucleus in our ongoing reform process. Decisions that impacted student academic achievement; the learning environment; and overall school-wide policies, programs, and procedures were finalized by this Leadership Team and then communicated to other stakeholders.

Within each academy a **core team** operated to facilitate communication. Each academy was staffed with an academy principal, an academy guidance counselor, a team leader, and a MSAP resource teacher. This core team allowed for more frequent and better communication with teachers, students, and parents of students within each academy. Teachers in each academy met on a monthly basis, they also participated in weekly common planning meetings, and weekly Quality Circles. Quality Circles continued for the second year and teachers participated in sessions that focused on teaching strategies, current educational articles, and school improvement activities.

**How has your focus on personalization, flexibility, RIGORous curriculum, and/or professional learning communities influenced the following:**

**9th-10th Grade Promotion**

Our 9th Grade Success Academy began the year by acclimating new ninth graders to the building through the **Link Crew** program. Link Crew Leaders consisted of upper-level students who served as “guides” for the new freshmen. The Link Crew Leaders each served as a resource about high school for a small group of students.

**World Cultures**, a pre-AP class which is team taught by an English 9 and World Geography teacher, served students in the Success Academy for the second year. Twenty-seven students were enrolled in the World Cultures class. A **double dose** of math and language arts was again included as part of the ninth grade curriculum. Students who entered Brainerd at least two grade levels behind were offered this double dose (Transition to Advanced Mathematics/Algebra I and Strategic Reading/English 9).

The Freshman Seminar class was revamped and called **PAWS** (Positive Attitudes Will Succeed). The purpose of this curriculum was designed to help students make a successful transition to high school and then on to upper-level career academies. All Success Academy teachers taught this daily 45-minute class. The curriculum emphasized skills that are necessary to succeed in life, including decision making and goal setting.

**A Career Academy Open House** was held during spring to welcome eighth and ninth grade parents and students into the building. Each career pathway was on display where teachers and information were available to assist students in choosing their career pathway. Within the Success Academy PAWS classes facilitated lessons on pathways which highlighted pathway courses. Career academy students spoke to each PAWS class about the career pathways and answered
questions for the ninth graders. With information in hand, Success Academy students chose their career pathway and pre-registered for their tenth grade courses with the guidance of their PAWS teacher.

**Gateway Results**

Students and parents were constantly reminded of the three Gateway exams, which are in course, by all school personnel. The classroom teachers, PAWS teachers, Advisory teachers, guidance counselors, academy principals, parent coordinators, and all other school personnel take responsibility for communicating the importance of passing Gateway exams.

Throughout the year, academic coaches (interventionists) meet with at-risk and first-time test takers to help the students master the State Performance Indicators for the Gateway exams. After-school remediation and enrichment programs provided more individualized instruction to help students master the Gateway test objectives. During the summer, for students who were not successful in passing their Gateway exams, a three-week program was offered. Smaller group instruction during this program has proved successful.

**Attendance**

Two features of Brainerd High School that allow for personalization and, in essence, closer attention to attendance issues are the wall-to-wall academy structure and the Advisory program. One of the goals of our Advisory program, which was in its second year of operation, was to personalize the learning environment and create a sense of community. Attendance issues were shared with Advisory classes throughout the year. At the beginning of the spring semester each student received an attendance report which showed the number of days absent and the percentage rate of attendance. This served as an eye-opener for many students, as well as teachers.

Incentives were offered throughout the year in various ways by classroom teachers (field trip opportunities, classroom recognition, etc.). Students were also recognized for good attendance each semester by their academies (pizza parties, etc.). Academy principals and teachers worked to maintain regular contact with students who had attendance issues. Each day a student is marked absent from school, their home received a phone call through the automated dialing system that is in place at Brainerd.

Professional development also emphasized the importance of offering an engaging and rigorous curriculum for students.

**Graduation and College Going Rate**

The reform efforts at Brainerd High School stress a common college preparatory curriculum for all students. Communication about college preparatory curriculum begins with the eighth grade students who will attend Brainerd High School. Through orientation and pre-registration students are educated about college preparatory curriculum. Within the Success Academy the importance of college preparatory curriculum and post-secondary opportunities were stressed through PAWS classes.

Through the Advisory Program the importance of college preparatory curriculum and post-secondary opportunities were stressed to the tenth through twelfth graders. Advisory students reviewed transcripts and graduation requirements quarterly. Students in advisory classes also completed a variety college preparedness activities (goal setting, college letter writing, study skills lessons, etc.).
The College Access Advisor coordinated a one-day Senior Retreat where students attended mini-sessions focusing on post-secondary life, graduation requirements, the college application process, scholarship opportunities, financial aid information, and career opportunities. The mini-sessions were facilitated by school guidance counselors, college personnel, and local business partners. The College Access Advisor served as a resource for post-secondary information to students throughout the year, as well as, coordinating and supervising field trips to colleges and universities.

Improving the graduation rate has continued to challenge our academy teachers at all grade levels. Attendance, passage of classes, and a post-secondary focus have been emphasized through our continued reform efforts. For each of the past four years, we have collected data showing positive gains in test scores, literacy, promotion rates between grades, and attendance. Yet, even though these indicators have shown that we have made improvements in student achievement, we still need to focus our efforts and energy on having all students graduate in a timely manner with skills they need to be successful in their post-secondary endeavors.
The long-term vision for 2006-2007 school year focuses on maintaining prior gains in teaching and learning while enhancing the curriculum to provide a highly engaging academic environment of rigor and relevance for both students and staff.

For three years in a row, Brainerd has made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) on all state mandated tests. This progress has been possible largely because of our ability to analyze data, monitor student performance with formative assessments, and to provide intensive Gateway coaching and intervention. We have made important gains, but still have much work to do. While we are proud of Gateway scores in English that average at 84% for Proficient/Advanced over three years, and Gateway scores in Algebra that have risen from 45% Advanced/Proficient to 70% Advanced/Proficient, these increases are not enough. At Brainerd High School, we believe that all of our students should achieve success, and all means all.

For this reason, we are focusing our SNS request in 2006-07 on identifying students who are at risk and providing them with the needed support to succeed. Two Algebra Gateway facilitators and an English Gateway facilitator will work with teachers on developing formative assessments to identify struggling students. Using pre and post-test data, these facilitators will coordinate appropriate coaching for these students, using Gateway coaches provided through our Title I funds. An additional facilitator will work with 11th and 12th grade advisors to provide college access support, ACT test preparation, and curriculum development to prepare students for the Writing Assessment.

The good work already started through previous SNS support will continue, with programs that have become embedded into the structures of Brainerd High School.

We will continue to combine the efforts of school and community stakeholders to afford students with the best possible career academy education. Professional development opportunities for the staff are designed to promote best practices, differentiated instruction, rigorous and relevant curriculum, and integrated units of study that enable students to see the connectedness of all learning. Brainerd High envisions improvement in teaching and learning that affords us with gains in standardized test performance, promotion from one grade to another in one year, graduation rates, college readiness, eligibility for TN lottery scholarships, and an overall high school experience that produces timely high school graduates who are ready for the 21st Century.

A wide spectrum of quality professional development opportunities are planned to meet the needs of novice and veteran teachers. Quality Circles, Critical Friends Groups, school-based sessions on technology and curriculum integration, community mapping, workshops to enhance teacher motivation and school climate, and vertical teaming with our feeder schools are among the 2006-2007 professional development plans. More teachers will receive in-depth training in Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum. This will not only increase the number of staff members who have benefited from offerings of College Board AP Institutes but will also expand and enrich Brainerd’s pre-AP and AP program. Quarterly peer observations of “master” and/or “exemplary” teachers will grow teacher leaders while also mentoring novice teachers.

In spite of any school’s best efforts during the traditional school day there will continue to be those students who need additional time and attention in order to meet academic and behavioral success. After-school and summer Extended-Day Services are designed to provide credit recovery (including our Twilight Academy), tutoring, remediation, and intervention programs.
Our former Camp Success summer program for new ninth graders is being replaced with a first week of school Transition Program that enables students to become oriented to the high school setting. The Transition Program also provides team building opportunities as well as exposure to new experiences as students work toward a smooth transition from middle to high school. In 2006-2007, Ninth Grade Success Academy students will rotate through 45-minute career exploratory classes four days per week. This rotation will pave the way for better pre-registration and career pathway choices in the spring.

While ninth graders enjoy career exploration, career academy students will also benefit from a revised Strategic Literacy focus on reading and writing across the curriculum. Tenth and eleventh graders will focus on Gateway objectives, state writing assessment, and ACT preparation. Seniors will focus on Senior Projects. These various points of focus will occur during 45-minute periods four days per week.

Grade-specific Advisory classes will continue to address personalization, post-secondary readiness, and development of student individuality. Classes will meet once per week for 45 minutes with the purpose of achieving increases in attendance, promotion between grade levels, graduation rates, and college readiness.

We anticipate a productive year of hard work and great results. With the support of district leaders and a dedicated administration, faculty and staff, Brainerd envisions making great strides as a career academy school of excellence. With valued community support, which includes our partnership with the Public Education Foundation, Brainerd will be able to make our 2006-2007 vision a reality.
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL REFLECTION

At the completion of our fifth year of wall to wall career academies, we see many positive advances that we have made. The areas of focus for this year included rigorous, engaging and relevant curriculum, skills for college and/or work, personalization, and engaging parents and the community. Through the programs implemented and refined from previous years we have shown measurable gains that have benefited all.

Differentiated Instruction
Our preparation for the fifth year began during the summer of 2005. Eleven teachers and staff attended a differentiated instruction national conference, while six teachers attended the regional conference. This created 17 individuals trained in the application of instruction that would address the diverse learning needs of our students. Teachers modeled lessons that demonstrated various applications of DI. Teachers that had not attended conferences visited the classrooms to observe the instruction. The visits and presentations made at faculty meetings created an opportunity for an open dialogue that had not previously occurred. Academy leaders and administrators reviewed lessons created by faculty.

Pounder Academic Lab
Special consideration was given to the students identified as at-risk. Programs that were created included an intervention program which took place during Pounder Academic Lab (PAL). This class met four days a week for 45 minutes and the students received ¼ of a credit. Academic coaches met with students during PAL and were instrumental in the success of the students. Their addition to the classroom enabled the students to received extra guidance on skills needed for success on the Gateway test, classroom assignments, or credit recovery. Freshmen, sophomores, and juniors that were not involved in a remediation or intervention class received instruction on literacy and writing, Biology, and mathematic skills. Data shows an increase from 47% passing and 19% scoring advanced in 2004-2005 to 64% passing and 32% scoring advanced in Gateway Mathematics. Gateway Language Arts reflected an increase from 85% passing in 2004-2005 to 95% passing in 2005-2006 and 56% advanced in 2004-2005 to 75% in 2005-2006. Gateway Science also showed gains from 92% passing and 40% advanced in 2004-2005 to 96% passing and 64% advanced. Please see appendix A for a more detailed breakdown of scores and for End of Course test scores in U. S. History, English 9, and physical science. In addition to academic opportunities, students were exposed to topics concerning careers and college during Top Ten and Hot Topics. Each topic discussed was adjusted to reach age or grade appropriateness for the class.

Senior activities differed from underclassmen. A major activity involved preparation of the Senior Exit Portfolio and Oral Defense (SEPOD). This presentation, that is required for graduation, was facilitated by the senior PAL advisor. Another instrumental opportunity for the senior’s transition from high school to post-secondary education or the work force involved the college consultant. Each student met with the college consultant on several occasions to explore opportunities after high school, complete college applications, and apply for scholarships or financial aide. ACT preparation classes were offered to all students desiring extra exposure to testing strategies and focused academic research on topics that were tested. College Fairs were coordinated through PAL for juniors and seniors. A survey of our graduates demonstrates the success of the coordinator. Only three of the 158 seniors that completed the survey had not made a decision for the future. Ninety-six will be attending a 4-year college or university while 46 have enrolled in a 2-year college. That is 89.9% of the seniors will attend a post-secondary institution. Five individuals will be enlisted in military and they each indicated that would also include college. This would bring
our percentage up to 93.0%. Eight will be entering the workforce, but of those eight, three are entering an apprentice program.

Career Academies
One of the purposes of the career academies was to create an environment were students were well known and engaged in relevant academic work. Planning teams met to discuss and design opportunities for the students to experience relevant academic work while being allowed to explore their chosen career focus. Student focus groups were consulted to gain a prospective from their point of view. We feel we were successful in several different areas. Students were given the opportunity to job shadow in pathway specific courses within each academy. In some instances, this job shadowing was a requirement in the course. Credit recovery programs were designed by academies to meet each one's individual personality.

Planning teams surveyed course offerings and implemented Bio-Chemical Nutrition for the Allied Health pathway of the Math, Technology, and Science Academy. This course was such a success that the number of students enrolled tripled for the upcoming school year. Students became so comfortable discussing their desires and academic needs with the teachers within their academy that they requested a forensic science class for the 2006-2007 school year. The planning team developed the course that will be implemented this fall.

Attendance has been an issue at various times and the previous school year had seen a decline in attendance. Academies worked to address this problem and were successful. We experienced an increase of 0.8%. This is a minor increase but when compared with Hamilton County attendance, which experienced a decrease of 0.1%, it is an indicator we are moving in the right direction. Please see appendix B for graphs.

Discipline referrals in the ninth grade academy reflected a need for concentrated focus on this issue. Of the 1719 referrals during the school year, 725 were from the freshmen. Four hundred seventy-one were from the sophomores.

The ninth grade academy worked on the transition year of their students from middle to high school. Programs implemented and the relationships that formed were instrumental in the 93.8% promotion rate for first time ninth graders being promoted to the 10th grade. Field trips, programs to recognize student achievement, and celebrations for the great year were highlights throughout the school year. Increased attendance at the functions by both the students and their parents indicated our success.

Parent and Community Involvement
Opportunities for involvement by both the parents and community were available through our advisory boards and volunteer coordinator. The coordinator facilitated the programs. Meetings were scheduled each term desiring input from different parties.
Appendix A

The information below compares the performance of the total number of students tested in Gateway and EOC exams for the 2004-05 and 2005-06 school years.

**Gateway Mathematics 2004-05**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Tested</th>
<th>Below Proficient</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>28 (19%)</td>
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**Gateway Mathematics 2005-06**

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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>49 (32%)</td>
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**Gateway Language Arts 2004-05**

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<th>Overall %</th>
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</thead>
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<td>50</td>
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<tr>
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<td>208</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>148 (56%)</td>
<td>85%</td>
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**Gateway Language Arts 2005-06**

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<tr>
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**Gateway Science 2004-05**

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<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>131</td>
<td>127 (49%)</td>
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**Gateway Science 2005-06**

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<td>73</td>
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<tr>
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<td>102</td>
<td>178 (64%)</td>
<td>96%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>76</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Science EOC 2005-06</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4 (19%)</td>
<td>75%</td>
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Appendix B

Central Annual Totals Compared to District (H.S.)

Annual Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Central</th>
<th>District (H.S.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>88</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>89.5</td>
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- 11 -
CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL PROJECTION

After three years of intensive research and professional development, Central High School opened the 2004-05 school year with wall-to-wall small learning communities with career academies in addition to a 9th grade academy. With this structure in place we are now prepared to delve into issues of substance such as rigor, relevance, engagement, personalization, and post secondary preparation.

Rigorous, Relevant, and Engaging Curriculum

Much work needs to be done in the area of rigor at Central High School. The growth and development of the Advanced Placement program will serve as the centerpiece of our work with rigor. More students will be recruited to enroll in AP courses. Special emphasis will be placed on students who traditionally have avoided this rigorous course work. Course offerings will be expanded and the faculty will participate in extensive professional development. A parental awareness campaign will be initiated.

ACT standards will be embedded into the curriculum of core courses in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. This procedure will aid in our efforts to address college readiness. Professional development activities will ensure full faculty participation. Activities will include vertical and horizontal planning and teaming with classroom walkabouts.

Professional development will be focused through the use of Quality Circles. Differentiated Instruction, AP standards, ACT standards, alternative assessments, and rigor will all be included in our professional development activities with an overall focus on improving instruction. Academy Teams will also meet monthly under the direction of the Academy Lead Teachers. Critical Friends groups will also continue to examine student work in relation to these areas.

Each student will be administered the Explore in either the 8th or 9th grade and the Plan in the 10th grade. Outcomes will be analyzed by academy teams with a focus on improving overall achievement while preparing for the ACT.

Intervention efforts will continue to be a focus with Gateway and TCAP Writing Assessment preparation. With the goals to increase the percentage of advanced scores all students will benefit from the intervention efforts of the academic coaches.

A summer intervention program titled 9th Grade Recovery will address 9th grade students in need of remediation and credit recovery for promotion to 10th grade. Students will be selected and recommended by teachers in the 9th grade academy.

Vertical planning will occur through our developing Network Learning Community (NLC). The NLC is a professional development partnership with all schools (K-12) in the Central High School feeder pattern. Faculties from each school in the NLC will participate in shared professional development opportunities. For example, teachers in core academic subject areas will participate in vertical planning to ensure effective alignment of standards.

Preparation for Post Secondary

Each graduating senior will complete an exit project referred to as the Senior Exit Portfolio and Oral Defense (SEPOD). This project will serve as the summative assessment in each end of pathway course. Incorporated into the SEPOD will be the student created electronic portfolio. The E-
portfolio will consist of important documents produced by the student in previous Career Academy courses beginning in 10th grade. Extensive training for staff and students in the use of this technology will be essential to its success. Significant technology upgrades will also be needed.

A focus on ACT prep in all core academic courses will lead efforts in preparing students for college. Professional development activities focused on this goal will be important to successful implementation. ACT prep mini-courses will also be offered to students.

The college awareness and application process will be facilitated by the college advisor. All students in 11th and 12th grades will participate in a mini course scheduled during PAL with the college advisor. Topics covered will include college choices, financial aide, scholarships, the application process, and entrance exams.

A formal mentoring and internship program will be developed in each Career Academy. Students will have opportunities to obtain valuable career exposure in their selected areas of interest.

A work based learning program will be developed for students with significant disabilities. Close monitoring and coaching will improve chances of success and permanent employment following graduation.

**Personalization through Career Academies**

Wall to wall career academies will be expanded through meaningful business and community partnerships. Business partners will assist with curriculum development and alignment. Students will participate in field studies, mentoring, and internships in their career interest choices. Teachers will have a career mentor to guide them as they guide the students. Specialty career interest courses and activities will be developed and expanded to allow teachers and students to explore areas of personal interest.

Pounder Academic Lab (PAL) will serve as an integral component of personalization. PAL will meet four days a week in forty-five minute mini-blocks. Students will be grouped by grade level within each career academy with the flexibility of alternative grouping as needed.

One vital component of PAL is academic intervention. Intervention efforts will be led by academic coaches in the areas of mathematics and language arts. Using data, the academic coaches will identify all students in need of intervention. The academic coaches will work as interventionist with small groups of students addressing specific needs.

In addition, students will receive specific interventions related to ACT Prep, AP courses, and credit recovery in PAL classes led by teachers.

PAL groups in 9th Grade Academy will focus on academic intervention and remediation, literacy, and social skills. A need has been identified in the area of social interactions related to behavior, conduct, etiquette, and civility. Mini courses and seminars will be developed and cycled through 9th Grade Academy PAL classes.

**Engaging parents, students, and surrounding communities**

The Change Coach will hold an important role in developing relationships with all stakeholders such as facilitating collaboration efforts with business and community partners. For example, a partnership with Allied Arts of Greater Chattanooga to establish an artist in residency program as an element of enrichment to the Humanities, Fine Arts, and Communication Career Academy will be pursued.
Equally important will be building relationships with students and their families, faculty, and community members. The demographic make-up of Central High continues to change rapidly from suburban-rural to suburban-rural-urban. The changes in the school and community population create unique challenges for school personnel.

The NLC will play a large role in addressing the demographic shifts. Each school in the feeder pattern is experiencing similar school and community population changes. Transition programs and activities will be expanded through collaborative planning with all schools in the NLC.

The 2006-07 school year brings the unique opportunity to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of Central High School. Through the work of the revitalized alumni association, graduates and friends in literally all 50 states and many foreign countries will be reconnected to the school. We plan to use the centennial celebration as a key ingredient in our outreach efforts.

A Principal's Student Advisory Committee and Parent Advisory Committee will be formed to meet on a regular basis with the school principal and other members of the leadership team. These committees will be made up of a cross section of students and parents representing the demographic make-up of the school.

A student incentive program (Central Champions) will be implemented to address academic success and motivation, conduct, and attendance.
Overview
After being involved in school reform for the past five years, we found that five questions guided our reform efforts:

1. What do we envision for our students, school, and community five years from now?
2. How can we work together to accomplish these goals?
3. How can we make arts and academics equally challenging and engaging?
4. How can we improve instruction so all students achieve at high levels?
5. How can we continue to build on the structural and organizational changes we have in place?

After working with parents, students, graduates of our program, outside consultants, community leaders, administrators, and teachers to define and refine a vision for our program, last year together we created a vision that reflected the values and goals of our school:

CCA - Illuminating Dreams of Passion, Acceptance, Creativity, and Excellence: PACE
Passion comes from the Latin “passio,” meaning heartfelt.
Acceptance reflects our dedication to recognizing and honoring diversity
Creativity remains at the center of all we do
Excellence is a goal for both our academic and arts areas

At this point in our work, we realize that as many of our reform efforts have been successful, our goals and parameters have shifted so that the five questions that guided our work at the beginning of our quest no longer provide the structure they once did. We now understand what we envision for our school community and know ways to work together to accomplish our goals. While we may revisit all five of our questions as we continue to grow, we find that the force of our work is focused in three categories which address the Carnegie goals of personalization, flexibility, rigorous curriculum, and development of professional learning communities:

- Improving Instruction
- Creating More Responsible, Reflective Students
- Building on Structural and Organizational Changes

Improving Instruction
The 2005-2006 school year was spent conducting a full year-long action research project around the concept of rigor, a project which involved our entire school community in a variety of ways: facilitating focus groups with CCA graduates, conducting a formal academic audit on two separate days in October and February, developing school-wide rubrics, and establishing vertical and horizontal teams of teachers.

The use of focus groups in the past years has proven to be an effective tool to surface gaps in student preparedness for after-high school study. In January, the Carnegie Change Coach facilitated a focus group during January in-service days to talk to CCA graduates in a fish bowl discussion observed by in-service teachers. At this time, graduates discussed the impact their high school education has had on their post-high school efforts by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This conversation served as the foundation for our work on What Graduates Should Know and Be Able to Do which is part of the focus of our vertical curriculum teams.
We conducted an academic audit as part of an effort to reach a global understanding of rigor for the CCA community and to “create a snapshot” of a day in the life of CCA. Through the use of Quality Circle meetings once a month for all faculty members, we started our investigation of rigor and that led to understanding the comments from the academic audit. In preparing for our audit, we developed several sets of interview questions: for teachers, for departments, and for students in different disciplinary courses. We recruited school, business, and community leaders to spend two days in our school at two different times. The first planned day was in October and involved interviewing students and faculty to identify our current definition of rigor. The second day in February was used to conduct classroom observations and additional interviews with faculty, staff, and students. During the two days of the academic audit all academic teachers were interviewed and 140 students were interviewed twice. After the observations and interviews, our recruited leaders discussed what information had emerged from their work. While we didn’t expect to change instruction based on the academic audit, we did know we would get a clearer idea of where we were and the next directions we needed to follow in order to fill the gaps identified by the audit.

As a result of the work conducted in the academic audit, we began to develop rubrics for assessment of rigor within classrooms. During the year, we created three different rubrics for school-wide use: Rubric for Rigorous Teaching, Rubric for Rigorous Learning, and Student Reflection Rubric. In addition to these rubrics which were created as a direct result from the academic audit, we devised additional rubrics for school-wide use in writing and research. In creating a consistent assessment tool for both teachers and students, we hoped to increase analytical thinking in terms of teacher efficacy and student performance.

Another outcome of the academic audit was the realization that not all teachers were in the same place in their understanding of student development, content knowledge, or pedagogy. The question then arose: how can we provide what a teacher needs in order to grow professionally? Based on our reflection as we answered this question, we began planning for true differentiated professional development. As part of the focus on changing professional development, we created the chance for teachers to self-assess their final exams in terms of critical thinking skills, to self-evaluate their professional performance based on the rigorous teaching rubric, and to determine three areas of priority for development. At the end of the year, we had an idea of what we need to offer in professional development. As a result in this understanding, in 2006-2007 we are individualizing professional development by using teacher work/study groups.

In addition to individualized professional development, we found the need to build both vertical and horizontal teams of teachers to work together. Many disciplinary-specific skills are taught without understanding the framework and continuity of same grade classes or same discipline classes across grade levels. With this issue in mind, we teamed one group of teachers together for 2005-06 and will offer two other interdisciplinary teams for the 2006-2007 school year. In addition to these teams having common planning, we have committed two half-days to continue this conversation. Through these teams and dedicated in-service time, we hope to identify discipline skills, study skills, and work habits necessary for success and to bridge and build on these skills from one class to another, from one grade to another so that teachers intentionally scaffold curriculum grades 6-12.

Creating More Responsible, Reflective Students
The use of the school-wide rubric is only one step of many in helping students take more ownership of the courses they study during the school day. By using a standardized rubric across the school, students have a tool to determine the ways in which they reach mastery of subject matter. Consequently, teachers also learn to articulate the standards they have established to determine criterion for success in classes. The rubric then serves not only as a tool for assessment of student performance but also as a teacher guide for developing their own awareness of what elements of student performance demonstrate understanding of content.
Student-led conferences, scheduled twice during the school year, are required for continued enrollment in CCA. With advisory teachers, students reflected on their performance in different classes then led through a series of exercises to set academic goals for themselves based on self-identified strengths and weaknesses. In the student-led conference, with the student’s advisor, students engaged in sequential conversations centered on their progress reports and report card:

- Reviewed a profile data sheet contributed by each classroom teacher
- Examined agenda mate for class requirements
- Discussed progress reports
- Reviewed work habits self-assessment
- Completed Goals for Success form by working with parent and advisor

We will continue student-led conferences in the 2006-2007 school year using the information gathered from our conferences in the 2005-2006 school year to improve and sharpen our students’ self-assessment skills and to build a new awareness of how to better represent themselves in the future.

During Summer 2006, teachers from each grade level collaborated on a study skills continuum to identify the study skills students needed to acquire at each grade in order to be better prepared for more rigorous study in upper grades. From this work, teachers created a draft of study skills to embed within each grade level through horizontal and vertical team planning sessions during in-service days. One concern in dealing with the study skills is to avoid placing the responsibility of introducing students to the skills in isolation, as in advisory classes. If teachers push themselves to actually teach the defined skill in context with curriculum, students will find the connection between using study skills as part of a classroom routine as opposed to simply having something to do in an advisory session.

Our transition program for sixth and ninth graders continues to provide necessary support for students who search for a place within our school community. Both transition teams met regularly and planned activities to introduce students to our school. We will continue to add activities during the regular school year to help build our sixth and ninth grade communities. Another area of concern for both transition teams is how to identify at-risk subgroups within the larger school community and to support those targeted students once they have been identified. As we continue our work this year with transition events and meetings, we will continue to find ways to better serve a sometimes underserved population within the larger groups.

Advisory and Directed Studies serve as ways to get to know which students are in need of enrichment or remediation so that is the method we use to identify students who need additional support. After much consideration, our advisory classes were divided based on arts major so that each advisory group shared a particular interest. Advisory activities rotate each week so that one week is used for college awareness, another for character education readings, one for discussion of hot topics, and the final week is dedicated to the individual arts department for special activities. Directed Studies is held three days a week to provide special time for the classroom teacher to provide remediation or enrichment for identified students.

The newly implemented senior project also serves as a culminating activity for our seniors to showcase learning. The senior project was designed with a variety of assessments in place to determine a student’s achievement in an area determined by the student. The senior projects provide the opportunity for students to use independent thinking, critical thinking, community awareness, and goal setting.
Building on Structural and Organizational Changes

Even though we have discussed the SNS four primary goals and designed our program around addressing these goals, the 2005-2006 school year marked the beginning of a different perspective for CCA in terms of sustainability of SNS. We still are looking for ways to provide students and teachers the support necessary to become more successful in their lives at CCA. We still examine data in order to determine our strengths and weaknesses within the four walls of our building. We still struggle with finding ways to encourage teachers to teach at higher levels and students to learn at higher levels. These things have not changed. We have learned enough from the last four years that we are capable of establishing what we want through what is best for our individual learner, and we have learned to do that by building on the structural and organizational changes within our school.

Task Forces for Change are committees established around different school initiatives or projects. Each task force has a chair and meets as necessary for the particular issue. Our task force includes advisory, community engagement, directed studies, student-led conferences, 6th and 9th grade transition teams, senior projects, and student recognition.

Vertical and horizontal teams were established when it became obvious that CCA needed support within faculty planning time. Our teachers have busy schedules: many teachers require performance rehearsals after school or they may be involved in community events that require outside rehearsal time. Other teachers tutor students after school as well. Because we do not finish our school day until 4:00 p.m., after school meetings are difficult to schedule. By scheduling classes so that teachers share common planning, we are offering teachers a tool to help create consistency across the curriculum.

We began Quality Circles during teacher planning time to give administrators the chance to share important professional material with teachers. During the 2005-2006 school year we used Quality Circles to read professional articles and discuss issues important to the change of the school. This time remains important but when we discovered that our teachers were at varying degrees of proficiency, we realize that our Quality Circle time must be flexible enough to make sure that we are providing the most valuable professional development for the individual teacher. Through our experience with supplying professional development through Quality Circle time, we have begun to see ways to make certain that we use the time rather than simply mandate teacher attendance. We have found ways to be more flexible in meeting the professional development needs of teachers and we will continue to do so.

Another aspect of structural and organizational change is our continued focus on data to improve student achievement and teacher efficacy. Data inform our decisions on an everyday basis. Teachers are given opportunities to analyze data from their own classes in order to select the most appropriate curriculum changes and to design their on-going professional development. Rather than simply being satisfied with proficient test scores, teachers and administrators are using data to find the pattern in student development and identify subgroups within our student population.

Conclusion
CCA has been successful in implementing change within the school and in developing a vision for its students. Student attendance, retention rates, graduation rates, and test scores have all improved over the past five years. Yet, closer scrutiny of test data suggests several areas of concern in terms of sustaining student achievement for all students, during and after high school, and underscores an alarming trend of disparity between minority and white students in all areas, from TCAP scores in middle school to ACT scores of graduating seniors. While the average ACT composite score for a CCA student is 21.4, the average composite for African-American students at CCA is 19.4.
Despite a rise in performance levels across CCA and a decrease in the percentage of students traditionally considered at-risk, many CCA students end up merely meeting the lowest standards of achievement according to standardized test data. These students are often our students of color or the economically disadvantaged. Persistent gaps in achievement of subgroups within the student population of CCA prove others steps must be taken to ensure that every one of our students is well-prepared to thrive in a rigorous high school.
Center for Creative Arts is a fine arts magnet school for grades six through twelve. We have had the good fortune to be involved in school reform for five years as the result of the SNS high school initiative. The last three years have been particularly productive for us as we have become more focused and thoughtful in our questions, more honest and reflective in our answers, and more willing to take risks to create systemic reform for our school. The following questions have served us well in our work:

1) What do we envision for our students, school, and community five years from now?
2) How can we work together to accomplish these goals?
3) How can we make arts and academics equally challenging and engaging?
4) How can we improve instruction so all students can achieve at high levels?
5) How can we continue to build on the structural and organizational changes we have in place?

What do we envision for our students, school, and community five years from now? We began the visioning process for our school during our first year as a magnet school and have had several refinements of the statement throughout the years. As we worked on our vision statement this year, we were guided by the following parameters; 1) A vision statement must be personal; 2) practical; 3) powerful; and 4) pictorial. The last is, perhaps, the weightiest for our school community. We learned that most of our students are visual learners and, thusly, we have sought to develop a vision statement which has visual quality.

CCA: Illuminating Dreams of Passion, Acceptance, Creativity, and Excellence.

This can be said another way: CCA is a place where each student is known well and supported in their goals of academic and artistic success. The acronym PACE is used to “unpack” our vision statement:

P- Passion: The word passion finds its root in the Latin “passio” which means, among other things, heartfelt. We sometimes forget that “heart” as well as the “head” are important in education;

A- Acceptance: We are a school united by diversity! That sounds contradictory, but it is truly the nature of our school;

C- Creativity: Theologians say that the Imago Dei, the image of God, which resides in humanity could be creativity, and it is this quality which separates us from all the rest of creation. Creativity is at the center of all we do.

E- Excellence: Excellence is both artistic and academic. Our audits have focused on the arts and academics and have given us a clear path – increased rigor. We have developed two rubrics that will lead to an increase in educational rigor, and this, teamed with vertical and horizontal planning and curriculum scaffolding will, we believe, lead us to excellence!

Five years from now, Center for Creative Arts will truly exemplify our vision and will illuminate dreams by:

- scaffolding an integrated curriculum grades 6-12
- developing independent, reflective learners
- utilizing scaffolded school-wide rubrics
assessing longitudinal student performance in academics and in the arts through a variety of strategies
assisting students/teachers in developing personal learning plans
using best practices as the cornerstone of instruction
advancing all students to their maximum success
creating meaningful student/adult relationships
involving community partners in meaningful ways
moving students seamlessly from fifth grade to freshman year in college
modeling what a school for a new society should be.

How can we work together to accomplish these goals?
In the 2006-2007 school year, we will build on what we have already learned through our high school SNS initiative. We have become skilled at asking pointed questions of our students, families, teachers, and community partners, using the data to serve as a catalyst for change. Focus groups, student-led conferences, school generated surveys, and standardized assessments will continue to be used as a way to engage all shareholders in the work of pushing our good school to become a great school. We are a committed group of educators, students, parents, and community partners dedicated to the success of all students. We will move our professional learning community to a deeper level by instituting individual professional growth plans and embedded differentiated professional development based on teacher need. Teachers will become reflective practitioners.

How can we make arts and academics equally challenging and engaging?
Vertical teaming will be an integral part of creating equally challenging and engaging arts and academics. These teams will meet quarterly and will be comprised of department members grades six through twelve as well as representatives from the arts faculty. This configuration will allow our school to build on our strengths and to scaffold skills. Our arts classes will fully implement juries in dance, music, and theatre with all seniors taking senior seminar, CCA’s equivalent to senior projects.

How can we improve instruction so all students can achieve at high levels?
CCA took a bold risk and embarked on a year long action research project focusing on rigor. Our findings have led us to our next phase of reform as articulated in our plan. As we seek to illuminate dreams of passion, acceptance, creativity, and excellence, CCA will embark on the most difficult reform efforts to date. In order to significantly impact student learning, we must change the nature of instruction and the focus of our conversations. We will develop and use school wide rubrics in the areas of oral presentations, writing, and research. CCA will intentionally embed literacy strategies, process skills, and study skills across content areas and grade levels helping students become independent reflective life-long learners. We will implement the rubrics for rigorous teaching and learning created from our year long focus on rigor. We will provide additional instruction in math. CCA will engage our faculty in quarterly vertical planning and weekly collaborative planning for grades six, seven, and nine.

How can we continue to build on the structural and organizational changes we have in place?
CCA does an excellent job in making new students feel welcome and accepted. However, we realize we need to increase the number and quality of transition activities and support provided to sixth, ninth, and twelfth grade students throughout the school year. Currently CCA has no continuum of support for students. While we have directed studies and advisory programs, we have come to the realization that we need a well developed system of support. The 2006-2007 school year will focus on the implementation of small groups developed and implemented by the guidance office as the first phase in creating a comprehensive support system. We will enhance our advisory program more effectively to meet the developmental needs of our students in grades six through eight, transitional needs of our sixth, ninth and twelfth graders and academic
achievement for our tenth and eleventh graders. Our master schedule for the 2006-2007 school year was developed based on the answer to the following focus questions, resulting in a schedule that increases course offerings for upper grades, exploratory for sixth and seventh grades, and teaming for sixth, seventh, and ninth grade with built in collaborative planning.

1) Is our schedule student or staff centered?
2) Are additional courses needed to assist 9th grade transition?
3) What is the goal of senior seminar/project this year?
4) Can we achieve 9th grade teaming this year?
5) How can we continue to improve ACT scores within our present schedule?
6) How does our schedule reflect our emphasis on rigor?
7) Is our goal to continue adding AP classes?
8) Is the present middle school schedule adequate for middle school learning?

The last and most substantial structure is a deep change in the way CCA approaches professional development. What we painfully acknowledge is that the hardest work is what we must undertake next. Until we make substantive changes in teacher efficacy and classroom instruction, we will not be able to take the next step forward as a school. Without increased accountability and greater professional learning, we will continue to make peripheral changes that do not get at the heart of the matter: the learning that happens in the classroom. In order for us to become a school that models what a school for a new society should be we must move our professional learning community into greater effectiveness. We are implementing differentiated professional development based on self-assessment of the “Rubric for Rigorous Teaching: How Does the Teacher Nurture Rigorous Learning?” Teachers will be organized into small learning groups based on their own professional needs. Each teacher will be asked to develop his/her own professional growth plan with stated goals and measures for evaluation. We feel this radical shift will not only create a change in the types of conversations in which teachers are engaged, but will reflect what is meant by job embedded professional development while creating reflective practitioners. Our vertical and collaborative teams will further sharpen the emphasis on instruction by routinely examining student work using protocols as found in critical friends groups. These professional development strategies are paramount as we work toward systemic reform at CCA.

Raysheequa’s Story

Raysheequa got off the bus excited to be at CCA. All her life, her passion has been performing – singing, dancing, acting, and playing the piano. And now her dreams were coming true. In two years she had already been at CCA, she had felt herself change. The transition to middle school was difficult, but her teachers had worked hard to help her gain the skills needed to be successful, from using her agenda mate, to dealing with social issues, to writing better. She would never have made it through the seventh grade without her peer-study group! Now, nearing the end of her eighth grade, she felt confident about her ability to make it in high school. She was on her way to earning 3.5 credits – with a decent GPA, too!

“I don’t know exactly what it is,” she had told her mother last night after rehearsal. “I mean, school is hard, but it’s exciting. Like yesterday, I understood the reason we were having trouble in ballet because of the lesson in physical science on force. When our choreography group talked about it, we were able to solve the problem and now our dance is coming together. I wrote a reflection about it in English and my teacher complimented me on how I used a semicolon.”

“Sounds like it’s all coming together for you girl,” her mother replied.
“It is, mama, it is! It’s like all my dreams are coming true – I get to dance, people like me for who I am, we’re always trying new things, and my grades are better than ever. I’m so glad we chose CCA for me.”
Year Five in the Schools for a New Society initiative at Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences (CSAS) was characterized by a focus on assessment, reflection, and an extension of the learning around school reform into the middle grades. As our ninth and tenth grade teachers worked with students on self-assessment through the Scholar’s Journey process, our middle school teachers began to question their own assessment of students. The district conversation about rigor was mirrored in a CSAS Quality Circle text-based discussion, which in turn became an important consideration in our middle school reform plan based on mastery learning. School-wide seminars focused on building community and improving climate provided a vehicle for modeling literacy strategies in seminar class. Our reform efforts wove together and supported one another so seamlessly that new learning naturally extended from our work. In 2005-06, school reform at CSAS ceased to be a list of initiatives or programs and truly became embedded into the way we do business, a learning culture for continual improvement and change.

The Roundtables produced some powerful conversations between students and their parents about learning, and often tearful words of appreciation from parents who rarely if ever had had serious dialogue with their own children about character, leadership, and their own strengths and weaknesses. Teachers who had been skeptical of the two year reflection process and the heavy load of paperwork involved in the collection of work samples, walked away from Roundtables saying quite literally, I am a believer in this process now!

Changes made to the process of reflection writing for Scholar’s Journey spawned important learning for teachers around the issue of self-assessment. In 2005-06 the audience for student written reflections was shifted from the advisor over to the teacher for whom the work was done. Initially the advisors were reading and commenting on all of their advisees’ reflections. Feedback from students at the end of 2004-05 suggested that the reflective process would be more meaningful if the teacher who had actually assigned the work could read the students’ self-assessment. By November 2005, teachers were asking some important questions about Scholar’s Journey reflections. Through Quality Circles and in a January in-service meeting, teachers examined student work samples and student reflections. Together we began exploring questions such as

- What kind of work merits reflection?
- What are the attributes of a strong self-assessment?
- How can we engender honest reflection when it is assigned?
- Do we as teachers do the same depth of reflection around our own work that we ask our students to do?

Not all students successfully completed their Roundtables, either because they had not completed their portfolio or because they had already chosen to attend another school the following year. Because Scholar’s Journey is a promotion requirement for tenth to eleventh grade at CSAS,
students choosing not to return to CSAS opted out of the Roundtable process. Over 95% of the sophomore class successfully completed this important two year process.

Community and School Climate - In May of 2005, a group of teachers began to surface some concerns about our student apathy and our school climate as a result of a CFG meeting. Together they decided to involve the entire K-12 faculty in a conversation identifying areas of concern. Last summer representatives from all levels of the school met, as did three focus groups of middle and high school students. Together students and teachers planned activities for the 2005-06 school year.

We launched the school year with faculty seminars focusing on the definition of community. Pre-reading literacy strategies were folded into the seminar plan, and specific reading strategies were employed in the pre-activity before the seminar. This seminar allowed teachers to begin their own dialogue about community and our school. An afternoon session on literacy strategies for use in seminar allowed teachers to de-construct the morning's seminar and to analyze the use of reading strategies through Socratic seminar.

During the first week of school, a similar seminar was conducted for all students grades 6-12. High school students examined a definition of community in Scott Peck’s *The Road Less Traveled* while middle school students did the same using the story *The Rabbi's Gift*. Each advisory then wrote similes that captured the essence of the CSAS community and constructed visual tiles that reflected that image. These tiles were hung in the school gallery throughout the first semester as a constant reminder of the importance of our school community.

We purchased all teachers a copy of Ron Clark’s *The Essential 55*, and groups of teachers created skits to present to one another around different rules for community in the book. Posters listing the Essential 55 rules hung in every classroom, grades K-12. The book and this list of rules became an advisory focus for the year. Our principal, Steve Ball, began an upper school newsletter for staff that was published every Friday. The *Friday Focus* highlighted one of the essential rules and often came with suggestions for advisory activities related to that concept. The celebration of staff birthdays and brain teaser puzzles with rewards attached made the *Friday Focus* a must read on Friday mornings!

Our own climate survey data shows that we have made gains in the area of school climate. Pre and post-survey results show improvements in all categories identified in the summer of 2005. SNS survey data indicates that 79.2% of our high school students care about their school and 78.8% feel safe at school, but these numbers could be higher. We still have much work to do. Community and climate continue to be of such importance to CSAS that it became one of three school improvement goals in our 2006 SIP.

College Access – CSAS has always had a strong record for sending close to 100% of its graduates to college. This year we strengthened the pathway to college even more by providing a subscription to Naviance for our seniors. 98% of our seniors used the program and of those students using Naviance, 33% logged on more than 40 times. We attribute the use of Naviance to a marked increase in total scholarship grants from $3.3 million in 2005 to $4.4 million in 2006. In particular, our students received more scholarships offered by specific universities because of the information provided through the Naviance program. Next year we plan to extend the use of Naviance to other high school grade levels to begin this important planning for college.

SNS student survey data reflects the strong emphasis CSAS places on the pathway to college. 93% of juniors participating in the survey indicated that they had visited a college or university since entering high school. Already over 37% of ninth graders surveyed indicated that they had also made a college visit that year. 82.2% of juniors indicated that they had received information about a college that might be a good fit for them, with the freshmen not far behind at 63%.
**Literacy** – During the 2005-06 school year, we identified struggling ninth grade readers and provided targeted reading support for those students through a modified grammar class. These focused efforts we made gains with these students. Using pre and post test data with Gates-McGinnitie, the reading scores of the targeted students increased an average of 4.5 points for comprehension, with an average increase of 2.28 grade levels in reading ability. Clearly a focused reading program using Cris Tovani’s strategies produced results.

Because we want to offer these strategies to all ninth grade readers, we have developed a year long ninth grade English class that incorporates Tovani’s literacy strategies with a special focus on reading non-fiction. ACT data tells us that our students can analyze and synthesize literature, but have more difficulty doing the same with non-fiction material. Successfully tackling non-fiction should enable our students to analyze information from text books across the curriculum. This new ninth grade requirement will allow our students to enter high school equipped with reading strategies that will help them be successful in coursework for the rest of their high school career.

Using our district literacy leaders to assess senior project papers pointed to a similar problem related to research and writing. ACT data had indicated that students were struggling with analysis and synthesis of information. Feedback from our literacy specialists indicated that our students lack the same skills as they conduct research. Senior project papers contained a collection of unfocused research, disconnected pieces of information that did not clearly support or answer students’ essential questions. These students were having difficulty sifting through information from various sources, analyzing the information, and synthesizing that research into new learning. We plan to embed these critical thinking skills into our literacy plan for 2006-07.

We continue to require all high school teachers to assign and assess a 3-5 page research paper in all content classes. A focus group of teachers this year used CFG protocols to examine student work and teacher rubrics from these writing assignments. The rigor of the assignments and the quality of student work varied greatly from class to class and teacher to teacher. Our literacy plan for 2006-07 will include professional development to assist teachers in addressing this problem.

**Mastery Learning** - As a part of our middle school SNS planning year, our entire school community began a discussion about assessment and learning. We began the school year in August with an honest conversation about the ways in which we are not serving our students. Again and again the issue of student apathy and the number of students who were choosing not to succeed came up. We were concerned with students who were opting out of an education in large numbers by simply accepting zeroes for their work. This conversation led in turn to a deeper, more difficult one concerning assessment. What does a grade represent? What a child knows and can do? Or time management, organization, and personal responsibility? Who is responsible for student success?…the teacher, the parent, or the child?

We decided to collect data about the number of zeroes students in middle school were taking. Every two weeks, teachers reported how many zeroes they were posting into their grade books. We were astounded by the results. In one two week period in October, over 270 assignments were never submitted for a grade. We posted over 270 zeroes for our small middle school student body, totaling no more than 225 students. Another important learning that coincided with this data collection was that punitive measures did not affect student performance. The seventh grade team began to place students who did not submit work into lunch isolation. This punishment did not effect any change in the number of zeroes students continued to take. If giving a student a zero for a grade did not change their motivation, and punishing them for failure to do work did not motivate them, what then could we as a staff do to ensure that all students learn and are successful in school?
Together we wrestled with these questions. We read and discussed Corbett and Wilson’s research on schools who adopt the posture that “Failure is not an option!” We began to wonder what our school would look like if all assignments were meaningful and all students were required to complete all work to mastery. In short, we began to wonder, What would CSAS look like if we believed that failure was not an option for any student?

Working with Dick Corbett we decided to visit some middle schools in Michigan that have adopted just such a policy. Our visit resulted in a profound learning experience for our teachers. We went to Michigan searching for an answer to apathetic students and found, instead, a new way of thinking about teaching and learning that had at its core an insistence on rigor.

The two schools we visited were both in their second year of implementing the ABCI model, meaning that all work was required to be completed to at least C level. Anything not done to this minimum was given an incomplete. The expectation was that all work would be done to a quality level and no failing grades were ever given. Instead, teams of teachers took responsibility for seeing that all students performed to mastery on all assignments.

We went to Michigan thinking that we were going to learn about how to implement a new grading model and discovered that this approach has less to do with grades than it has to do with a shift in teaching focus. Listening to teacher after teacher, what we heard were the voices of converts who no longer focus on their assignments, all those pieces of paper, those points in the grade book. Instead they focus on individual students and specific learning outcomes.

In the first year of implementation, teachers admitted to being overwhelmed by trying to keep up with students who needed to re-do work or make up incompletes. They felt like they were drowning in paperwork. They realized that something had to give and that they needed to re-think what they were assigning. Were all of those worksheets, math problems, word searches really essential to student learning? As teachers began to shift their focus to specific learning outcomes, the rigor and relevance of the work they assigned increased. They began to use more formative assessments to coach students along the way, and only gave summative assessments the grade required for mastery. They began to adopt the attitude, If an assignment is worth doing, it is worth doing well.

When the middle school team brought this idea to the high school faculty, they expected to encounter strong resistance. Instead, the high school teachers saw a connection to the Paideia coaching model in existence at CSAS when the school was first founded. They also saw parallels with our expectations for Senior Project and Scholar’s Journey. Both of these high school requirements are worth doing well and we hold them to that expectation, coaching them along the way. Our conversation and learning about mastery learning will continue over the next year and we plan to expand this model across both middle and high school grades over the next two years.
Over the course of the last year, the CSAS staff has been on its own expeditionary learning adventure. We began the school year in August with an honest conversation about the ways in which we are not serving our students, particularly at the middle level.

Again and again the issue of student apathy and the number of students who were choosing not to succeed came up. We were concerned with students who were opting out of an education in large numbers by simply accepting zeroes for their work. This conversation led in turn to a deeper, more difficult one concerning assessment. What does a grade represent? What a child knows and can do? Or time management, organization, and personal responsibility? Who is responsible for student success? …the teacher, the parent, or the child?

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At CSAS we are continuing the conversation about the learning for mastery concept and we are committed to spending the next year getting ready to implement a model that will best fit our Paideia school. Because our students score well on state tests, but do not progress from the Proficient to the Advanced levels, it is imperative that our plan \textbf{address rigor at all levels}. Moving to this model will require a change in our existing schedule to allow for more teaming and to create an \textbf{IE block for Intensive Assistance and Enrichment}. This IE block will give our existing advisory program a new and more academic focus. Students not involved in coaching to mastery will be involved in integrated expeditionary learning units. We want to stretch \textit{all} kids.

Teachers in Michigan also stressed the importance of true \textbf{cooperative learning and differentiation}. Although CSAS is a non-tracked school with heterogeneously mixed classes, we have not fully developed our potential for truly differentiated classrooms. We plan to create in-depth professional development around cooperative learning and \textbf{differentiated instruction}.

Because our state report card ranks CSAS as an F in Reading for TVAAS, we have developed a \textbf{comprehensive literacy plan} with a two-pronged approach: content literacy and coaching reading through seminar. Utilizing existing departments we will focus on specific literacy skills by content area, and then more generally coach reading though seminar. We are currently using the Gates-McGinnitie test to identify struggling readers in grades 6, 7, and 8. These students will be able to receive intensive reading assistance through the IE block. We are also in the process of developing a year long 9th grade English class on the block. Starting in 2006-07, all freshmen will take this year long class with a special focus on literacy strategies for reading across the genres.

As we move through our reform work, we continue to learn along the way. One important learning that has informed our plans for the future came from our use of outside literacy experts to assess and give us feedback on our \textbf{Senior Project} papers. Through their objective eyes we were able to identify a gap in our students’ ability to connect general research to a specific research question. They helped us identify a gap in how we teach students to analyze and then synthesize. We are learning that literacy goes beyond reading and writing, and is in fact related to how students think, connect, analyze, and synthesize information. As a result our literacy plan extends into \textbf{critical thinking skills using ACT benchmarks and SAT prep} to address those gaps in our curriculum.

As a K-12 school we need to recognize the importance of transitions. Even though our children move from level to level within the same building, there are transitional issues that need to be addressed. Our transition plan allows for a \textbf{year long transition}, beginning in January and ending the following December for grades 5-6, grades 8-9, and grade 12 and beyond. A transition team will coordinate monthly transition activities at each level. The year long 9th grade English class will also offer needed transitional support, particularly for those students new to CSAS.

We realize that our plans for the future will not be easy; they are not for the faint of heart. As a staff we believe they are worth pursuing. It is no longer good enough to assign a grade and move on. At CSAS we do not simply believe in success for \textit{all} students; we believe in success for \textit{each} student.
East Ridge High School’s focus has been to improve student learning while fostering personalization and engaging students in a rigorous, relevant curriculum. During the 2005-2006 school year, we continued to deepen our work around the following components:

- **Professional Learning Community**: Professional development is aligned with the school vision and SNS goals. Our staff has continued to study effective teacher practices and student expectation dilemmas relying on three particular texts: *Teaching What Matters Most* (Strong, Silver, and Perini), *What's Worth Fighting for in Your School* (Fullan and Hargreaves), and *Qualities of Effective Teachers* (Stronge). Professional development occurs within the school day during CFGs and quality circles, during site visits, and at curriculum-based conferences. Throughout the year, teachers and students from ERHS have had opportunities to provide professional development for teachers and leaders within our district and with other school districts across the nation.

- **Leadership capacity building**: Throughout the year, the faculty and staff at ERHS have assumed leadership roles, sharing and participating in professional growth opportunities. These activities have included “train-the-trainer” models that support building sustainability and capacity in our school. Teacher engagement of educational issues and SNS change initiatives is at an all time high. Teachers are requesting opportunities to learn more strategies, visit other schools, share their work with their colleagues and those of other schools, and request feedback on their classroom practices. Through the Networked Learning Community, at least two teachers from each content area have shared teaching strategies and projects with other members in the Learning Community. In addition, The Networked Learning Community has provided opportunities for eighteen teachers to visit and learn from other teachers across the network. Six teachers have presented at national conferences this year and have been asked to provide professional development for other school systems. East Ridge High School involves new teachers in an extensive new teacher mentoring program. In the last two years, ten teachers have completed classes to become state qualified mentors for new teachers. Each new teacher has been assigned two mentors. Mentors and mentees meet individually and in groups during the year to help ease the transition into teaching. This program has proved successful as teacher turnover rate has dropped from 66% in 04-05 to 23% in 05-06. The leadership team was actively involved in helping to support the new administrative team and thus an easy transition was seen.

- **Advisory**: Funded through SNS, ERHS employs an advisory coordinator that oversees advisories, updates teacher advisory notebooks for all grade levels, and assigns new students to an advisory teacher. Activities, lesson plans, and handouts are provided to help teachers with their advisories. Advisory Professional Development continues to support teachers for planning and in conducting their advisories. Through advisories, open house, and newsletters, parents and students have been informed about the new single path diploma and graduation requirements. We continue to be challenged in helping students develop a five year plan that includes high school, post-secondary, and career goals.

- **Literacy**: Ninth grade academy students demonstrated a remarkable increase in DRP (reading assessment) scores during the 2005-06 academic year. 82% of the students increased their reading comprehension in one year. Teachers at ERHS have been trained in WestEd literacy strategies that have been implemented across content areas. The Networked Learning Community grant has provided three professional development days
focused on K-12 literacy strategies. In addition, common language and reading strategies have been shared to support a seamless K-12 learning environment for students in our community.

- **Numeracy**: Together, the administration and math department have collaborated to ensure a seamless progression of our math classes. In particular, Algebra I has been redesigned to support the strategies necessary for success on the Gateway Algebra exam. For example, students not meeting success in Algebra I during the first semester were reassigned to a Gateway Algebra I class so they could move at a slower pace and experience success. All Algebra I students use the Cognitive Tutor Lab and Gateway Algebra I scores improved from 71% in 04-05 to 85.5% in 05-06. The number of student taking higher level math classes has dramatically increased. We now have three calculus classes and will be adding an AP Calculus class next year. Chattanooga State and East Ridge High School experimented with a new computer program to help raise ACT math scores—the CSTCC River Valley Tech Prep Consortium Remediation/DSP Pilot Project 2005. Students with an ACT math score lower than 19 were eligible for the class. Fifteen students enrolled. Students were given a pre-test and post-test. 11.43 hours/student was logged on to the PassKeys Site. 60% achieved college level waiver through ASSET Post-Assessment entrance to sixteen colleges or technical schools in Tennessee. The success of this pilot program has opened the doors for two classes to be offered at our school during the 2006-2007 academic year.

- **Ninth Grade Academy**: The Freshmen Academy continues to evolve and establish success for ninth grade students at East Ridge High School. To ease the transition from eighth to ninth grade, a Ninth Grade Academy picnic was held August 11, 2005, to meet and welcome all ninth grade students and their families. In addition, students were involved in a variety of team building activities throughout the year. Data driven decision-making was employed to ensure that every ninth grade student had the opportunity to succeed and move to the 10th grade. A variety of opportunities were offered to support increased student achievement such as flexible math placement, credit recovery, parent-teacher conferences and community service projects. An academic lab was available to students needing extra help and remediation. The lab was available eighty-two days and served approximately 248 students. Every four to five weeks, parents were notified of student progress. With the help of the Ninth Grade Academy staff, student-led conferences were held in May for parents, family members, and teachers. 80% of the student-led portfolio conferences were attended. All who attended praised the process and the student designed portfolios. Absenteeism is still a problem as the ninth grade had the highest absentee rate of 15%.

- **Construction Career Academy**: The Construction Career Academy continues to prepare students for careers in industry and human services while equipping them for continued learning and further study by unifying both the academic and technical worlds. The academy serves as a national model in how to link career/technical education to a strong academic content. In the 2005-06 school year, the Construction Career Academy shared its story with twenty-one different school systems and/or businesses. Within the past four years, the Construction Academy has increased from thirty-nine students to ninety students. With the increased enrollment, a welding, plumbing, and additional electrical class have been added. The academy continues to build relations with business partners through community/school service projects, field trips, and hosting an open house which was attended by fifty teachers, principals, and AGC representatives from fifteen states. In 2005, the Construction Academy was awarded a $3,000 Department of Labor Grant and an additional $15,000 in supplies or money has been received from various business partners. With continued growth of the Construction Academy, the challenge of providing a personalized learning experience and common planning for teachers is evident. Due to low teacher salaries, sustainability and maintaining teachers continues to be a challenge for the Construction Academy.
• **Community Outreach and Partnership:** East Ridge High School and the community are united in educating students. The East Ridge Education Committee (EREC) worked with East Ridge High School to promote literacy in the elementary schools. Through the RACER Program (Read across East Ridge) students from the high school distributed and read books once a month to students in kindergarten through third grade. EREC also provided a teacher depot for all teachers to receive needed classroom supplies. The East Ridge Chamber of Commerce partnered with the high school in a number of projects such as Reality Check and Who Wants to be a Millionaire. The East Ridge Expo, Scholastic Book Fairs and two open houses invited the community as well as parents into the high school. In an effort to keep parents and the community better informed, a newsletter was published and distributed monthly. Students, families, and community members also have access to an interactive website that contains information about the school and activities. Over 250 parent and volunteer hours were logged this school year. In an attempt to reach more parents a shuttle service was provided to and from the open houses. Based on lack of participation and monetary expense this service was not deemed a success.

• **East Ridge Intensive Care Program (ERIC):** ERIC, one of the most successful programs at ERHS, provides academic intervention for students who fall behind in their class work for various reasons or for those students with behavior problems. This year 315 students served one or more days in ERIC. The breakdown by grades is as follows: 147 ninth graders, 88 tenth graders, 60 eleventh graders, and 20 twelfth graders. Of those 315 students, 55% finished projects or completed make-up work so they could maintain or improve their grades, 13% raised their grade or satisfied requirements to receive a credit, and 96% completed teacher daily assignments plus additional assignments (reading/writing assignments, life skills, character education, ethics).

In addition to the above initiatives, the staff of East Ridge High School continues to focus on effective teacher practices, developing alternative assignments and assessments, and participating in rich dialogue supporting a rigorous and challenging curriculum for students at ERHS. During the 2006-07 academic year, we will continue to explore and implement strategies to motivate the lower quartile students through the ninth grade academy. In order to gain interest and ownership in learning, we will continue to implement a seamless 6-12 learning experience. With that goal in mind, East Ridge Middle and High School have started meeting to communicate expectations to reduce achievement gaps and to engage students in mastering the essential standards. Our efforts have been validated as we met Average Yearly Progress (AYP) for the 2005-06 academic year, moving East Ridge High School to a school “in good standing.” With all stake holders supporting our efforts, our school will continue to make yearly academic progress.
EAST RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECTION

The 2006-2007 Schools for a New Society proposal continues to focus on building sustainability and supporting increased student achievement at East Ridge High School. Our vision is to ensure that all students graduate with the skills necessary to pursue post secondary education and/or enter the workforce. To accomplish this goal, we believe that students should have an active role in the learning and decision-making process. Additionally, we believe that East Ridge’s rich heritage and community support are vital components in our school’s mission and vision for student achievement.

Our primary focus is to ensure that all students experience a rigorous and relevant curriculum will be our primary focus. During the 2006-2007 academic year, teachers will receive training in differentiated instructional strategies and will collaborate in departmental teams to develop a differentiated curriculum. Teachers will also participate in professional development activities focused on ACT standards and alternative assessments. Training will occur through Quality Circles, Critical Friends Groups, and School-Based Administrative Professional Development Days. This training will ensure that all teachers have the skills and strategies necessary to engage students at all ability levels. In addition, teachers will expand their knowledge and use of literacy strategies in all content areas through participation in our Networked Learning Community and expanded literacy professional development. School- based professional development will focus on creating school-wide writing rubrics and writing assessments that will be administered across the curriculum every six weeks.

East Ridge High School will continue to prepare students for a post secondary world. Students will have the opportunity to discover and explore various career opportunities through community-service learning, advisory, and community-based programs such as the ninth grade Reality Check, tenth grade Get a Job Program, and the eleventh grade Who Wants to be a Millionaire. To increase the number of students taking the ACT, going to college, and applying for scholarship monies, a college access coordinator has been employed. Students will have the opportunity to develop leadership, communication, and thinking skills through the development of a Student leadership course and participation in the school’s Student Government Association (SGA). Student voice will be heard through monthly class forums with the principal and through SGA.

We will continue to offer a personalized education and to support the academic needs of students through advisory, ERIC, portfolio conferences, Ninth Grade Academy, and the Construction Academy. These programs work together to provide students with a relevant, individualized, and personalized learning experience. Our Ninth Grade Academy teachers will work closely with eighth grade teachers from East Ridge Middle School to support a seamless transition from middle school to high school. Through our East Ridge Education Expo, ninth grade orientation, and ninth grade family night, families and students will participate in activities and team-building events designed to establish a foundation for success. It is the desire of East Ridge High School that all students graduate from high school and to increase the graduation rate for our seniors, East Ridge High School will identify at-risk seniors and provide individual development plans for them to meet graduation requirements through credit recovery, Virtual High School, Adult High School, and Gateway remediation.

Through the use of community, school, and home surveys, East Ridge will begin to develop an additional career academy to support the needs of our students, parents, and community partners. Insurance companies and human resource personnel will be consulted. Using round table discussions comprised of business leaders, administration, teachers, parents, and students we will identify needs, pathways, curriculum, and staffing.
East Ridge High School has a rich heritage and the community is an essential component to our success. Our plan will continue to include and reach out to the families and community of East Ridge. Families and community members will have access to an interactive website that will include a monthly school newsletter, school information, and communication avenues for teachers, students, and parents. In addition to technology, opportunities to support student achievement will be provided for students, families, and community members through student-led conferences, awards assemblies, and the Education Expo.
Virtual School:

Hamilton County Virtual School offers Gateway courses designed to prepare students for successful completion of mandated exams in Algebra I, Biology I, and English 10. These courses address each performance indicator in a comprehensive, interactive format. Students, assisted by certified, highly qualified teachers, set their own pace as they work through the content and practice skills necessary for success on Gateway exams. Additionally, online courses are available both for recovery credit and for expanding curricular offerings that small schools within the Hamilton County school system cannot offer due to limitations imposed by a small faculty.

Summer Professional Development:

During 2004-2005 it was decided our summer retreat for 2005-2006 would focus on curriculum and working with at risk students. It was agreed on to work on PBL, seminars, literacy and critical thinking necessary in working with students at risk. All the approaches were demonstrated and practiced. But, a wonderful tool was introduced, Presentation of Learning, POL. It was introduced and demonstrated by our lead teacher. It allows the student to reflect on what he/she has learned in class and in his/her life and put it in a presentation. The faculty was very impressed and several are using POL as their end of course project.

Guidance Database:

Naviance was not used to its full potential due to the extensive time needed and our limited staff. The Educational Opportunity Center helped by providing a career counselor to us two days per month. The counselor helped students with financial aid and college applications. As a result of the personal contact 49% of our seniors applied to a post secondary institution.

Student Led Conferences:

The Student Led Conference format did not meet our needs. Therefore, we are in the process of developing advisories targeting “educational personalization”, to be implemented in 2006-2007.

Advisories/New Staff Development

The lead teacher provided:

- Demonstrations and aid to new teachers in methods of instruction and classroom management
- Met with all teachers to help in the implementation of ideas

Less advisory days were used, but more personal time was set aside for advisory. The teachers chose to have office hours during their planning period.

This allows the students the opportunity of have a personal meeting with his/her advisor. We have found the student respond to this in a very positive manner.

Transition Coach:

The transition coach has evolved into a multifaceted position. The first priority of the coach is to recapture students who have dropped out of school and to identify students at risk of dropping out by
making contact with those students. The transition coach also evaluates transcripts, interviews, and 
enrolls students with the help of the student’s guidance counselor and administrator, if necessary. 
Contacting all students requesting a GED waiver is also the job of the transition coach. Transcripts are 
evaluated and phone calls are made to discuss other options for continuation and completion of high 
school. Keeping students updated every four weeks as to their graduation status and making sure they 
are progressing toward their goal is included in the job description. Another aspect of the transitional 
coach’s job was to work with the career counselor, ACT program and with FAFSA to aid the students’ 
transition to college.

Recruitment:

We have found that this year we did not have as much time to recruit. We did make contact with all 
schools, but did not visit and make our presence known. Contact with the guidance counselors in every 
school was made, but we would like to develop a better way of communicating with schools. Brochures 
were sent to all high schools to be distributed to all students dropping out.
Online Remediation:

The Hamilton County Virtual School development of Gateway courses has been completed. Next year the faculty will be trained in the registration process, monitoring of online Gateway courses, use of Blackboard for purposes of monitoring student progress, and spotting areas of deficiency in students. In addition the students will be instructed in the use of Blackboard in order to access the Gateway courses.

Senior Projects:

Senior project development has been addressed. Hamilton County High School administration and faculty have discussed the senior project issue and have chosen to go a different route that will meet the single path requirement and the student population needs. The faculty and administration are in the process of developing an e-portfolio and tested in several classrooms. The e-portfolio’s will be a culmination oral presentation joined with a portfolio; both will demonstrate the learning achieved for the span of time the student attended Hamilton County High, and the presentation and the portfolio will focus on academic and personal growth. School wide training of faculty and students will begin next year in preparation for e-presentations.

Recruiting and Transition:

This year Hamilton County High School has served students from every high school within the county by capturing students before they left school or within a short period of time thereafter. This was accomplished through the ongoing efforts of the Transition Coach and use of effective recruitment information.

Next year it is imperative this recruitment process continues and becomes more routine due to the increasing number of dropouts and potential dropouts. The updating of our web site and the creation of a school video is of great importance and a high priority.

School Structure and Climate:

Teaching strategies and classroom management have been addressed but continue to need improvement due to the extreme diversity of the school. During in-service throughout the 2006/2007 school year, the faculty will be trained in best practices of classroom strategies in order to advance differentiated instructional methods, and they will be trained in better classroom management strategies.

The training will be done using two books: Beyond Monet will be utilized for instructional practices, and Qualities of Effective Teachers. Both texts will be purchased for each teacher and will be utilized during in-services throughout the school years. Also outside consultants will be incorporated to enhance the strategies and the classroom management understanding.

Advisory:

Personalization of our advisory process has been accomplished through the individualized meeting time with each advisee. Grade card distribution is done at this time and discussion about grades
and progress takes place then. Work is still necessary in the training of the staff to do the following things during advisory time.

- Personalization enhanced by reviewing attendance, grades, and transcript for purpose of graduation, and graduation map reviews
- Review of progress reports
- Personal contact will be made with students on a regular basis
- ACT information distributed and explained

Conclusion:

The 2006/2007 school year promises to be one of more growth for the faculty and administration of Hamilton County High School. Time will be spent enhancing classroom instruction by learning and incorporating more innovative practices for the instructional time and helping teachers move away from the routine instructional practices still in place.

Along with innovative classroom practices, the faculty and administration will focus on ways to improve classroom management and become more effective teachers through quality practices in the classroom. Teachers will receive training in ways to better relate to a diverse student population by developing management skills that meet the special needs of our student body and our diverse student personalities.

More time will be spent in recruitment of students for Hamilton County High School so that the potential student drop out population is addressed in a timelier manner.

Advisory will be enhanced and made even more personal for students and teachers, and this will be done through ongoing training on transcript review and graduation map work along with emphasis on continued personal contact with advisory students.
HIXSON HIGH SCHOOL REFLECTION

The 2005-2006 academic year has been one of reform and transformation for Hixson High School. The year began with virtually all new leadership, including both principal and assistant principal changes.

When the new principal, Eddie Gravitte, began his tenure, he immediately formed a school leadership team (SLT). This SLT was structured to include the assistant principals, the Carnegie change coach, a guidance representative, the technology coordinator, four teachers who had a history of leadership within the school, a parent representative, a community representative and two student representatives. This original team was initially used by the principal as a forum for gathering the perceived stakeholder needs for the school. The principal was also looking for insight into school policy and expectations. This team began meeting weekly in September and continued to do so as it grew and evolved over the year.

One of the first tasks of the SLT was to establish the immediate needs of Hixson students through gathering and assessing achievement data. Although a majority of 05-06 Carnegie/PEF monies were used to fund the change coach, the literacy coach and the college access coordinator, other funds were used to support meeting expenses and teacher stipends for SLT members to explore the student needs assessment. This original data revealed that Hixson High, as with many other high schools within the district, had the need to increase the graduation rate (60% in 2005), improve Gateway scores, increase ninth to tenth grade promotion rates (85.4% in 2005, 86.4% in 2006) and expand the career and college preparation and admission through smaller learning communities.

Under the leadership of Mr. Gravitte, the SLT members facilitated the Hixson staff in deciding upon a three year, three phased, personalized student achievement needs based plan for restructuring the high school into wall-to-wall, viable and effective smaller learning communities. The three phases decided upon were:

2005-2006 Phase One:
Developing Structure

2006-2007 Phase Two:
Developing Rigorous Instructional Strategies and Strong Community Partnerships

2007-2008 Phase Three:
Developing Program Sustainability

Hixson High School devoted all attention during 2005-2006 to the phase one process of developing smaller learning community structures. As of spring, 2005, the only evidence of a beginning smaller learning community at HHS was in the ninth grade. The ninth graders had been moved to a specific building within the campus and divided into two teams. Through numerous on-site planning hours, SREB High Schools That Work Strand 1 training, the National Career Academy Coalition professional development conference, local site visits to fellow HCDE academy schools, peer collaboration, and surveyed parent, student and community needs, semester one of 2005-2006 ended with the creation of the following academies:

9th Grade
PRIDE ACADEMY
10-12 Career Academies
MASH
Mathematics, Science, Health and Family Consumer Sciences
TEC

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Carnegie/PEF funds supported the after hours service of staff members to hold two parent and community academy evening open houses. Academy informative PowerPoint presentations were provided for both the PTSA board and the general organization meeting. Finally, the lead teachers from the SLT presented the upper level 10-12 career academies to all HHS students during advisory periods.

Semester two of 2005-2006 was filled with the action steps necessary to begin implementation (Phase 2) of the Hixson High reform plan. Funds were used to create academy brochures designed to inform students, parents and community members of the offerings of the ninth grade PRIDE and 10-12 Career Academies. The scheduling team attended Pearson Learning academy specific scheduling training and scheduling forms were created by grade level for each academy. The curriculum was solidified and interdisciplinary activity planning began to develop. Transition development for incoming ninth graders began to occur within the PRIDE academy team. Since every upper level 10-12 career academy team agreed that service learning would be required of every academy graduate, senior service learning and internship plans began. Through the leadership of the literacy coach, the pre-existing focus on student literacy skills was built into the plans of every academy. Plans to strategize for identifying students’ need for mathematics (specifically Algebra I) improvement and ACT score enhancement were also included in the academy plans. New computer software, Naviance, was utilized by the guidance department, the college access counselor, and academy teachers to provide students and parents information on two and four-year colleges to increase college access for all students. In January, strategies for improving academy students’ performance on the state required TCAP writing assessment was piloted with eleventh graders. Academy team meetings were held monthly with the goal of weekly meetings during phase two, 2006-2007. The official Hixson High School Academies of Excellence catalog was created and printed via the invaluable Carnegie/PEF grant funds. The final step of first semester, phase one, was the selection of the career academy board chairpersons listed as follows:

**MASH**
Barbara Bowen  
Public Relations Director  
Memorial Northpark Hospital

Kathy Rose  
Nursing Instructor  
Chattanooga State Technical Community College

**TEC**
Dr. Cathi Wheatley  
Department Chairperson  
College of Business  
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

**WILD**
Mr. Jim Coppinger  
Former Fire Chief  
City of Chattanooga  
Hamilton County Commissioner

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The school year ended with the formal presentation of the official Hixson High School smaller learning community academy plan to the Hamilton County Department of Education superintendent’s cabinet. In addition, the existing school facilities were restructured for necessary academy conglomeration. The 9th grade PRIDE academy was relocated to a self-contained building located closer in proximity to elective courses, and one administrator was assigned to provide personalized attention to 9th grade student, parent, and teacher needs. Teachers from the 10th-12th grade career academies, WILD, MASH, and TEC, were relocated to common areas of the building in order to provide increased collaborative opportunities for students and teachers.

The 2005-2006 summer consisted of exciting developments that moved Hixson High School toward a solidified beginning of Phase Two. The health occupations teachers of the MASH academy developed and presented authentic career appropriate curriculum for the students in their strand of the academy that will lead to national certifications in health related fields. These teachers also made the commitment to work with the professionals identified by Mrs. Bowen of Memorial to enhance the opportunities and internships for their students. Mr. Coppinger, chair of the WILD academy, met with the administration to discuss community support for the academy programs and potential new board members. And finally, Dr. Kay Andrews, Education Liaison for the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce, met with the administration and lead teachers of the TEC academy to discuss an opportunity for a real, viable, and productive partnership between the banking and finance industry leaders of Chattanooga and the Hixson High School TEC academy. This potential partnership will likely lead to industry leader hands-on participation in curriculum development for the banking, accounting and finance strand as well as college and career matriculation opportunities including possibly two-years of paid college and guaranteed job placement for Hixson High School students.

Through Carnegie/PEF funds, HCDE central office support, and countless hours of planning and preparation on the part of staff members, Hixson High School ends the summer with a solid wall-to-wall smaller learning community structure in place that sets a solid foundation for the implementation of phase two, 2006-2007, developing rigorous career and college-oriented instructional strategies that are designed to challenge students to meet and exceed their post-secondary goals.
Hixson High School has aggressively pursued the goals of the *Schools for a New Society* action plan for the SY 2005-2006. Due to multiple historical factors, Hixson has had to essentially “catch up” with other district schools in the reform process. We feel that we have done a sufficient job of moving this school in the direction of smaller learning community development with the focus of a personalized learning environment fostering academic achievement for all subgroups of students. We also believe that there is much more work to be done.

Hixson High School has formed an extremely active and cohesive Site Leadership Team consisting of administrators, academy lead teachers, guidance counselors, media specialists, students and parents. This slt has met weekly for the entire school year, both developing and preparing to implement the Hixson reform plan. Community advisory boards have been established with board chairmen for each academy-WILD, Commissioner Jim Coppinger, MASH, Memorial Hospital’s Barbara Bowen, and TEC, UTC Business Dept. Chair Professor Kathie Wheatley. This board will meet quarterly with teachers to discuss job embedded curriculum and program sustainability. Student achievement data has been discussed at length and this team has strategized all year long in developing an accelerated plan to use instructional rigor, personalized smaller learning communities and quality curriculum to address the student needs addressed in the data section.

Based on student achievement data, Hixson High School must focus on improving math proficiency, decreasing suspensions and expulsions, increasing graduation rate, closing subgroup gaps, and most of all, improving both readiness and admission to post-secondary college and or advanced training courses. Hixson High will do this through the strategies afforded through the following personalized wall-to-wall smaller learning community structure beginning SY2006.

**PRIDE**

**Ninth Grade Academy**

Two Teams

Three 10-12 Career Academies

- **MASH** Academy
  - Math, Science and Health/Family Consumer Science

- **WILD** Academy
  - World Interest Leadership Development

- **TEC** Academy
  - Technology Enterprise & Communications

These academies will allow students to be taught by a common core of teachers who know them well. The academies will also allow for each student to participate in a career themed daily advisory with other students who hold like career and college interests.

The strategies used through this design will include strong professional development for teachers to focus primarily on **rigor** in the classroom, motivation and intervention for struggling learners, behavioral modification, common assessments and collaborative teaching methods. Intervention strategies will be provided such as tutorials during advisory and before and after school academic labs. The *Carnegie Learning* Labs, *Cognitive Tutor*, will be utilized to aid in improving math performance and teachers will be trained in Advanced Placement courses with direct recruiting occurring to boost this program. The Ninth Grade Academy has physically moved to a new building with teams split to two floors. Every math teacher will now teach at least one Algebra I class. The three upper level career academies have also moved into their own geographic locations within the
building. A Carnegie change coach will remain in place as well as a literacy coach and a college access coordinator. Teachers will conduct monthly peer observation/walk throughs to gather best practices from one another, within their own building. The SLT will continue to meet weekly and lead teachers will provide release time for Algebra I teachers to meet weekly to assess student progress on Gateway indicators and potential instructional adjustments and improvements. All professional development will be student achievement need driven.
Howard School of Academics & Technology Reflection

Year Five in Schools for a New Society for Howard School of Academics and Technology focused on three main goals: Increasing the promotion rate in the Ninth Grade Academy, implementing a more rigorous curriculum in all classes, and creating career path academies for all students in grades 10 through 12. We also looked and worked on more parent engagement and improving attendance.

The Ninth Grade Academy remains a major focus because until we have students moving to the tenth grade without retention, we will not be able to improve our graduation rate. This year the ninth grade consisted of three dedicated teams with no students taking classes outside their team of teachers except their one elective each term. All teachers on each team had common planning. Teams began to function more as small learning communities as they established their identities through choosing team colors, a motto, a song, and designing their tee shirts. The academy held quarterly celebrations for achievement, effort, and character. They established a Beta Club to recognize high achievement, and as an academy organized, ran and supported the Goodwill Smile Week for our school. Due mainly to the Academy’s efforts, Howard won first place out of all schools in the county for our contributions to Smile Week. The data supports that this was a good year for the ninth grade. The promotion rate rose to 85% from 67% the previous year and from the 50% the year before that. Contributing to this success was the inclusion of a PAWS (Performance Activities with Students) period each day. The team of teachers decided where students on their team would go during this hour period. Some needed credit recovery, some reteaching, some literacy work, some acceleration. Every three weeks, assessments would indicate where students should move or if they should move. This implementation of PAWS is a best practice that we will implement for the whole school next year. The first term of English in the Ninth Grade Academy was a literacy course based on West Ed Reading Apprenticeship. The syllabus for this course was put together during the summer by the three language arts teachers working with the Literacy Coach. Reading scores as measured by the Gates-McGintie improved significantly. Students moved upward from all groups and 13% of the hard cord nonreaders in the lowest group moved to proficient. Algebra I scores continue to present a challenge to our students. Our official scores are not available at this time, but on a teacher to teacher basis, the ninth grade scores improved from 37% proficient to 51% proficient or advanced. This summer the teachers from the academy, new teachers included, participated in a workshop on team building, teaching, and conferencing for two days with Alan Siebert, a teacher/principal/consultant from Solutions, etc. out of the University of Virginia. Editorially speaking, the two days were powerful.

Every staff member at Howard from the Executive Principal to every teacher to every support person was involved in the establishment of wall to wall academies. New rooms, new offices, and new curriculum were the orders of the summer. As a result when school opened, we had three new career academies up and running – The Multimedia Informational Technology Academy, The Health Science and Human Services Academy, and the Residential Construction and Engineering Technology Academy. The opening of these academies followed a year and a summer of planning. Staff met with businesses on curriculum, partnerships, and networking possibilities. As a result every academy has a good working relationship with a cadre of business and community partners. During the summer we invited our partners to a luncheon to describe our progress, to show them our facilities and give feedback to us concerning our remarks and what they say. The MIT Academy has become very involved with the community and businesses. 3D Web Design assisted our students in the creation of a new school website which will be maintained by the academy. The River Gorge Trust hired our Graphic Arts Department to design and produce a bandana for their summer celebration. The students delivered an excellent product on time. The TV Broadcasting strand of the academy has been very involved videoing many community events. This summer
they began a project with Chattanooga State to interview connected people and produce a History of Howard film. The film will be screened next year at the Bijou. Students from this strand also produced and conducted a monthly radio show with WNOO. The Journalism class wrote and produced the first school newspaper the school has had in several years. The Construction Academy has partnered with Goodwill Industries to build handicapped accessible additions to designated spaces. This academy has also articulated with Chattanooga State Welding and Masonry programs. Their next project is in the planning stage – building a house with the Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise. The Health Science and Human Services Academy also maintains a strong articulation program with Chattanooga State in Child Development. Twenty-two students received credit. Additionally twelve students served internships at Siskin Children’s Institute, the Public Library, Chambliss Home, Maurice Kirby Day Care among other placements.

It is significant when talking about academies to note that not one student requested an academy change after one year although procedures are in place for students to make such requests. The academies came together to host a Career Fair for ninth graders in the school gymnasium. Students visited academy booths, talked with academy students, and participated in hands on activities in order to make a good academy selection for the next school year.

Howard has an ongoing conversation with all stakeholders about curriculum which is relevant, engaging and rigorous. Common readings, dialogues, discussions and professional development have created opportunities for the school to keep this issue at the top of the agenda. Sue Beers has talked to us about Writing and Literacy. Lynn Canady worked with us on Assessment and Teaching in the Block. Brook Haycock worked with us on creating a positive learning climate in our school. These experiences opened very new dialog within our school. Weekly Quality Circles, or Booker T. times, focused on teaching and learning. The school Leadership Team met monthly to read and discuss issues related to student learning and quality teaching. Every member of the Leadership Team did at a minimum one walk through daily. Most did two, or ten a week. Every teacher received a visit at least once a week. Walkthrough information became a part of the teacher leader conversation with all staff. Academies met regularly to work on integrated units of instruction which would make core classes more relevant to what else the student was learning. Core teachers observed technical teachers in the academy and visa versa to gain a better understanding of connections that could be made. Groups of teachers participated in numerous out of school workshops in their subject areas. The ninth grade began Socratic Seminar in all subject areas. The plan is to extend this skill to the tenth grade teachers during school year 2006 – 2007. Ninth graders also began the first step of scaffolding a senior project. They researched and wrote papers on personally selected topics in preparation for the next three years of Senior Project work.

A college access counselor and leadership coordinator brought many new faces into our school to work with out students. One Hundred Black Men mentored our ninth grade boys, One Hundred Black Women mentored our young women. These were only two of many organizations that were involved with our students. Each class participated in a class retreat. Each retreat focused on looking to the future, what options students had, decision making, and how to travel the path to postsecondary opportunities. Ninety-one seniors received regular diplomas. This is an increase from last year when 72 received regular diplomas. Seventy students took the ACT. Our number scoring in the high ranges of the ACT is slowly increasing. Fifty-seven students have been accepted at 2 or 4 year postsecondary institutions. One motivational activity our college counselor did was to post in a display case in the main hall copies of college acceptance letters and scholarship winner notifications. The 2006 Senior Class received over $300,000 in scholarships. As more students move through the grades in a timely manner, all graduating senior statistics will increase as the cohort pool will be much larger. As more students are exposed to rigorous curriculum and, very important for our students, as their literacy skills increase, higher ACT scores and more college scholarships will be evident.
At registration day in August, 2005, eight hundred parents came to register their children, meet the teachers, talk with the principals, and receive a parent handbook. Our PTSA continues to grow in membership and participation. One Wednesday a month after school, faculty stayed to meet with any parents or have parents simply visit their children’s school. The faculty took two bus trips through the community. One trip was to meet and greet and encourage parent involvement, one trip to spread awareness about Gateway Testing and how parents can help their children during test time. Chattanooga State offered several life skill classes and a GED program on our campus. The school continues to rework its plan to find the best way to engage parents in our school. School attendance will improve with more parent engagement. We did not meet our goal of increasing attendance rate by 5%. However, we did increase our rate from 87.2 to 88.8. We realize that this is a challenging problem, but the school will persist in solving the attendance problem.

Howard is building a Professional Learning Community. Teachers and staff are continually involved in conversations about teaching and learning. Teachers are emerging as leaders and assisting their colleagues in better instruction. A student government and a Principal’s Roundtable give opportunities for students to voice their ideas. Parents are increasingly becoming more involved in the learning part of school. Sustainable change is taking place. Our school will meet its goals.
HOWARD SCHOOL OF ACADEMICS & TECHNOLOGY PROJECTION

As Howard School plans for the 2006 – 2007 school year and Year Six Action Plan for SNS, we have surveyed our faculty in order to complete the SNS Continua of Present Status and have revisited several essential questions that have guided our planning. These questions include:

- What school practices have been most successful in helping students achieve at high levels?
- How can we adopt, use, or refine those practices in our school?
- What commitments would we have to make to one another to create such a school?
- What indicators will we monitor to assess our progress?

As we have gained and shared knowledge over the past few years and have found common ground as a staff, Howard is prepared to continue to move forward with its improvement initiative. When we address the benchmarks of each SNS goal, we are mindful of the challenges we as a school face. However, we are also aware of our strengths which we have played on to formulate our proposal. Forty-nine percent (49%) of our students have demonstrated weakness in Algebra I. Even though this is an improvement from sixty-five percent (65%) last year, we need and have interventions in place. We have learned that interventions need to be timely, based on intervention rather than remediation, and directive as opposed to invitational. The PAWS program used in the Ninth Grade Academy this year proved effective in that we reduced the ninth grade retention rate by forty-percent (40%) over the past year. Next year PAWS will be school wide in a flexible schedule that rotates the period for reteaching, intervention, enrichment or independent study daily. Furthermore, students will receive three week progress reports to ensure that intervention comes before the need for remediation. Department-wide common assessments will also point out our progress or lag on a periodic basis.

We have also decided to adopt a school-wide instructional model so that students in grades 6 – 12 will receive a uniform approach to learning which will reflect a rigorous, engaging, relevant curriculum. Facilitators and coaches who are trained in the Understanding By Design model will work with faculty throughout the summer and during the school year to ensure that the staff shares common purpose in our planning and delivery of instruction. Additionally, eighth and ninth grade students will have access to the Renzulli learning model, an internet based program which personalizes curriculum to each student’s learning style and skill level.

Assessment has been a priority throughout this year. Therefore, our plans for next year also address this concern. Our faculty has agreed to assess student performance at least fifty percent of the time on assessments other than pencil and paper tests or exercises. We have an agreement that formative assessment, demonstration based assessment, project based or problem based assessment, as well as summative assessment must play important roles in our instruction. We will continue to embed literacy in our curriculum following our training in the West Ed Strategic Literacy model. This year’s ninth grade had a full semester on the block schedule of the West Ed literacy curriculum. As a result their reading scores improved on the average thirteen percent based on pre and post tests of the Gate-MacGinitie. We will continue to train teachers in Socratic Seminaring and other best practices that have proved to be effective.

Every student belongs to an academy at Howard, either the Ninth Grade Academy or one of three career academies. We have moved beyond the organizational phase to the focus on curriculum integration, mentoring, internships, and collaborative work with our business partners. We will also add a strand to the Multimedia and Informational Technology Academy to include Business and Banking. Howard is in close proximity to many financial institutions which have expressed a desire
to work with our students. Academy staff have ongoing contact with their business partners to
determine that course work and performance based skills are in sync with what is required in the
working world. A planned Career Fair for our juniors and seniors which will be conducted by our
partners and other Howard friends will introduce our students to what it is like to be in the job
hunting world. This year the River Gorge Trust brought to our MIT Academy the task of designing
and producing a bandana for its River Celebration. Students in the Graphic Arts strand completed
the job with an outstanding product which it delivered in bulk in a timely fashion. We plan to have
more of these opportunities for real work in the coming year.

Ninth graders began the first step in scaffolding a Senior Project requirement this year when they
completed a research paper and bibliography and did a presentation based on their projects. This
will become a requirement of ninth graders each year. As tenth graders, students will take the next
step and so on until their senior year when each senior will complete an independent project. Many
students will also have the opportunity to do service learning as that is a part of our curriculum. In
an effort to increase our postsecondary successes and our ACT scores, we are starting awareness
programs and practices in grades 6 – 8. Students will be introduced to the postsecondary world in
middle school with many activities and programs. This is essential in that a survey identified that
very few of our middle school students planned to go to college. At the high school we will
incorporate ACT materials into the “Do-Now” at the beginning of each class period. Each
department will select materials appropriate to the subject area. We plan to continue to work with
College Access to assist our students in enrolling and attending post secondary institutions. Finally,
Advisory time will include regular conversations and information sessions about postsecondary
education opportunities and pathways.

We plan to provide multiple opportunities for parent and community involvement, commencing with
Registration Day when parents will accompany their children to enroll in school and view a data
presentation of what their school is about, and continuing throughout the year. We feel that it is
important that parents and community share our strengths as well as our challenges. It is difficult
for some parents to attend our school functions, so we plan to take it to them via bus rides and
forums in community locations.

Positive relationships are imperative to the success of our school. We have to be for our children
the people many are often missing at home. We also have to be for each other the support and
expertise needed to meet our ongoing challenges. Our professional learning community must grow
beyond the social camaraderie and the consensus about operational procedures. We must focus
on collaboration that is the process in which teachers work together, asking the hard questions, to
analyze and improve their classroom practices. This process, in turn, leads to high levels of student
achievement. Commitment and persistence will change our school. Our plan and our vision focus
on learning – learning among all members of our school community. This is what we will be about.
LOOKOUT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL REFLECTION

The focus of Lookout Valley Middle/High School has been to support educational experiences for all students to attain the skills necessary for post-secondary options and to evolve as responsible, self-directed and civic-minded citizens in our ever-changing global society. We created a student-focused learning community that integrated technology and offered a project-based curriculum that encouraged behaviors for lifelong learning and provided real-life experiences. We believe family/community involvement and communication were essential factors in supporting the foundation for student success. Our Schools for a New Society goals in conjunction with our School Improvement Plan drove our school’s vision and mission for student achievement.

Maintaining and expanding our professional development program was an integral component to accommodate a variety of learning styles; support a rigorous, engaging, and relevant curriculum; improve instruction; and provide teachers with research-based strategies to enhance teaching and learning. Through professional development, teachers expanded their teaching strategies and tools by participating in curriculum-based national and local workshops and conferences, developing and collaborating on interdisciplinary activities, sharing and networking with partner schools to increase student achievement, and attending training sessions provided by curriculum-based consultants. Opportunities for teachers to individualize and improve teaching and learning were supported by release time for classroom observations, school visits, technology training, expansion of our school professional library, and the continuation of our school-based teacher mentoring program. In addition, our school became affiliated with a PEF grant-funded Networked Learning Community that provided opportunities for teachers to explore and discover as a professional learning community K-12 literacy strategies that enhanced and supported student learning. The Change Coach/Literacy Coach assisted teachers by modeling skills and strategies that established proficiency in teacher learning, student achievement, and reading comprehension.

Expansion of course offerings engaged students in a wide variety of choices and provided a more rigorous, relevant curriculum. AP Chemistry, honors English, online and dual-enrollment courses were available to all students. With the addition of the new computer technology lab, we offered the beginning of computer technology classes. Information technology infrastructure prepared students with work-related skills for advancement in telecommunications and information technology. Info tech participated in the Tennessee SkillsUSA competition and won first place in the state and competed in the national competition in Kansas City, Missouri, where they came in 6th place. Students will next advance to networking architecture, which prepares them for post-secondary options through certification to design, build, and maintain networks.

Our flexible scheduling accommodated our Literacy Life Skills/Advisory initiative. The addition of advisories provided opportunities for students and teachers to establish and maintain positive relationships that built rapport and assisted students in meeting and exceeding their personal and educational goals. Advisory teachers assisted students in developing and maintaining a personal plan for progress, conducted student-teacher conferences to ensure interaction between teachers and students, and communicated with families to guarantee that their students’ educational progress and options were being met. Student-teacher conferences also promoted academic success by providing opportunities to meet the individual needs of each student. In addition, virtual school, credit recovery, and after-school tutoring supported student achievement and the 2006 graduation rate.

The 6th and 9th grade summer transition program provided students with a nonthreatening, comfortable atmosphere that prepared them for the transition from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school. This program allowed the students opportunities to
succeed and build self-esteem. Students participated in a variety of activities designed to alleviate fears and concerns about adjusting to middle/high school. Social studies, language arts, math, science, and art involved students in a nature and wildlife interdisciplinary unit, culminating in a field trip to the Tennessee River Gardens, where students observed much of the nature and wildlife of the unit. Students also became familiar with expectations, responsibilities, administrators, and teachers. Opportunities for parents to be involved in the transition process were available through teacher-parent conferences, a tour of the facilities, and a college-career theme night that provided parents with information necessary for graduation. Our 6th grade student participation in summer transition was 75%, an increase of 25% from last year. Our 9th grade participation in parent-teacher-student conferences was 100%.

Beginning with the 2005-2006 academic year, our school implemented a Freshmen Academy. Prior to the beginning of the school year, Freshmen Academy teachers met individually with each student and parent. During these conferences, the teacher explained and/or discussed the following: earning credits, promotion requirements, single path diploma, types of diploma, four-year plan, transition plan, grading policy, summer reading list, and dress code. The Freshmen Academy actively engaged students in relevant academic work and supported increased student achievement. We attribute the 93% first-year freshmen ninth to tenth promotion rate to the implementation of the Freshmen Academy. (Total ninth to tenth promotion rate was 89%.) A rigorous curriculum including core honors classes, e-portfolios, personalization, flexible schedule, quarterly newsletters, and quarterly parent-teacher conferences contributed to the achievements of the Freshmen Academy. Parent and student surveys validated the successful implementation of the Freshmen Academy.

Our Gateway and End-of-Course Exam Proficient and Advanced Scores improved from 2005 to 2006: Algebra I 62.7% to 76%; English I 82% to 92%; physical science 72.8% to 79%; US history 70.8% to 87%. The following Gateway and EOC scores remain a strength: Biology I-93% & English II-95%. Our school average of a 4.1 on TCAP writing scores remained strong. Our middle school attendance has slightly increased. Our middle school attendance rate was 92.8% in and 93.8% in 2006. Our high school/middle school average attendance rate in 2006 was 92.8%, holding steady from 2005. All seniors enrolled in 2006 graduated. However, the state has the 9-12 AYP at 66%, which, according to Dr. Kelly who believes that the state may make modifications, is below the county AYP. College applied and acceptance rate was 98%. Scholarships totaling $198,150 were given to 91% of our seniors. Forty-six percent of our juniors and seniors participated in college trips to MTSU, Bryan College, Vanderbilt, Tennessee Tech, Belmont, and Maryville.

Believing that family and community engagement is a critical component for student success, our school involved families through theme-based family nights and technology training programs. Families, the community, and students had access to the school through an interactive school web page that supported additional avenues of communication between the school and stakeholders. Through technology, students and families learned to use the computer for more than a homework retrieval system.
LOOKOUT VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL PROJECTION

The unique focus of Lookout Valley Middle/High School is to support educational experiences for all 6th-12th students to attain the skills necessary for post-secondary options (higher education, vocational training, work force, military) and to evolve as responsible, self-directed and civic-minded citizens in our ever-changing global society. We are creating a student-centered learning community that focuses on literacy, integrates technology, and is a real-life, project-based curriculum that develops behaviors for lifelong learning and offers real-world experiences. We believe family/community involvement and communication are essential factors in supporting the foundation for student success. Our Middle/High Schools for a New Society goals, in conjunction with our School Improvement Plan, drive our school’s vision and mission for student achievement.

Maintaining and expanding our professional development program are integral components to accommodate a variety of learning styles; support a rigorous, engaging, and relevant curriculum; improve instruction; and provide teachers with research-based strategies to enhance teaching and learning. Through professional development and collaboration in a networked learning community, teachers will expand their teaching strategies and tools by participating in local curriculum-based workshops and conferences, developing and collaborating on interdisciplinary activities, sharing and networking with partner schools to increase student achievement, and attending training sessions provided by curriculum-based consultants. In addition, opportunities for teachers to individualize and improve teaching and learning will be supported by release time for classroom observations, school visits, advisory training, technology training, expansion of our school professional library, and the continuation of our school-based teacher mentoring program. The Change Coach/Literacy Coach will continue to assist teachers by modeling skills and strategies that establish proficiency in teacher learning, student achievement, and reading comprehension.

Expansion of course offerings will engage all students in grades 6-12 in a wide variety of choices and provide a more rigorous, relevant curriculum. The school will be expanding its offering of Pre-AP and AP classes. Beginning with grade 6, teachers will focus on the integrated higher-order thinking skills that are important for success both during and after high school, and students will begin a planning process, which identifies career and educational goals. During the 2006-2007 school year, Lookout Valley Middle/High School will pilot a program in grades 8-12, which focuses on ACT SPI’s and helps teachers monitor and document students’ academic growth. In the 8th grade, the EXPLORE test will be given to each student as a diagnostic tool to establish a baseline with respect to the English, reading, mathematics, and science SPI’s. EXPLORE will identify students’ strengths and weaknesses early in their educational development and enable teachers to seamlessly document student progress and plan high school course work. The PLAN test will be administered in the 10th grade to determine growth and predict individual performance on the ACT and college readiness. All seniors will take the ACT. Scores will be tracked each year to evaluate the amount of growth, and each of these curriculum-based assessment programs will help in the instructional planning process for successive grade levels and curriculum adjustment.

Our flexible scheduling will continue to accommodate our Literacy Life Skills/Advisory initiative. Continuing the advisory program will provide opportunities for students and teachers to establish and maintain positive relationships that build rapport and assist students in meeting and exceeding their personal and educational goals. Advisory teachers will assist students in developing and maintaining a personal plan for progress, conduct student-teacher conferences to ensure interaction between teachers and students, and communicate with families to guarantee that their students’ educational progress and options are being met. Student-teacher conferences will promote academic success by providing opportunities to meet the individual needs of each student.
Continuation of the 6th and 9th grade summer transition programs will provide students with a non-threatening, comfortable atmosphere that prepares them for the transition from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school. This program allows the students opportunities to succeed and build self-esteem. Sixth-grade students will participate in a variety of activities designed to alleviate fears and concerns about adjusting to middle school. Students will also become familiar with expectations, responsibilities, administrators, and teachers. Personalized opportunities for 9th grade students and their parents will be provided. These individual sessions will address Carnegie units, schedules, personal four-year plan for progress, and a career/college survey.

Lookout Valley Middle/High School expanded its former Cornerstone Academy program for at-risk ninth graders. The success of this program, along with MSNS/SNS goals, established a foundation for a Freshmen Academy. Beginning with the 2005-2006 academic year, our school implemented a Freshmen Academy. The Freshmen Academy actively engages students in rigorous and relevant academic work and supports increased student achievement. In addition, all students have opportunities to participate in internships and job-shadowing activities with community-based businesses. The activities provide real-world experiences and open new doors for post-secondary options.

Believing that family and community engagement is a critical component for student success, our school will involve families through student-led conferences, theme-based family nights, and technology training programs. These activities will make the walls of our school transparent and extend learning opportunities beyond the traditional four walls of the building. Families, the community, and students will have access to the school through an interactive school web page that will support additional avenues of communication between the school and stakeholders. Through this technology, students and families will learn to use the computer for more than a homework retrieval system.

Lookout Valley Middle/High School offers a seamless 6-12 learning environment that supports lifelong learning. Students are involved in a variety of technology-rich, project-based experiences that are essential factors in supporting the foundation of student success. As indicated in our school’s mission and vision, Lookout Valley Middle/High School is focused on increased student achievement for all students by extending teaching and learning beyond the four walls of our school by allowing teachers, students, and the community to explore and discover their future together.
Ooltewah High School has made remarkable progress during our year five implementation of SNS reform initiatives. We are proud this year of our sustaining success in two very solid academies. Both the Global Studies Academy and our Freshmen Academy were in place and produced incredible results. Experiencing the success of the small learning community (SLC) model within both of these academies, the staff and administration of Ooltewah is now ready to take a larger step forward and commit to the creation of wall-to-wall SLC’s to be implemented in the near future. Last year, the staff voted overwhelmingly to implement additional small learning communities. With this strong commitment to move forward, there is still much work to be done. Teams of teachers continued to work to identify themes for new academies, researched and wrote curriculum, and visited schools similar in demographics to Ooltewah who have successfully made such a transition. Currently, several additional programs have been fully developed and are ready for Fall 2006 implementation. These new additions will be an Engineering Academy and a Fine Arts Cluster. As these new academies were developed, the excitement spread throughout our school, along with the realization that we are several steps closer to our goal of wall-to-wall academies. Our literacy program continued to make incredible strides as it enhanced all academic classes with literacy integration and reached out to improve reading levels of those struggling readers. We have begun to see the results of our hard work and energy toward a common goal to provide all Ooltewah students with a personalized, rigorous, and relevant education.

Our concentration this year was the successful implementation of the Ninth Grade Academy. The Ninth Grade Academy opened its doors to all incoming freshman of the graduating class of 2008-09, the first class who will receive the single path diploma. We re-structured the ninth grade year around three teams of core teachers. These teachers worked long hours to integrate curriculum, plan and implement a summer transition camp, and structure freshmen advisory and seminar activities. The ninth grade academy team worked hard to protect the heterogeneous mixing of students as they scheduled each freshman into one of the three SLC’s. The same core group of teachers taught the same smaller cluster of students all year long, monitored their progress, and wrote action plans for individual success. The lead teachers of these three teams all received Critical Friend’s training last summer, preparing them to use CFG protocols to examine student work and improve the professional learning community of the academy teams. The hours of planning and dedication to this academy lead to a renowned sense of ownership and partnership between the teachers and the academy, which in turn provided an extremely personalized, rigorous, and relevant environment to the students. These high standards of excellence were exemplified throughout the year as absenteeism was lower among 9th grade students, suspensions were down, and the number of 9th grade failures decreased.

The summer transition program, or Owl Camp, was a huge success this summer. Two week-long camp sessions brought rising freshmen to campus for the morning only. Using a hands-on CSI curriculum, students solved a mystery using skills from across all disciplines. Working side by side with the teachers who will guide them in the ninth grade, students became acclimated to the campus and the staff. In addition, identified students were offered additional opportunities to stay after the morning camp activities concluded to receive remediation in reading and math. Through a strengthened relationship with our feeder middle schools that has been an outgrowth of the relationships forged through the literacy network, all incoming freshmen were tested at the end of their eighth grade year using the Gates-MacGinitie assessment for reading ability. With this data, Ooltewah High School was able to target a special mailing to the low-performing readers and invite them to participate in this summer remediation program. This data is also being used to structure students’ schedules and cluster students into academy groupings.
The Fine Arts Cluster has been fully developed and will launch this fall. It will offer a humanities based curriculum with a special focus on training and experiences in visual and performing arts. Course offerings will include Film and Theatre Production, Speech and Forensics, and Singing for the Stage.

The Engineering Academy will also be launched this fall. We are very excited to announce that Ooltewah High School was approved to be an Infinity Project School, an engineering-based curriculum. Two of our teachers were trained in the Infinity Project this summer. They are the first to be trained in Tennessee. We will start with 53 students in this academy. These students made application to the academy and were chosen on the basis of their interest in math and engineering. The mission of the Engineering Academy is to prepare students for post-secondary training opportunities in the engineering field and to make relevant connections to real life applications of math and science. The program will place emphasis on the academic areas of math and science taught through a cross-curricular project model. Students will be given opportunities to apply what they learn through engineering internships, job shadowing, and project competition. Two new courses will be offered at OHS this year; Principles of Engineering and Professional English. We now have two teachers trained to teach the Professional English class. Additionally, we will be offering Algebra II for Engineering and Pre Calculus for Engineering. These courses will be taught with an engineering twist. These students will be scheduled in Principles of Engineering and CAD I for the first year. Also, they will be placed in a “pure” Directed Studies.

We will continue to plan and develop the following small learning communities.

- **Outdoor Education and Leadership Academy** – The Outdoor Education and Leadership Academy (O.W.L.S.) will offer students an outdoor education focused curriculum with an emphasis on leadership. Course offerings will include Ecology, Aquatic Biology, Environmental Issues, Environmental Chemistry, and Outdoor Leadership.

- **Sports Academy** – The Sports Academy will expose students to the opportunities available in the areas of sports marketing and business, and sports medicine. In addition, students will learn about health and fitness and how the human body functions. The Sports Academy students will explore the world of sports marketing and examine how the principles of business function in this arena. Students will have opportunities to practice these new skills through internships, job shadowing, and certification opportunities. Course offerings will include Anatomy and Physiology, Nutrition Science, Sports Marketing, Sports Medicine, and American Business and Legal Systems.

- **Marketing, Communications, Broadcasting and Design Academy** - This academy combine both art and a science. As an art this academy will encompass innovative and forward thinking ideas. Students will have the opportunity to express themselves creatively. This academy is also a science, through the combination of technology and modern marketing methods. Video and computer production equipment will be utilized in all these courses. Course offerings include Marketing, Advertising, Fashion Design, Fashion History, Interior Design, Textile & Apparel, American Business & Legal Systems.

- **Owl Academy** – The Owl Academy will provide a small learning community for those students with Single Path majors around three career clusters:
  - Fine Arts
  - Humanities
  - Math/Science/Technology
Our Directed Studies schedule this year has allowed us to be flexible around the needs of students. Passes back to academic classes have allowed students the opportunity to make up missed work and receive Gateway remediation and preparation. This time structure also allows advisors time to conference with students around progress reports and report cards. This year the Directed Studies block provided time to remediate low-level ninth and tenth grade readers and to promote reading and literacy strategies for other students as well.

We incorporated credit recovery for biology and chemistry classes this year and were very successful. 16 students recovered biology and 5 students completed credit recovery in chemistry.

This was our first year to have a College Access advisor in our building on a part-time basis. This was a learning experience for all—students, parents and faculty. She provided ACT/SAT preparation strategies for all students as well as encouraging all students to attend at least one college visit. Student advisory folders were developed during advisory with our 9th grade academy in order to focus on preparation for college.

As we fine-tuned our literacy program at OHS for the 2005-2006 school year, we drew from many of the successful elements from our implementation year. First, our professional development played a critical role. Since our teachers had previously been educated on literacy strategies, our new goal was to concentrate on helping teachers feel comfortable and confident when putting them into place in their classrooms. Second, we kept a school-wide focus on literacy. We continued our program that reached every student and showed them that literacy is important across the curriculum. Lastly, and possibly most importantly, we maintained our special needs program, called “Intensive Care Literacy,” for those students who had already fallen behind in their reading skills. This program was structured with creative teachers as our leaders.

Our professional development throughout the year covered a wide variety of literacy strategies, as well as help in how to implement those same strategies. We used the strategies to teach our teachers and it proved extremely effective. Teachers worked in small groups, by departments, and they taught each other. We covered strategies and activities such as summarizing, generating questions, predicting, relating, activating prior knowledge, K-W-L chart, think-pair-share groups, story maps, content brainstorming, compare and contrast, and many more. We used resources provided to us by the Public Education Foundation, including a video series highlighting the work of Cris Tovani. The wealth of information and education provided on this series was one that each teacher would not have experienced without this opportunity. We equipped our teachers with knowledge about a wide variety of strategies and examples so that they were more comfortable implementing them into their own curriculums.

Our literacy specialist and several teachers attended a Literacy Institute to receive special training outside of our own campus. This institute featured a variety of local literacy leaders, as well as well-known authors Dr. Janet Allen and Mr. Jeffrey Wilhelm. In addition, our key literacy and reading teachers met on several occasions with our feeder schools, Ooltewah Middle and Hunter Middle. Together, we developed plans for our students, building a shared ownership of these students. New ideas were shared as we played an important role in supporting their work on their new MSNS proposals. We worked on integrating the same literacy strategies so they can be reinforced year after year. This partnership paved the way for us to go into the middle schools at the end of the year and administer the Gates MacGinitie test to all rising freshmen. Our literacy specialist also attending monthly meetings hosted at different Hamilton County schools and organized by our county-wide literacy leaders. These literacy leaders network meetings opened doors for both sharing and learning cutting-edge literacy strategies.

Our school-wide literacy focus was delivered through direct instruction in each classroom. Teachers worked together within departments and chose strategies that were key to their instruction. The departments focused on these strategies monthly and used them within their
lessons. Our teachers discovered that literacy strategies are simply quality instruction, and no drastic changes were needed to their curriculum. In reality, teachers found that by using the literacy strategies, their students’ worked more efficiently and retained more knowledge. The end product was that students experienced multiple strategies across the curriculum and were not only able to apply them independently, but they learned to make connections between their classes.

To further advance our school-wide literacy, we implemented a peer-observation program for our teachers. This was a great benefit to the overall literacy program in that teachers were able to observe other teachers, not necessarily within their own subject area, and see real methods and results at work. This program opened the eyes of many teachers by allowing them to see how literacy truly can be integrated across the curriculum.

The biggest, most effective piece of our literacy puzzle is our ‘Intensive Care’ program we developed for **struggling readers**. During our directed studies period, we continued to utilize this time and structure an intense literacy program based on high-interest low-level material for our low-level readers. In the early planning stages for the program, we set a goal to raise the overall reading level average by one grade level. Even though we met this goal during our first year of implementation, we knew it would be a major accomplishment to make those gains again. We set up 11 Intensive Care classes this year, and kept the low numbers we knew we needed in the classes to be able to have more 1-on-1 time with the students. In these 11 classes, there was an average of 10-12 students per class. And because students responded so well to it last year, we again set up the classes to be homogeneous, by ability and by gender.

We provided training for the teachers who were to teach these classes. The literacy coach provided very structured lesson plans for each day, and also made all the copies for the teachers. Teachers received a packet one week prior to the week the material was to be taught. The activities were planned around monthly comprehension strategies, but were more intense than the general population activities. We were able to purchase materials written on grade level for these students, which was key in their understanding of subjects. We focused on writing, and reading on multiple levels. The high-interest material was important in retaining the student participation levels. All of these factors were crucial and produced significant results. After re-testing the students at the end of the school year our improvement was increased by an average of 1.7 grade levels per student. Our literacy program continued to exceed our expectations.

We continued with our Shared Leadership Team as an important component in our success this year with SNS initiatives. A team composed of representatives from each SLC and all departments, of parents, and of administrators met monthly. This team was facilitated by the Change Coach, allowing for the entire group to set the agenda and allowing administrators to participate as peers and colleagues. This conversation resulted in a new commitment to college access and a push for post-secondary success for all students. The Leadership Team has become a venue for important dialogue to emerge around student achievement for all students and a push for post-secondary success for all students at Ooltewah High School.
Ooltewah High School’s vision for the 2006-2007 school year will focus on helping all students become life-long learners. Ooltewah High students will be provided with instructional strategies that will enable them to gain knowledge and skills necessary for a successful transition from high school into college or the workforce. To achieve this vision, we will incorporate the four SNS goals of personalization; flexibility; rigorous, engaging, relevant curriculum; and finally, professional learning communities. Through the following programs, we will engage our students in a rigorous and relevant curriculum.

- **Literacy** strategies will continue to be embedded into the instruction in every classroom. Teachers will continue to refine the use of these strategies through peer-observation during planning periods. Intensive reading remediation will continue through small gender-specific reading groups in directed studies. Reading assessments will be administered to all incoming ninth graders so that intensive remediation can be developed for low-level readers. Reading progress will be monitored by advisors throughout all students’ high school careers. The **Literacy Specialist** will advise teachers and provide literacy support through professional development during Quality Circles.

- Career oriented **Small Learning Communities** (SLC) will continue to be developed and refined. Teacher led SLC teams will continue to develop curriculum, establish communication pathways with parents and community members, and establish the educational environment for their career academies. **Professional development** through Quality Circles will support these emerging teacher leaders in their new roles as leaders for change. Our **Global Studies Academy** will continue to develop new courses with the inclusion of each grade level. We will launch our **Engineering Academy** (MEST) this fall. In February, OHS was admitted to **The Infinity Project**, a national engineering education initiative sponsored by industry and education. We will be developing and finalizing three additional academy/clusters for implementation in 2007-2008 when OHS will become “wall-to-wall” with academies.
  - Outdoor Education and Leadership Academy – Students will focus on an outdoor education curriculum with an emphasis on leadership.
  - Sports and Marketing Academy – Students will explore the opportunities available in the areas of sports marketing and business as well as sports medicine.
  - Owl Academy – This academy will provide the structures and strategies of a small learning community for those students with single Path majors around three career clusters:
    - Fine Arts
    - Humanities
    - Math/Science/Technology

- We will continue to refine the **Freshmen Academy** for successful transition from middle school to high school which will in turn increase our graduation rate. Areas to be addressed are
  - Referrals and Suspensions
  - Promotion Rate
  - Attendance

Summer transition will provide opportunities for academic remediation and enrichment for all ninth graders as well as identified subgroups.
• **Professional Development** will be provided through **Quality Circles** during planning periods for GW Algebra I teachers to develop GW preparation strategies with particular emphasis on subgroups that are at risk. **Common Assessment** and **Lesson Study** will be used to encourage the development of **Professional Learning Communities** in an effort to improve student learning. Teachers of GW and EOC courses will be the first groups to develop common assessments and use lesson study.

• **Academic Enhancement, Remediation, and Acceleration** structures as well as **Credit Recovery** opportunities will be developed. These will be addressed during **Advisory** and **Directed Studies** and after school. These activities will be used to address the following issues for ALL students and especially our **hidden subgroups**, such as black males, our Hispanic population, and economically disadvantaged students:
  o Improving GW Algebra I scores for our 9th graders and repeaters
  o Our Credit Recovery program will consist of all 9th and 10th grade core courses
  o ACT College Readiness in all areas for ALL students
  o Increasing graduation rate/decrease dropout rate
  o Increase AP/DE enrollment and success

• **College Access** will be enhanced for ALL students and especially our **hidden subgroups**. We will recruit students for college entrance testing with the goal of 100% participation for eligible students. Many of our college access recruitment activities will take place through **Advisory**. College tours and available scholarships will be made more easily accessible through the research of our **College Access Advisor**. The program will aid in attracting students who are not traditionally eligible or interested in **College Access**.
RED BANK HIGH SCHOOL REFLECTION

The 2005-2006 school year was one of firsts for Red Bank High School. The decision was made to transition from a traditional schedule to a four by four block schedule. In addition, every student in the building chose a smaller learning community, a career academy or major strand of academic concentration. At the heart of the academy structure was an active advisory program that is not only grade level specific, but academy specific as well. The end result was a ninth grade academy, three career academies: health, leadership, and teaching, and a major studies academy that houses majors in math/science, business technology, exercise science, communications, and humanities/fine arts.

A great deal of attention was directed at the curriculum and instruction at Red Bank High School. A revision of courses for incoming ninth graders proved to support the transition for first time ninth graders with an increase in promotion to tenth grade from 86% two years ago to 92% last year. These courses included an integrated English 9/Geography course, along with Ecology and Algebra I or Geometry. In addition, existing academy courses were strengthened and two new academy courses were added in the Teaching Academy.

With continued focus on instructional leadership, the School Improvement Planning Team supported faculty in the continued reform efforts. Retreats and other planning days allowed group collaboration that focused on interventions and/or enrichments for the diverse student body including an increase in directed study assistance specifically in algebra I and English, advisor contacts to parents, computer lab access after school hours, and pre-registration as a collaborative effort between advisor, advisee, and parents. Additional professional development through conferences, workshops and school site visits allowed teachers the ability to strengthen and expand their strategies in the classroom. An increase in AP course enrollment, continued academy course development, and an increase in daily attendance could imply that things are changing in the classroom. The benefit of this expenditure, however, goes well beyond quantitative data. Collaborative planning, Tuesday Twenty focus groups and common assessments indicate a movement towards a "professional learning community" and a faculty that is in active pursuit of excellence within their profession.

The focus on instruction at Red Bank High School is only a means to the ultimate goal: GRADUATION! “Planning with the end in mind” has been a major theme for the advisory program. One of the most beneficial activities by advisors is the registration process that not only includes course selection and scheduling, but significant conversation about each student’s future. Also in advisory, activities are focused specifically by grade level and with academy topics including drivers education topics and preparation for the ACT. The administration and faculty believe that each student deserves an advocate within the four walls of the school. The intent is for that role to be filled by the advisor.

Another activity with significant impact toward graduation is the senior project. As this initiative develops, students focus their research on a topic related to their academy or major. Students not only research their topic, but spend time creating some type of product and present their project to a group of teachers, students, and community members. This project not only develops public speaking and writing skills, but also strengthens confidence, creative thinking skills, and public relation skills.

Red Bank High School is proud of its academy development over the past few years. After completing its first year as a wall-to-wall academy school, the administration and faculty have embraced the concept of smaller learning communities and continue to strengthen each program to its maximum potential. Specific recognition in the Health Academy for community partnerships and
teaching excellence by the National Career Academy Coalition and an articulation agreement between the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and Red Bank High School for courses offered in the Teaching Academy recognize the continued academy development. Preliminary state report card data shows a significant decrease in retention rates, an increase in proficiency scores in state gateway and end of course exams, and an increase in the daily attendance rate. All of this data supports the impact of smaller learning communities. More impressive than numbers is the slow development of an academy culture where words such as “rigor”, “academy”, and “advisory” are regularly used in the daily language.

It is quite clear that Red Bank could not have achieved such a monumental task without the continued involvement of all of its stakeholders, including parents, students, faculty, and community members. One of the greatest examples of such efforts occurred in March at the Academy Fair. Each academy created a booth to display activities, courses and other valuable information regarding their academy. In addition, incoming ninth graders and their parents met with academy teachers to prepare for the upcoming school year and answer any questions. This night proved to be a success with significant attendance by many grade levels and a united effort between academies to proudly represent their learning community.

The Health Career Fair allowed students to visit with local health agencies to research different possibilities in health care. The Teaching Academy spent several days observing and teaching at local elementary schools and the Leadership Academy continued its annual blood drive. Advisory boards continue to be developed for each academy and major for continued community involvement. The intent is for each academy and major to have a thriving advisory board that is infiltrated within the curriculum of that specific discipline.

The priority need at Red Bank High School is to provide a rich curriculum that meets the need of all students. This priority will be addressed specifically through the continued development of academies, a strong advisory program, and differentiated learning. After an outstanding year of first, the faculty at Red Bank High School will continue to learn new strategies of practice through emphasis of a professional learning community including teacher mentors, focus groups and peer observations. Students will then be exposed to an increased level of rigor and encouraged to take an advanced level of study through AP courses, dual enrollment, and other advanced offerings.

Together with a supportive faculty and continued community involvement, Red Bank High School can sustain its heritage of excellence by addressing and meeting the needs of all students and creating a learning environment that is personalized to their needs.
Red Bank High School has made dramatic strides in its efforts to provide a more personalized and relevant educational experience for all stakeholders. With an enrollment steady at the 1100 student mark, the school has taken a comprehensive high school that was grounded in its rich heritage and tradition and transformed it into smaller learning communities that are supported through an active advisory program and community partnerships.

The 2005-2006 school year was one of firsts for Red Bank High School. The decision was made to transition from a traditional schedule to a four by four block schedule. In addition, every student in the building would be in a smaller learning community, a career academy or major strand of academic concentration, and have an advisory that was not only grade level specific, but academy specific as well. The end result is a ninth grade academy, three career academies: health, leadership, and teaching, and a major studies academy that houses majors in math/science, business technology, exercise science, communications, and humanities/fine arts.

With all of these developments, Red Bank High School appears to be on the right track. However, the data shows mixed results. While state gateway scores and ninth to tenth retention rates have showed some improvement, other relevant data indicates that the minority population at Red Bank High School diminishes by half by the 11th grade year. There is an increased need for cultural awareness, student voice, and a rich instructional program that is grounded in relevant and interactive work. In other words, Red Bank High has an impending need to dig deeper into the foundation they have built through the academy structure.

Based on the data analysis, several areas have been targeted for immediate attention through entire school reform efforts. There are specific deficiencies in standardized test performance for Algebra I and English/Writing State Gateway scores. Also, average daily attendance and promotion rates, specifically in the African American and economically disadvantaged subgroups, are an issue while suspensions, particularly African American, are higher than the norm. An evaluation of the State of Tennessee Report Card for Red Bank High School reveals that the school, as of 2005, did not meet federal benchmarks in several reporting categories. These performance deficiencies moved Red Bank High School to School Improvement 2 status according to the federal performance guidelines of No Child Left Behind Legislation. Specifically, academic proficiency in English II posed significant challenges in the African American and economically disadvantaged subgroups with a fall in the percentage from 79% in 2003-2004 to 77% in 2004-2005. Algebra I also posed challenges for the African American subgroup with a fall in the proficiency percentage from 48% in 2003-2004 to 46% in 2004-2005.

These types of trends continue in the ACT testing profiles, as only 26 minority students (27% of 11th and 12th grade minority population) took the ACT in 2004-2005. This fact directly impacts the number of students eligible for the Hope Scholarship, a statewide scholarship that grants $3300 to any student with a 21 ACT or 3.0 unweighted GPA. The percentage of African American students that were eligible for the Hope Scholarship from Red Bank High School was 13%.

The AP program has always had a strong reputation as being one of the best in the area. The mission of the honors program at Red Bank is to prepare students for Advanced Placement work. However, a review of the admission procedure for honors courses shows opportunity barriers for some students to enter the program.

The collaborative team effort of data gathering at Red Bank High School reveals student needs that are very clear and addressable. Red Bank High School is a public high school with a portion of the students achieving at either proficient or above proficient levels in all measured performance.
categories. There is an obvious achievement gap at Red Bank that is very real, identifiable and growing.

The priority need at Red Bank High School is to close the achievement gap between subgroups to encourage success for all students. The School Improvement Planning Team will focus its efforts on developing and mentoring a strong instructional program. This priority will be addressed through professional development on instruction and cultural awareness.

The faculty at Red Bank High School will continue to learn new strategies of practice through emphasis of a professional learning community. This will occur in weekly meetings (Tuesday Twenties), academy focus groups, and collaboration on curriculum alignment with both middle and high school subject teachers. A committee with teachers from each subject area will coordinate professional development that is meaningful and collaborative. This will include a teacher mentoring program, focus groups and classroom observations.

Another priority will be the involvement of students in the decision-making process of the school. A Principal’s Advisory Council will meet bi-monthly to discuss student issues. In addition, students have also been included on the School Improvement Leadership Team. Student focus groups will also provide essential feedback for school reform.

The academy development will continue in the school. The 9th Grade Academy will focus on its first day of orientation and active advisory program, as well as interventions specifically in math and language arts. The three career academies and five majors will continue to thrive and focus their attention on personalization and real life experiences. The involvement of the advisory boards for the three career academies and the development of an advisory board for major studies will increase community involvement and input for learning. Advisory programs, service learning and senior projects will add depth and relevance for each student to individualize their learning opportunities.

Students at Red Bank will enjoy a rich instructional program and a diverse student population. Each student will have a proactive advisor that focuses on individual student successes. More attention will also be given to recognition of students for their successes in and out of school. Together with a supportive faculty and continued community involvement, Red Bank High School can sustain its heritage of excellence by addressing and meeting the needs of all students and creating a learning environment that is personalized to their needs.
SALE CREEK HIGH SCHOOL REFLECTION

Sale Creek School continued to focus on personalization in the 2005-2006 school year. As the school continues to grow, the staff remains committed to providing a climate in which students feel safe—physically, emotionally, and academically. Continuing the work from the previous year, the staff was committed to increasing rigor throughout the curriculum as we continued the work on the literacy program, staff development, senior projects, and “families”.

The literacy program continued to work on vocabulary development as well as increasing student voice in the choice of reading material. Every student 6-12 attended a literacy class daily, working to increase proficiency in vocabulary, comprehension, writing, research, and presentation skills. Presentation skills are seen as vital to the successful completion of Senior Projects and the ability to present oneself well in college or the job market. Teachers had a variety of materials available to them, including novels, magazines, newspapers and vocabulary texts.

The literacy coach position was continued through the first nine weeks before becoming a change coach position. By this time, most faculty members were comfortable with the materials and lesson plans that the literacy coach had developed for use. The need for systemic change in the overall curriculum, alignment with ACT, and continuing to develop teaching strategies dictated a change coach. We hope the literacy initiative will continue with just some attention from the change coach. The change coach was essential to continuing the Professional Development that is working so well.

Professional Development continues to be a driving force in the change at Sale Creek. Teacher training in the area of literacy continues to be essential. Many teachers are still trying to increase their own comfort level as they were not trained to be reading teachers. The focus of staff development days as well as faculty meetings was and still is on developing strategies to increase literacy. Teachers reviewed the strategies of previous years including read-around-the-text, inside/outside circles, pair/share, and others found in Beyond Monet. Our efforts in literacy instruction have increased our ACT Reading scores from 18.7 in 2004-05 to 22.9 in 2005-06. Gates MacGinitie Reading Scores for seniors showed that 25 of 29 graduating seniors scores at Post High School in reading. Teachers began the work of investigating Differentiated Instruction, and Project Based Instruction is well under way.

As a part of the Carnegie Grant, teachers have been able to attend conferences and visit schools in other districts. Teachers visited middle schools in Georgia and Kentucky to learn new ideas and see award-winning practices. This summer, teachers were able to attend training on Project-Based Learning and Capturing Kids’ Hearts. It has also been important to this faculty to see each other at work, and the grant allowed relief time for teachers to visit other classrooms within Sale Creek School. There is academic excitement and confidence at Sale Creek among the teachers as they see the results of work done during the last few years.

As the faculty grows in confidence, we recognize the need to share with our feeder schools. So Network Learning Communities are a new item of attention this year. Our sixth grade teachers started by having a casual lunch on a staff development day to start discussing ideas and strategies. This work was continued when the staff of North Hamilton County Elementary was invited to attend a Professional Development time at Sale Creek School. Principals of North Hamilton Co Elem., Birchwood Elem. And Sale Creek School had meetings during the summer, have scheduled meetings for once a month in 2006-07, and have produced the first edition of a newsletter to go to all students in the three schools. This collaboration will continue in the 2006-2007 school year, with plans in place for creating better communication and more events between feeder schools, Sale Creek School, and all the communities involved.
Gateway results are very high at Sale Creek School, however, our data shows a disconnect between GPA and ACT scores. The faculty went on retreat the last day of the year to develop strategies to align the curriculum to the ACT standards. That work continued during the summer with teachers working together in content areas and across the curriculum to have much of the alignment done when school started. We are committed to preparing students for post-secondary instruction without the need for any remediation.

Preparing students for post-secondary education and encouraging them to take advantage of this opportunity is of vital importance to their future. This year we focused on college options. All high school students attended a variety of universities and colleges with the goal of familiarizing them with several campuses so they feel comfortable and know what to expect from any campus. The seniors and the sophomores also participated in retreats aimed at encouraging their applications and attendance in college; seniors focused on financial aid and essays while sophomores focused on what colleges look for in students. College pennants were hung in the hallways as a visible symbol of the importance and variety of post-secondary training available. Juniors and seniors also had the opportunity to job shadow in a wide selection of areas. As students explore the possibilities available to them, the hope is that they see occupations that require more than the high school diploma. We recognize that this remains a cultural change at the highest level for a first generation college student. We are encouraged by the rate that our students go to college. Of the 2006 graduates, 67% had applied and been accepted to a college. One student entered military and others entered the work force knowing that their job involved post-secondary training.

To help students become computer literate and to provide an electronic resume for college, every high school student worked on an electronic portfolio. Pat Appleton and Tom Carson provided training and the format necessary to get the project underway. Students were able to go to the computer lab on a rotating basis to work on these portfolios, adding to the template some of the work they have completed as well as test results and goals. Students take pride in preserving only their best work and in improving their test scores as they develop their portfolio. The portfolio will include work from all four years of their high school experience and can be saved and used as a college or job application electronic resume. We encourage seniors to add the Senior Project to their electronic portfolio.

The Senior Projects Committee continued its work into the second year of projects. Every senior participated in a leadership class to work on presentation skills that seemed to need improvement from the previous year. Every senior completed a project, but deadlines were often missed or overlooked. A focus of the Senior Project Committee during the 2006-2007 school year will be refining those deadlines; we hope to accomplish that by starting the projects earlier. The juniors are already talking about their projects; there is excitement about them as well as the usual dread of any more work.

The parent/community liaison coordinated support for students and community and was responsible for a variety of activities including arranging summer transition trips, job-shadowing opportunities, and college visits. She worked with student documenters, making sure they were aware of all the grant goals and holding focus groups with them. She also started the work on a career center for the students in the library with materials, a computer and a quiet place for students to research colleges and careers. She was instrumental in providing transition activities for all students.

Transition activities revolved around “families” and encouraging students to feel a part of Sale Creek School. Even though we are a small school, students experience many of the same transitional fears as those who attend large schools. Within families, seniors took on the role of mentor to the sixth graders, assisting them with lockers and combinations, their greatest fear. Students also attended field trips intended to raise their awareness of the world around them, including trips to Chattanooga, Nashville, Huntsville and Atlanta. Many of our students have never
been to Nashville or Atlanta; most have been to Huntsville only if they had a field trip there in elementary school.

In order to better communicate with students and the community, focus groups are held almost continually. The principal and teachers held an important focus group with all middle school students at the conclusion of TCAP testing this year to determine which procedures, testing times, snacks, number of days tested, etc. had worked and which had not for the students. In addition, focus groups are held to give students a voice in procedures within the school day. Class Presidents will meet once a month in 2006-07 with the administrative staff for a Principal’s Advisory where student voice can be more formal. As Sale Creek School grows, more formal procedures must be put into place so personalization continues. Soon it will no longer be possible to see almost every student every day to provide that personal touch they need.

Even with the personalization we do at Sale Creek, as we add rigor to the curriculum, we have not been successful in promoting every 9th grade student to 10th grade. We know this is also a part of our problem of not having graduation rate where we would like it to be. We lose students at the lower grades, many of them who come to our school in 10th or 11th grade with little hope of graduating and then drop out when the are old enough to do so. Our discussions are rich and varied with ways to address this problem while retaining and increasing rigor in the curriculum.

The work has been exciting, the future holds even more work as the faculty and staff continue to take pride in Sale Creek School, its students and their accomplishments.
Erin’s Story

Dear Principal:

I wanted to share with you my experience yesterday after attending the PTA Open House and hearing about all the things happening in your building. I met my daughter’s teachers and saw her classrooms and the work displayed, and I realized this was a new school experience compared to what I knew.

My first experience was attending the Transition breakfast with Erin, my sixth grader. I myself graduated from Sale Creek School several years ago, and I felt I knew what to expect from the building and staff when I brought my daughter for her first day of school. I realized soon that the plans the school had for my daughter far surpassed what I had expected.

When I was in school, it always seemed like the teachers were traditional. We did “normal” kinds of things in class like reading chapters and answering questions at the end of the chapters. We took tests, moved on to the next grade, and finally graduated or dropped out of school. Most of my friends and I didn’t care about classes or school in general. In fact, I barely graduated and never went on to college.

My daughter as a sixth grader is already talking about going to college. The seniors came to talk to her class two weeks ago about schools they’re considering and how important grades are. Teachers have posted in their classrooms the ACT standards and how even the sixth grade curriculum is working toward the score on the ACT. And the teachers are even planning a field trip to Chattanooga State for the sixth graders to see a play and tour the campus. She is already looking forward to the trips she will take in seventh and eighth and even in high school to tour campuses across the state. The seniors had toured Vanderbilt and David Lipscomb and shared a video on the announcements of their trip, and Erin is talking about both of those schools as ones she wants to see one day. It is amazing to me that it’s considered important for her to start thinking about college so early.

In her agenda Erin keeps a record of which objective she has learned so that she is ready for her TCAPs as well as a test called EXPLORE that she will take as an eighth grader. She showed me the board in the hallway that recognizes students for their high scores on that test as well as the PLAN and the ACT, and she is determined to have her name on that board. Erin can even tell me what she needs on that test to earn a HOPE scholarship.

When I was in school, the ACT was a test you took as a senior because the principal made you in order to graduate. My friends and I definitely didn’t see it as a way to college.

At the Open House I listened as you mentioned project based learning and explained what it was. The amazing thing to me was I had already heard this at home from Erin. I can ask her what she did at school that day, and she can tell me in great detail how this one project she is working on counts for math and science and social studies and language arts class. I don’t think I ever saw how those subjects connected in school. I asked her one day what worksheet she had for homework, and she let me know in a hurry that at Sale Creek School, students do not do worksheets. I don’t think I ever realized how many worksheets I myself actually had to do.
When you ask parents in the community about Sale Creek School, they will all tell you it is the premier school of Hamilton County. Everyone wants to send their kids to this school. I know when I was in school, the community was proud of the basketball team, but academics were not really mentioned. Now, this school is preparing students for college starting in the sixth grade and students are seeing college as a given rather than an option.

I am proud to tell people Erin attends Sale Creek School. She is getting a quality education with teachers who care about their subjects, who work with other teachers to teach students, and who want my daughter to succeed in college. I just wish that I’d had that kind of focus when I was in school.

Sincerely,
A sixth grade parent
As the Sequoyah Leadership Team met to plan for the 2005-2006 school year, we saw many needs for our staff and students. This collective reflection led to the development of standards and expectations to develop a professional community in our school and community.

Four career academies were established with academic and vocational teachers working collectively to set and enforce standards of instruction and learning through the integration of their subject matter. This led to more sustaining opportunities for student learning and at the end of the year a number of students completed their technical classes as concentrators and were hired by local agencies and industries. As a result of making student learning more personalized we had several early graduates, 86 graduates, more students co-oping and work releases.

A ninth grade academy was formed with an introduction to the opportunities for ninth grader who decide to attend Sequoyah. Summer at Sequoyah made a great impact on our faculty. It was a great opportunity for the ninth grade teachers to work across the curriculum and students to get to know each other through trust games, field trips and a picnic. We set up a Seminar for Success class to use as an advisory program. This class helped students enhance their soft skills, self-esteem, work ethics and writing resumes. We involved the community with guest speakers who brought their expertise to this class. This led to the community coming for more visits and more partnerships formed for all 4 career academies. Our “creating the future” dinner for 150 people was a result of our growing popularity with industry and manufacturing personnel.

Our ninth graders produced average to high performing scores in the end of course and gateways assessments as a result of attendance incentives, test-taking skills implanted and remediation programs for our lower quality students.

ACT practice tests and online registration were available and we had more students take the ACT than ever before at Sequoyah. Many staff used our new career center for various presentations, student research, on-line college application and federal aid. More students received financial aid and applied to colleges whether a four or two year institution.

Our Senior Project class was very successful and helped students with the college essays, public speaking and group dynamics.

Credit recovery classes in math subjects were offered to students needing to pass the Algebra Gateway. As a result students showed marginal gain in satisfactory scores. For the first time Sequoyah had students who scored in the advanced category in English and Biology gateways. All involved agree that the credit recovery is good but improvement will need to be made with having Gateway Algebra classes.
In keeping with our mission to educate the whole person, we at Sequoyah High School take seriously our charge to produce a populace armed with sufficient skills, knowledge, and experiences and to prepare them for a seamless transition into the work place or on-going education. We recognize our duty to equip our students with the tools necessary to meet not only their personal needs, but the needs of the community which has nurtured them. We are not the sole actors, however; our commitment to student learning relies heavily on input from the home as well as from the business and manufacturing members of our region. Recognizing that, we further pledge to create in our school an environment that not only invites, but welcomes the community as critical members of a partnership that will engage students more fully in their own learning by involving others and improving instruction, thus presenting students and their community with more options via a more rigorous and relevant curriculum. This year at Sequoyah High School we are concentrating on the three R’s …rigor, relevance, and relationships.

**Rigor**

Through job embedded professional development, teachers will receive instruction on tactics and strategies to incorporate literacy in all areas, academic and technical. SHS will implement a school-wide writing rubric to assess the writing that is required in all classes. Thus, students know what to expect and how to improve their writing skills. Regular and required practice in writing will allow for higher scores in the Tennessee Writing Assessment and in the writing portion of the ACT. Sequoyah students will benefit from seminar style learning as teachers are exposed to current trends in instruction. As part of the Soddy Daisy Network Learning Community (SDNLC), we have made a commitment to challenge our students by focusing on vocabulary, utilizing graphic organizers, and using Learning Focus strategies within instruction. Our teachers will receive 4 days of training in the Learning Focus Model. Regular use of these strategies will be evident in classrooms, proven by student success, and monitored by regular walk-throughs. For students who need to be more academically challenged, we will offer honors courses in the following areas: World Studies, Biology, Chemistry, and Geometry. These classes are an excellent way to up the standards for students who are demonstrating mastery in the general curriculum.

**Relevance**

Our business and industry partners have indicated to us that problem solving skills, written and oral communication skills, working as a team, and organization are necessary for succeeding in today’s working world. Through lesson integration between academic and technical classes, students will see firsthand how what they are learning is applied to real life situations. Whether going straight to work or continuing their education, our students will have had opportunities to practice and apply the concepts they learned. Summarizing with peers, reasoning exercises, and hands-on discovery will provide students with the practice they need to develop confidence in their decision making abilities. Students at Sequoyah High School have the unique opportunity to explore a technical field for elective credit. Classes in our four Career Academies, Transportation and Engineering, Construction, Communication, and Social Services, will allow students to start learning a trade while they earn credits toward graduation. Regardless of whether students continue working in their trade area or choose to attend college, everyone will have the invaluable opportunity to get a glimpse of various professions.
**Relationships**

Recognizing that our increasingly complex and global societies require interdependence; we actively recruit parents and other community members to help educate our students. Each of our technical instructors has an advisory board made up of business members in that particular profession. Our teachers will meet twice per year with their advisory board members to stay abreast of new trends in their area. Additionally, advisory board members will serve as a sounding board for instructors in knowing specifically how to best prepare their students. Once a year, advisory members will be invited to SHS for a tour and demonstration in shop areas.

Building relationships among our students and staff is the best way to personalize learning. Once per month, students will meet with their advisor to discuss grades, credits, or future plans. Instructors will use this time to encourage students to participate in competitions and clubs. We encourage students to recognize that it is their responsibility to become involved in professional organizations, thus setting the standard that involved students will become involved adults after completing high school.

**Conclusion**

Our philosophy of “better rather than more” applies not only to curriculum, but extends to our graduates as well. Although we aim to graduate a higher percentage of students, we intend for our graduates to be more prepared than ever. This is a tall order, indeed, but one that is manageable, and a much less daunting task than it may first appear. Sequoyah High School is committed to recruiting students who will be prepared to enroll in post secondary education or, the world of work immediately upon completion of graduation requirements. As the rigor and relevance of our curriculum increase, students will naturally begin to gravitate toward higher achievement, hence graduation. Therefore, this generation is only the first of many who will be proud to call Sequoyah High School their alma mater.
SODDY DAISY HIGH SCHOOL REFLECTION

Soddy-Daisy High School experienced another year of progress in our SNS school reform efforts. While other items will be discussed, this narrative will first address the four dominant SNS goals for school reform.

Ninth to tenth grade promotion: After going from a 74% promotion rate during the first year of the SNS grant to a 94.2% promotion rate for school year 2005-2006, we were concerned that there might be a decline in the promotion rate for 2005-2006. Fortunately this was not the case as the promotion rate increased to 95.8% for the year. There were 16 freshmen not gaining the 6 credits required to be promoted; however, 5 of the 16 received 5 or more credits for the year. There was, however, some unforeseen minor loss of team cohesiveness within the academy due to the adoption of block scheduling this year, but this has been addressed and corrected in the schedule for the coming school year.

Along with the ninth to tenth grade promotion rate, attention was given to the sophomore promotion rate. There was some concern that, absent the increased attention they were accustomed to in the freshman academy, the tenth grade promotion rate would fall. This has not occurred. In fact, this year’s sophomore to junior promotion rate was nearly identical to last year’s 94% ninth to tenth grade promotion rate. As a result, SDHS should see a significant increase in its graduation rate within the next two years.

Advanced Placement/Dual Enrollment Offerings and Student Enrollment: Soddy-Daisy High School offered 2 AP courses for the first year of the SNS initiative. For SY 2005-2006, there were 7 AP courses offered to the students at SDHS. Nearly 10% of the students enrolled in one or more AP course, and this 10% includes freshmen and sophomores. Over 35% of students in AP courses scored 3 or higher on the AP exams. AP enrollment for the coming year is detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AP Chemistry</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>AP Physics</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Euro. History</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>AP Calculus</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP US History</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>AP English Comp.</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP English Lit.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dual enrollment also has experienced a tremendous growth with approximately 10% of juniors and seniors enrolled in a dual enrollment course. The table below shows current day dual enrollment for the coming year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE English 12</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>DE Sociology</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE Psychology</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>DE Pre-Calculus</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are working very closely with both Chattanooga State and UTC to offer more dual enrollment courses aligned with the coming year’s two career academies.

Tennessee Gateway Exams: This area continues to reflect the good work being done by the classroom teachers in preparing students for these high stakes exams. Results of the 2005-2006 exams are given below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>% Proficient</th>
<th>% Advanced</th>
<th>% Below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algebra I</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English II</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two goals are still being worked: decrease the number scoring below proficient in Algebra I and moving more students from proficient to advanced. Both the adoption of the new algebra curriculum and the increased rigor promoted by Learning-Focused Strategies should provide the means to achieve both of these goals.

**Career Academies:** The Engineering & Technology Academy completed its second year with over 110 students enrolled. Enrollment for the coming year is up and we anticipate that with the arrival this summer of all Project Lead the Way equipment, we will see notable increases in enrollment during the next year. This year saw the first seniors graduating with an academy background, and a significant number of these are enrolled in engineering or technology programs at either two or four-year colleges. Additional business partners were added this year, and, with a large increase in the number of seniors in the program for the coming year, these businesses will be key to providing job shadowing, internships, etc., for our academy students. SDHS was fortunate to have our Engineering & Technology Academy featured as the cover story in the May/June issue of Teacher Magazine. While this academy was the focus of the article, the Hamilton County school district and various other academies within the district received favorable coverage as well.

Planning, course selections, and faculty selection for a new Business/Mass Communications Academy were completed this year. This academy was formed based on faculty input, student interest, and a good response from the business community. Additionally, Chattanooga State and UTC have both been very generous with support and recommendations regarding what students in this academy will need to pursue post-secondary training in either of these fields. The coming year will also see planning and groundwork laid for additional academies in the coming years.

**Attendance:** While we are still above 90% in average daily attendance at 93% for the year, this is slightly below last year’s average. The attendance appeals process has been strengthened and the number of missed days allowed before having to appeal has gone from 4 to 3 per 9 weeks. One interesting fact that was detected this year occurs when neighboring counties—Rhea, Sequatchie, and/or Bledsoe—are out due to weather. When these schools are not in session, SDHS’ absentee rate increases. This year saw an unusually high number of days when schools in neighboring counties were called off due to weather which had at least a minimal impact on overall attendance here.

Attendance has become a part of the Renaissance Program, allowing those with perfect attendance to be recognized. Finally, we are looking for active participation in one of the career academies to be an attendance incentive that allows us to reach the goal of 95% average daily attendance.

**College Enrollment:** Over 80% of 2006 graduates have enrolled in either a two or four year college or a career training program. This number should increase in the coming years as students are being exposed to the benefits of post-secondary training in their freshman year rather than waiting until they are juniors or seniors. Also, career academies are enticing more students to consider additional training after high school. The college access advisor has been highly effective in getting students into her office, explaining the benefits of higher education, and assisting students in applying for college admission as well as financial assistance offered via various scholarships.

This year’s graduating seniors received over $1,385,000 in scholarship money. A large percentage of these funds are renewable, so the final amount should far exceed the initial presentation.
Quality Circles: When SDHS adopted the 4X4 block schedule this year, the administration decided to use one hour of faculty planning time every two weeks to conduct professional development training with Quality Circles being the name given to these bi-weekly meetings. This allowed professional development to be imbedded within the school day and resulted in no after school faculty meetings or meetings to conduct other training. The main focus of this year’s training was the Learning-Focused Strategies (LFS) of Dr. Max Thompson. The literacy coach, who works closely with the Soddy-Daisy Network Learning Community as it concentrates on K-12 literacy, was responsible for much of the training. This coming year will see more protocols introduced to facilitate classroom instruction using differentiated instruction in conjunction with Dr. Thompson’s LFS.

Network Learning Community (NLC): While not a specific SNS program, this is most definitely an offshoot of the SNS reform efforts. The Soddy-Daisy NLC is made of Soddy-Daisy HS, Sequoyah HS and all feeder schools: Soddy-Daisy Middle, Loftis Middle, Ganns Elementary, Allen Elementary, Falling Water Elementary Daisy Elementary., Soddy, Elementary, and McConnell Elementary. The network has the general goal of working collaboratively from kindergarten through high school graduation so that every child entering kindergarten will have a real opportunity to graduate from high school with his or her classmates. What has been most spectacular for the first year is how the faculties have come together as one body with a single purpose of educating our students. The term heard frequently is that we are one school with different building names and locations. A child entering kindergarten this year will be exposed to the same terminology and strategies throughout his or her education while a part of the Soddy-Daisy NLC. Again, while not a SNS program, it has fit perfectly with the stated goals of the SNS reform initiative.
Soddy-Daisy High School has continued to experience success in school reforms efforts during the 2005-2006 school year. There are, however, a number of issues that have not been resolved to the satisfaction of the administration and faculty. While we will add a new career academy in SY 2006-2007, we will also focus a great deal of attention on refining and enhancing existing reforms.

**Ninth Grade Academy:** Initial data indicates that this academy continues to produce excellent results. With the 4X4 block being introduced during the 2005-2006 school year, there was a slight loss of team cohesiveness when compared to the initial year of 2004-2005. This will be rectified by close attention to scheduling to ensure that freshmen students on the various teams are grouped together throughout the year. Another area of emphasis this year will be to significantly increase parental involvement with the Ninth Grade Academy. We will provide times for the academy teachers to gather and work on curriculum alignment, student issues, and academy activities.

**Ninth Grade Transition:** This program will undergo a significant change in the coming school year. One complaint from previous years has been that many students who needed to attend the summer transition programs did not attend. The coming year will see the first two days of school devoted to transition activities within the Ninth Grade Academy. The activities of these days will mirror those that formerly occurred during the summer, but all students as well as all freshmen teachers will be involved. This change will ensure that those students most in need of transition activities will be present.

**Career Academies:** 2006-2007 will see an additional career academy added to the offerings at SDHS. Future plans call for the addition of at least one, and probably two, additional academies.

- **Engineering & Technology Academy:** This will be the year that this academy reaches its full potential. All equipment is to be in place before the start of school allowing us to fully comply with the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) curriculum. One new PLTW course, Architecture & Civil Engineering, will be added to the academy, increasing our PLTW course offering to five. A lead teacher has been selected for the academy, which will increase the “academy feeling” for students as well as the academy teachers.

- **Business & Mass Communications Academy:** This academy will begin with the start of the new school year. Equipment is on order to provide us with a modern, fully equipped broadcast facility; a certified instructor has been added to the faculty, and the number of students registering for this academy has shown that there is more than sufficient student interest to warrant the existence of this academy. Working with UTC, Chattanooga State, Chamber of Commerce, and local businesses has produced a strong support network which will provide our students with the real work connection needed in career academies.

**Advisories:** Advisories will be increased from one meeting per week to two. One teacher from each grade level will be designated as the advisory monitor/mentor/trainer for that grade level. These individuals will circulate through their grade-level advisories, giving assistance, advice, and/or training where needed. This should produce positive results to the point that it accomplishes the desired objectives of a highly effective advisory program.

**Literacy:** Concentrating on literacy issues will continue to be paramount during SY2006-2007. The Literacy Specialist will be the chief representative from SDHS to the Soddy-Daisy Network Learning Community (NLC), where the focus is on K-12 literacy. Dr. Max Thompson’s Learning-Focuses Strategies has been adopted as the basis for classroom instruction across all disciplines and within all schools in the NLC. The primary goal for the coming year is to see the proven best practices of
LFS so imbedded with our school that it becomes an integral component of the school culture – it will be the way we teach at SDHS.

Community/Parent Involvement: Placing a lead teacher within each career academy will free the Change Coach to focus considerable attention on increasing community and parental involvement in our school. The addition of a new career academy and adding a new course to the PLTW offerings will require additional business involvement with SDHS. A major goal of this year’s reform efforts is to increase parental presence in the school. This increase can be achieved through formation of parent advisory boards for the Ninth Grade Academy as well as inclusion on the advisory boards for the career academies. With everything in place for our career academies, businesses and civic groups will be invited to visit our school and observe the opportunities being afforded our students.

College Access: Excellent results were again produced in this area for SY2005-2006. The goal this year is to increase the number of students enrolling in either two or four-year colleges as well as the number and dollar amount of scholarships awarded to 2006 graduates.

ACT: An English ACT prep course will be added this year. This course offering is designed to increase student scores in the English area of the ACT, thereby increasing composite scores. The results will be more students qualifying for lottery scholarships and fewer be assigned to remedial course during their first year of college. The addition of this offering will now give students the opportunity to choose ACT prep course(s) in math and/or English.

College Remediation Courses: Attention will be directed toward reducing the number of SDHS graduates taking English or math remediation courses. Introduction of best practices of Learning-Focused Strategies, ACT prep classes, and a continued emphasis on instructional rigor is expected to lead to a significant reduction in the number of remedial courses taken by SDHS graduates.
The 2005-2006 school year has seen the refinement of our Service-Learning focus. All students grades 8-12 were placed at service sites for one and half to two hours a week. This program continues to serve our surrounding community well, including elementary schools, which utilized our students as tutors for their students. Our students contributed around 4000 hours of service to their community this year. Students new to the program underwent seven weeks of training prior to placement in the community. During this time Service-Learning class time was spent engaging in a study skills class designed to help new students, particularly ninth graders, to be successful in class.

Senior Project continues to be one of the most rigorous activities of our students’ careers. This year saw the growth and development of many excellent projects, some of which reflect our students’ career interests. Students consistently report that this project stretched them in ways they had never expected or experienced previously. We feel that this remains a strong bridge for our students from the classroom to the world.

Directed study was expanded initially this year to allow students two opportunities a week to receive assistance in different core classes, resulting in the ability to receive assistance in all four core classes in two weeks. Opposite directed study were mini-courses in Drama, Juggling, Driver’s Ed, Aerobics, Creative Writing, Historical Film and Covey’s Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens. Unfortunately, this schedule, while highly flexible, was very confusing for students, who reported to four different teachers on these various days, in addition to Service-Learning classes during the same period on other days. The program also did not yield the hoped for gains in student achievement in core classes. As a result, the high school teachers reviewed first quarter report card data and designed an advisory program called House that targeted any student who performed below average by report card time. Each quarter report card data was compiled and reviewed and students who were below average were enrolled in the program. Students and teachers utilized the online grade book Teacherease to help students keep up with work, inform them of grades and progress and review any behavior reports listed. Students, with the help of teachers, would collect work, both missing and on going projects, and bring them to House for help in completing the work, setting goals and deadlines and study skills training. This resulted in the desired improvements in grades.

Two Math teachers offered before school tutoring and access to the Math lab and two English teachers offered afternoon access to the writing lab. In addition, one of the English teachers also offered a before school reading and writing tutoring and enrichment program. A Gateway course was offered for students who had not passed the Algebra Gateway and three ACT preparation classes were available to students: one during the school day, one before school and one after school.

We have described our reform efforts under each of the following areas: 9th – 10th Grade Promotion, Gateway, Attendance, and Graduation and College Going Rate. However, we feel that true reform overlaps each of these areas. For example, strategies to improve attendance will have as a natural outcome an improved Graduation Rate. Therefore, each of the programs below could easily fit in other categories as well.
9th – 10th Grade Promotion

Rising Stars Retreat
The summer of 2005 had 35% of upcoming ninth grade students attend the Rising Stars Retreat. High school faculty attended, as did six upper classmen. The older students acted as mentors for the 9th graders and were available for questions and support. The teambuilding and support aspects of the retreat are the most valuable for the students. This opportunity to form friendships and build relationships with teachers outside of school is extremely beneficial. Team building activities are integrated into the retreat bringing the students and teachers together as a group. In addition, information centers were designed to give the new high school students information on expectations, goal setting, credits and graduation, school and county rules, summer reading and Service-Learning.

Directed Study and House
Directed study become a once a week opportunity for students to receive tutoring or make up work or tests for teachers during the regular school day. This allowed students who needed more individualized instruction, pre-teaching or re-teaching the chance to get that help every week. House targeted students who performed below average in any class. These students received intensive assistance and monitoring from an advisor, in addition to preferential tutoring in Directed Study, to help prevent them from falling behind. This program was successful leading to a 10 and 1/2 percent drop in 9th graders who failed a class and a 6% drop in failing students 9-12. Promisingly, 85% of students in the House program had increases in their averages while enrolled.

Study Skills Class
All ninth grade students and high school students new to the school spent two days a week for the first seven weeks of school in a study skills class designed to give them training in note taking, study strategies, literacy strategies, time management and goal setting.

Gateway
Two Gateway exams were given this year in English 10 and Algebra I. (Biology was not offered this year). All 9th and 10th graders were enrolled in English 10 and 8th and some 9th graders were enrolled in Algebra I. Cognitive tutor was again utilized in Algebra I, as well as Geometry and Algebra II, allowing students to work in the math lab two days a week. In addition, an Algebra Gateway remediation course was open to any student who had not passed the Gateway test in previous years but was no longer in Algebra I class. In contrast to last year, when 60% of 8th grade students were enrolled in Algebra I, this year 100% of 8th graders were enrolled in the course. As a result, Algebra I scores dropped from last year, but are higher than the 2003-2004 school year, the last time 100% of 8th graders took Algebra I. English scores were very good at 98.7% Proficient or above.

Attendance
21st Century Academy consistently maintains attendance rates above the state average. This is due, in large part, to the small, family atmosphere at our school, which prevents alienation of students. In addition, the faculty has received training that assists them in developing engaging activities and projects for the classroom.

Service-Learning
The Service-Learning program consists of two weekly classes and one morning of off-campus service in the community. Students are given a 7 week training course prior to being allowed to leave campus to perform service in the community. Once students began their service, students
interviewed their site supervisors to ascertain needs that could be addressed through a student project. Students then developed individual plans for projects through their Service-Learning class. These projects were to include links to core knowledge and skills and a literacy component. In addition, each project should have contained a component of art or technology. Service-Learners then wrote a proposal, which was reviewed by the Service-Learning teacher and approved or given back to the students with recommendations for adjustments. This mirrors the process used in Senior Project to give students an opportunity to develop the skills needed to develop and sell and proposal. This year projects included preparing center materials, games and books on tape for elementary students, painting projects, preparation of an educational room for the Humane Society, fund-raisers and collection drives just to name a few. Students are rarely absent on service days and look forward to Wednesday mornings when they have the opportunity to go to their sites as productive, helpful members of their community.

Professional Development
This year all high school teachers and teacher new to the building, including a new administrator, attended Lion’s Quest training and became certified as Service-Learning teachers. Teachers also participated in seminars for Kagan Cooperative Learning, Capturing Kid’s Hearts and technology training. Teachers have reported using many of these types of strategies in the classroom, with positive results. In addition, the high school teachers met twice a month to engage in Learning Strategies training using Beyond Monet, Critical Friends Groups and read two books and engaged in Literature Circles. Teachers school-wide were involved in the School Improvement Plan process and reviewed their own data to determine strengths and areas of weakness and created action plans to address those areas and student needs.

Graduation and College Going Rate

Pre-Registration Conferences
Every year at the near the end of the school year high school faculty hold conferences to register students for classes for the upcoming year, including incoming 8th graders from the middle school. These have been very successful in informing students and their parents of the requirements for graduation, helping them look at transcripts for credits, GPA and Gateway scores and selecting appropriate courses for the next school year. This also gives the parents and students the opportunity to discuss college and scholarship requirements. Students and parents are also given information on Service-Learning and Senior Project in these conferences.

ACT Preparation Class
All students at 21st Century take the ACT test before they graduate, regardless of class rank, status or GPA. Three ACT Preparation classes were offered during the school day as an elective, before school and after school. Before and after school classes met weekly and gave students the opportunity to become familiar with the test layout and material. Students actively worked on skills tested. However, this program is not as popular with students as we had hoped and eventually the before and after school classes were dropped due to lack of participation. The elective course should yield better results, but needs to placed in the school day at a time when more students can participate. This is a program the full benefit of which will not been seen until all the students in the class have taken their ACT.

College Visits
Each year seniors take several trips to various colleges, both as school trips and on their own, and this year’s seniors were no exception. What was different this year was our expansion of this opportunity to the rest of the high school. We offered a college trip for each grade and 93% of 9th graders took advantage of the opportunity and 100% of 10th and 11th graders participated. The 9th grade students visited Chattanooga State, the 10th graders visited The University of Tennessee at Knoxville and the 11th graders visited Middle Tennessee State University. These trips were highly informative for students and then plan is to continue a regular rotation with a selected college for...
each grade level to allow a variety of experiences during students’ four years of high school. There are also plans to extend this into the middle grades since our middle school students take classes that count as high school credit to give them an realistic view of grade expectations as well as allow them the opportunity to begin thinking about what they plan beyond high school.

**Senior Project**
Senior Project is a highly anticipated part of the 21st Century Academy educational experience. Upcoming seniors look forward to the opportunity and many students think about and plan possible projects throughout their high school years. The project is a graduation requirement completed by every senior in the school and consists of 5 parts: service-learning in the local community, a formal research paper, a product, a presentation and a portfolio documenting the process. This year senior projects included the formation of a non-profit organization, a documentary about homelessness, production of a music CD, a booklet documenting the progress of premature babies, the creation of a mime dance that incorporated American Sign Language, and a program for at-risk middle school students. Senior project helps students stretch and grow in directions not normally found in the classroom and prepares them for the type of thinking, writing and planning that will help them be more successful in college and the workplace. Most of our seniors are going on to post-secondary programs, both two year and four year. One student is planning to join the military and one student is planning to attend a state sponsored computer-training program. Five of our students applied and qualified for the Hope Scholarship, two received full scholarships to UTK and 5 others received various scholarship amounts in both in state schools and out of state schools. Our goal is not just to graduate students, or even to have them go to college, but to have them succeed and senior project is a big part of that preparation for success and life-long learning.
21st Century Academy is a small K-12 magnet school. Throughout the past year there has been a myriad of activities addressing the four goals of SNS.

- Improving instruction so that every student experiences a rigorous, engaging, and relevant curriculum
- Preparing every student to graduate from high school with skills necessary for college and/or the world of work
- Creating environment so that all students are well known and engaged in relevant academic work
- Engaging parents and surrounding communities in high school reform

Our focus for this coming year is on instruction and development of curriculum with emphasis on promoting literacy across the content using concept-based curriculum model. As a staff we will plan using the following questions:

1. What is concept-based curriculum and instruction?
2. How does it raise standards for curriculum, instruction, and assessment by developing critical, creative, and conceptual thinking abilities?
3. How do we create quality concept-based units that maintain the integrity of discipline-based standards, concepts and skills?
4. How can we use concepts and “enduring understandings” in unit design to focus instruction and develop deeper levels of thinking?
5. How do we write Guiding or Essential Questions that lead student thinking from lower to higher levels?
6. How do we write quality performance tasks that measure what students know, understand, and are able to do?

Improving instruction so that every student experiences a rigorous, engaging, and relevant curriculum.

In order to address literacy, we propose to hire a Change Coach to work in conjunction with the consulting teacher and a consultant to conduct professional development needed to implement the MSNS plan: concept based curriculum, backward instruction planning, and standards based assessment/rubrics. Faculty book studies on these topics will be done during common planning and quality circles for further professional development. Off-site professional development for the Coach, including the Literacy Leaders Network, will be utilized to enhance the coach’s expertise in literacy strategies in all content areas. As the strategies are implemented, the Change Coach and Consulting Teacher will facilitate peer classroom observations and provide feedback and modeling as needed to ensure a high level of rigor in instruction. Collaborating with the faculty, the Change Coach and Consulting Teacher will facilitate the creation of standards-based assessments with which to monitor the effectiveness of instruction and support teachers across all content areas.

In addition to literacy in all content areas, rigor within the math program will be enhanced through the development of rigorous standards-based assessments created by vertical teams and utilized in backward instructional planning. Math teachers, with the assistance of the Consulting Teacher and Change Coach, will pursue professional development opportunities using Bridge to Algebra to provide a stronger foundation for Algebra and higher level math courses. Remediation and enrichment opportunities will also be offered for math students in addition to the opportunities available for language arts.

Transition needs to increase promotion rates and student achievement
In order to assure the success of all students, transitions teams will develop a comprehensive transitional plan to be implemented at all grades 5-6, 8-9, and 12+ with the assistance of an outside consultant from UTC. In addition, a pre-registration conference will be scheduled with the teachers, parents, and students to inform every one of the expectations of the coming grade level. The unique needs and concerns of adolescents will be addressed through an advisory program “Star Time” for all students in grades 6-8. A pyramid of intervention will be developed for struggling learners that will begin with prevention strategies and continue through credit recovery in an effort to move students from non-proficient to proficient and from proficient to advanced. Gender based classes will be implemented in 7-8 to build on the pilot study done in 6th grade last year.

Family and community involvement will be evident
To increase understanding and meaningful involvement, the Change coach will work with the school’s community partners to offer service opportunities to parents similar to the service-learning opportunities in which students will be participating. In addition, families and students will be invited to a series of informational workshops delineating the essential practices, procedures, expectations, and opportunities that define 21st Century Academy. In order to create real-world experiences, students in grades 9-12 will be enrolled in a service-learning class and placed at a service site arranged by the Service-Learning Community Coordinator for approximately two hours each week. Using a cross-curricular rubric, students will design a service-learning project that addresses an authentic need at the service site identified by the student. These projects prepare students for the culminating senior project of their final year and foster caring, responsibility, and good citizenship. In an effort to introduce students to a variety of service industry opportunities, representatives from fire, police, EMS, local government, non-profit organizations and educational agencies will be used as speakers, mentors, and curriculum planning assistants. The Change Coach will facilitate these partnerships.

In order to ensure accessible, convenient, and up-to-date academic progress and attendance, TeacherEase will be used as an on-line grade book. All students and parents will be assigned free email accounts to ensure accessibility. On-going communication of activities and events from the school will be transmitted through a periodic newspaper written by the Change Coach.

In conclusion, our Professional Learning Community at 21st Century Academy is showing positive results. However, there is room for improvement and evaluation of existing programs. The need to strengthen literacy across content areas is essential in order to exceed state benchmarks, as well as create life-long learners. Implementation of the MSNS action plan will engender a more rigorous curriculum, greatly enhance literacy instruction, improve teacher practice, and enable students to transition successfully to the adult world.
The 2005-06 school year saw many changes for Tyner Academy. The implementation of Career academies and the continued work with the Freshman Academy increased the focus in the classroom on the rigor and relevance of the curriculum. Our main areas of focus were: Freshman initiative, college access, senior projects, and academy development. The impact of the work at Tyner has been an increase in promotion rates, an increase in Graduation rates, and an increase in Gateway results. The status of Tyner Academy with the State Department of Education through No Child Left Behind has been School Improving. As a result of the initiatives and hard work of a dedicated staff, the school met AYP for this year and is in good standing. This is a major accomplishment for the school and the staff and is the best indicator of increased achievement of the students at Tyner Academy.

**Freshman Initiative**

The Freshman Initiative provided students with an opportunity to have a smaller, more personalized community. The Academic and Career Strategies class was a part of the curriculum for all 9th grade students. Students were able, through this class to learn effective study skills, increase their reading ability, build relationships and increase teamwork. The lower level readers were grouped together and utilized Jamestown reading program. After one semester ALL students had increased their reading level by at least one grade level. In addition to the in school time, students who were falling behind in their course work were given the opportunity to attend Academic Support, a class after school staffed by teachers and intended to help students increase their skills in needed areas. Students who attended this class increased their grades and their understanding of the subject. All students who attended were promoted to the 10th grade. This also provided opportunities for students to work on gateway skills.

The Freshman Academy retreat was in Nashville, Tennessee. Students were given the opportunity to see career implications for their academy choice for the coming years. students visited the Nissan plant, Vanderbilt University, Middle Tennessee State University, and various other locations. The students stayed at the Embassy Suites. As the students entered the hotel, they were amazed at their surroundings. One of the teachers took this as a teachable moment and told them IF they went to college their employer would send them on trips and these are the types of accommodations they might receive. It helped focus the students on achievement and planted another seed that college is a desired outcome for each.

**College Access**

Tyner Academy hired Sarah Broadnax to serve as the College Access Advisor. Mrs. Broadnax worked with all seniors to ensure they completed FAFSA and provided them with information on college applications and scholarships. All but 2 of the graduating seniors completed their information. The actual number of students enrolled this fall is not yet known, but the class of 107 received $2.2 million in scholarships over the next 4 years. The graduation rate for the senior class was 96.5%.

**Senior Projects**

Senior Projects were successful again this year. The project for each student is composed of research, the physical project, and the presentation before a panel of judges. Student’s made their presentations before a group of teachers, business leaders, and educational leaders. All but 2 students were successful in their presentations. In their exit comments students remarked they
were happy they had to complete a senior project. They felt like this would be good preparation for them for college. 75% of the students received all good or excellent comments from the judges. This is a slight increase from the previous year. Students celebrated their success with their parents and teachers at a dinner.

**Academy Development and Implementation**

The major focus of Tyner Academy has been the continued development and implementation of three career academies: Communications, Engineering, and Science. By allowing students to choose an academy focus the students receive more intense personalization from their advisor. All advisories were academy and grade level focused. this commonality allows students to relate to the teachers who have the greatest impact on the academy they chose. All 10th and 11th graders were a part of an academy. Students served on advisory panels for the academies and provided student voice in the activities designed for each academy.

One real connection for the academies was to make that real world connection for the students. Students were able to visit businesses that connected to their focus area. This increased student interest in the areas and provided them with real world experience in their chosen field.

Teachers took time to work together to develop various units that were academy focused and units that crossed the curriculum. An example of this is the unit developed by the Anatomy and Physiology teacher and the Wellness teacher. The students in the A&P class visited the wellness class and filmed them during their warm up exercises. They came back and through their curriculum studied muscles and how muscles were used. They applied this information to the students they had filmed and developed a presentation based on their findings. The culminating activity was a presentation to the original Wellness class on the impact the exercises have on different muscles in their body.

In addition to the individual teacher connections, quality circles focused on strategies and ways to improve student achievement and rigor. Teachers were assigned plan time based on their academy selection. This allowed each academy to focus together in their quality circle on issues pertinent to that academy.

Academies are also focusing senior projects on academy themes. The juniors began writing their letters of intent to the academy instead of a separate Senior Project committee. This will help focus the Senior projects on a learning stretch that is related to the learning that has been a part of the educational career of the senior.

**Conclusion**

There is much work to be done within the Academies. Next year all students 10 – 12 will be part of a career academy. The academic focus will be on increasing rigor in all classes to provide students with access to all colleges. Essential Questions will guide teachers in their pursuit of excellence and provide a framework for all learning in and out of the classroom.
Tyner Academy is a small magnet school with a Math, Science and Technology theme. Throughout this past year there has been a focus on the transition from 9th to 10th grade and Career Academies. Our focus for the coming year will continue these themes centered around key pieces: providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum, preparing every student to graduate with the skills necessary for college or work, continuing to develop academies centered in relevant academic work, and engaging the parents, students and community in the work.

Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum
We intend to focus our work this coming year on Essential Questions and Differentiated Instructional Practices. We believe the Essential Questions will help focus student learning in the classroom and their individual studies. Teachers will utilize the Kaleidoscope profile to help students determine their strongest learning styles and assist the teacher in providing instruction geared toward that style. Learning opportunities will be provided for students who struggle with content during the summer and the structured advisory time. In addition to the standard classroom, students will be able to experience real-world applications through trips to career related places of business. Communication will be improved for parents and students through an active website where each teacher will maintain a course link for each course they teach.

Preparing students for college and work
One very important piece at Tyner is to make sure students are aware of the opportunities available to them after high school. Sara Broadnax has worked with Tyner this past school year as a college access advisor. We will continue this focus for the coming school year. Students at Tyner were awarded over 2.2 million dollars in scholarship money. To that end our ACT scores and Gateway Algebra scores must continue to improve. We will implement a program through advisory to emphasize test taking skills formulated by Kaplan. In addition specific ACT prep courses will be provided to students immediately prior to the ACT test. All information will be tracked through Naviance, a web based program designed to help students with their college preparation. A number of our students are also in programs which have National Certification. While a few of the students have taken the National Certification tests, our goal is to have all students who are eligible to take the exams.

Academies centered in relevant work
Tyner is in the 2nd year of career academy work. Next year we will be wall-to-wall academies: Freshman Academy, Communications Academy, Engineering Academy, and Science Academy. To strengthen our academy work we will establish strong ties to the business community. The Science Academy has a number of business partners who help develop curriculum and provide input. The remaining academies will strengthen their academy work by utilizing business partners and students to help guide the process. New courses will be developed by Spring of 2007 modeled after the Science Academy’s Science Troupe course. These courses will enable students to work with business and industry and communicate their learning in elementary and middle schools as well as our local Children’s Discovery Museum. In addition to these 2 new Project Lead the Way courses will be implemented in the Engineering Academy. By establishing a Network Learning Community the feeder schools will be more in tune to the uniqueness of Tyner and help guide their students in an appropriate way. Throughout the year students will remain the focus. Student recognitions and celebrations will facilitate additional student engagement. Through all these things visitors, parents and students will be able to see the focus of the academies. Since we are a small school visibility is very important. We are creating a visual display at the main entrance to introduce visitors to the uniqueness of Tyner. Teachers will be identified by academy outside their door. We will continue to host Taste of Tyner to introduce incoming students to our academy themes.
Engaging Parents and Students
Tyner Academy will develop a student led appeal system to assist with conflict resolution. Students will be trained in conflict resolution and student court and will be mediators for students who are having problems with other students. Our goal will be to reduce the number of students suspended allowing them to be in class and receive more instruction. Conversely, we have parents who are very interested in coming to school. We will provide afternoon and evening sessions for parents in curriculum areas as well as areas to assist parents in their own learning. While 75% of our parents have internet access in their home, many of them are not familiar with computer applications. This training will allow parents additional knowledge to assist their students and access school documents.