

Education Task Force Report



Mr. Ray Swoffard, Committee Chair

This report represents the collective efforts of the 2008 Chattanooga Education Task Force Committee. It is presented as a conduit to the overall goals of the Office of Multicultural Affairs in addressing significant problems facing the Chattanooga community.

EDUCATION PRIORITY PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS:

1. All students should be reading at grade level.
2. Mandatory cultural awareness training for principals and staff.
3. ACT scores of schools that repeatedly do not perform well
4. Truancy Issues.
5. Shortage of minority teachers in schools with predominately minority student bodies.

2008 EDUCATION TASK FORCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ray Swoffard, Hamilton County Department of Education
Dr. Kirk Kelly, Hamilton County Department of Education
Dr. Barbara Medley, University of Tennessee Chattanooga
Mr. Luther Shockley,
Ms. Carolyn Jackson
Mr. Johnny Garth, Philadelphia Film
Dr. Crystal Partridge, University of Tennessee Chattanooga

Staff support for the Task Force was provided by the City of Chattanooga Office of Multicultural Affairs. Individuals who provided staffing included:

Mr. James Piercy
Mr. Solomon Hatch
Ms. Casandra Crosby

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction.....	5
II.	Student Readiness	6
III.	Cultural Awareness Training	9
IV.	ACT Scores	12
V.	Truancy	14
VI.	Shortage of Minority Teachers	18
VII.	Appendix.....	20

I. INTRODUCTION

The Office of Multicultural Affairs has created several task forces to examine issues pertaining to health, social services, employment, economic development, housing, crime and education. The purpose of these task forces is to make recommendations that will lead to effective policy and organizational change. This report represents the collective efforts of the 2008 Chattanooga Education Task Force Committee. It is presented as a conduit to the overall goals of the Office of Multicultural Affairs in addressing significant problems facing the Chattanooga community. The goal of the OMA as it relates to the work of the education task force is to make Chattanooga an inclusive, progressive city and have that reflected in the schools.

The Education Task Force identified several key issues and areas that Hamilton County schools need to address and improve upon. This report examines these priority areas and makes specific recommendations based on the data and reports that were presented to the task force by Education Task Force Committee Chairperson, Mr. Ray Swafford who serves as Deputy Superintendent of Campus Support for Hamilton County Schools.

The task force looked at a multitude of data and reports that included but are not limited to: student attendance data, behavior summary reports, TCAP achievement results which examined the minority achievement gap from 2003-2007, Hamilton County Department of Education expulsion, suspension, remanded and ISS report for 2008 and the enrollment report by school for 2007-2008.

II. STUDENT READINESS

Goal: Ensure that every student is able to perform at his or her grade level.

Students should not be allowed to continue to fall further behind as they advance to the next grade level. By the third grade, all students should be reading at that grade level. In order to guarantee student readiness, the school must place responsibility on the teacher, parents, and the community. Teachers need to be highly qualified and trained so that they are equipped to deal with every student. Parents must be kept aware of the progress of their child. The community needs to become more involved in the well-being and development of local children.

1. RECOMMENDATION: Require every school to send home the standards that each child will be taught for the year.

Parents need to be aware at the beginning of the year what is expected of their child. This will allow the parent to more readily assess when their child is facing difficulty. The sooner the problem can be identified, the more easily it can be addressed. The parents should be constantly alert to the development of their child and maintain open communication with the school's staff.

2. RECOMMENDATION: Conduct awareness training for parents at least twice a year across the district.

Awareness training during the year is also needed so that parents are continually alert of the progress of their child. This training will allow parents to meet together and gain knowledge that will aid in the progress of their child's development. Though many parents have the proper intention to help their child, such a training program will set definite times during the year so that a problem is not overlooked. The school cannot control the parents, but awareness training programs will allow some interaction that will encourage parent to become more involved.

3. RECOMMENDATION: Reach out to the community to ensure awareness training is conducted.

In order for the awareness training to be effective, the community should become involved in bringing the parents together. Most people do not feel a program is a valuable use of their time unless it has the proper support. Community

organizations can prove their desire to improving their neighborhoods by promoting a program that will benefit local children.

4. *RECOMMENDATION: Structure Faith-Based programs that will increase student readiness.*

In the past, the church was an integral part of the development of neighborhood children. These types of programs have subsided in recent years, but can be renewed and restructured for today's communities. Local churches must determine the needs of their community and find ways of developing programs that will be effective. Many local churches can act as a community center by providing tutoring sessions and mentor programs. The church is also an ideal place to find volunteers who are willing to help. Churches must be encouraged to expand programs that will increase student performance.

5. *RECOMMENDATION: Ensure highly qualified teachers for Hamilton County Schools*

Proper teachers are necessary in ensuring that a child is able to function at his or her grade level. Teachers must be held accountable for the progress of their pupils. Staff development programs and training seminars are needed in order to keep teachers current and informed. Teachers must have the correct teaching methods and use the correct terminology for every subject. In Knoxville, Tennessee, the school system uses the Gallup Teacher Perceiver test to find the best teachers. Hamilton County Schools must have a means of attracting the some of the top teachers and providing incentives for them to stay. Once teachers are within the system, they must also be provided with incentives to improve their students' performance.

Parents must also become involved in the process of monitoring teacher performance. A teacher who is inadequate should not be allowed to continue in the classroom. Only through consistent involvement can parents guarantee that their child is receiving the best education possible.

6. *RECOMMENDATION: A monitoring program that tracks the performance of every student*

Not only should teachers examine their students' progress, but the school must also be instrumental in setting up programs or tools that will allow problems to be detected easily. Standardized tests are given once a year and do not always accurately portray the progress of a student. Every school needs to enforce a

functional Response to Intervention (RTI)¹ program so as to monitor student progress. This program is designed to determine which students are not functioning at grade level and which students need special education services. Such a program encourages teachers to properly diagnose children with special needs.

¹ Response to Intervention was a part of the 2004 Individual with Disabilities Education Act. For more information, please see: http://www.superduperinc.com/S_Pages/start_faq.htm.

III. CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING

Goals:

1. Improve the environment in public schools by developing a training curriculum customized for Hamilton County schools.
2. Creating a better environment that fosters cultural awareness is important not only as it relates to staff and students, but it is dually important to have cultural awareness reflected in the schools curriculum.
3. Improve the relationship between students and teachers
4. The logic is that a teacher will have difficulty teaching a student who he/she does not understand or cannot relate to on a personal level.
5. Improve the performance of the students.
6. Identify a tentative budget for the cultural awareness training.
7. Develop a plan for a delivery system embedded in the County schools teacher development system.
8. Begin the implementation of a “pilot program” that will provide the necessary input for successful application across the district.
 - a. Developing a schedule by working with the central office to identify dates times and locations to design a schedule for the training.
 - b. A ‘pilot program’ project would start by working with the central office to designate a target audience of fifteen (15) schools: five (5) elementary, five (5) middle, and five (5) high schools.
9. Identify a budget for the required tools, materials/supplies, trainers, the curriculum, and evaluation report.
10. Secure funding

The problem with Hamilton County schools current budget crunch presents the issue of how to fund the training. Who will fund the training? There is a need to identify grants along with public, private, city, county, federal, and state monies (or a combination thereof) that can be used to fund the program.

The suggested idea is to have the Hamilton County schools principals go through the cultural awareness “pilot program” training first. This will hopefully allow the process to proceed smoothly when it comes to training the teachers. The staff of the Hamilton County Schools, which consists of over seventy-five (75) schools, is very large and presents significant scheduling problems when attempting to implement such a macro level training. Therefore, it is more feasible and less cumbersome to start by conducting the training for the principals.

1. RECOMMENDATION: Implement cultural awareness training in Hamilton County schools in multiple 4 or 8 hour sessions. Down the road, the schools will need to bring in a national organization to ensure training is effective as possible and that it eventually is expanded to include all the teachers at all Hamilton County Schools.

An organization is only effective as its leadership, which directly relates to why it is important to get the leadership (principals) from each school to “buy in” and see not only the need, but the importance for such training.

Culture influences the relationship and communication between students and teachers. Information on ethnic and gender variables can be particularly helpful in avoiding unproductive conflict and establishing useful ongoing relationships with parents which is vital. There is a genuine need for cultural awareness training for staff due to a lack of minority teachers but more so because of the disproportionate minority student to teacher ratio. In recent years the demographics of Hamilton County schools have undergone change, as have most school systems. New and different cultures are now represented in the population, and more students not originally from the area are attending schools outside of their own neighborhoods and districts. The result of this is a need for the district staff, from the central office to the class room teacher to take on a more public role and to acquire cultural awareness and communication skills designed for such a role. Not only will this lead to better understanding between non-minority teachers and minority students, it will also improve student-teacher relationships. The cultural awareness training program is intended to aid in improving student performance by fostering better understanding between and amongst teachers and students.

It is the task force understanding that such a program has not been fully implemented in Hamilton County Schools and has previously been met with much resistance. Due to the possibility of the cultural awareness training being met with resistance from not only the principals but staff, parents as well as City and County officials.

2. RECOMMENDATION: Make the training mandatory to ensure participation.

In order to successfully implement this training program, a consultant that is skilled in cultural awareness/sensitivity training and well equipped with a team large enough and experienced conducting large-scale trainings. Consultants need to be full-time and understand that the training will be met with some resistance. The training can be conducted on teacher in-service days, breaks, half days or days to be designated. Training must include all relative issues under which a principal,

teacher or student might face or be faced with discrimination. Such a program will also aid in the school system becoming more effective in recruiting minority teachers when potential recruits clearly see that the school system is doing something to encourage better understanding among the different ethnic groups.

It is also important to educate and inform stakeholders and the community to ensure awareness, emphasize the need for such a program and to stress the importance. In summation the ultimate goals are to enhance the schools, the performance and quality of the teachers and students, while improving the learning environment.

IV. ACT SCORES

Goal: The Improvement of the ACT scores at lowing-scoring schools

According to data provided by the Hamilton County Department of Education, certain schools within this district continue to exhibit lower than average ACT scores (See Appendix 3). In order for these high schools to produce students who are able to attend college, the problem of declining ACT scores must be addressed.

1. RECOMMENDATION: Ensure that Hamilton County high schools employ highly qualified teachers in the specific content areas that the ACT covers

Hamilton County schools must continue the focus of attracting highly qualified and talented new teachers who are equipped to prepare students for the ACT. In order for local schools to be more appealing, there needs to be incentives such as signing bonuses and incentive plans. Hamilton County must ensure that it is competitive with other districts.

Local high schools must also concentrate on improving current employees and the ability of teachers already in the classroom. Training seminars should be required for teachers who teach in the areas covered by the ACT so that they are up to date with current teacher methods and curriculum. Current teachers should also be offered performance bonuses if their students attain a certain score or an improvement in score.

2. RECOMMENDATION: Formulate and implement intervention programs for students by providing extra assistance for ACT preparation.

Not only should teachers provide the tutelage students need for the ACT, but local colleges should also be involved. High schools should create relationships with local colleges so as to offer a tutoring program. College students majoring in a subject covered by the ACT could then receive credit hours for tutoring high school students. Such a program would have to be monitored by college professors under certain guidelines in order to be managed properly.

3. RECOMMENDATION: Utilize the ACT EXPLORE and PLAN programs at all schools so as to project and improve students' scores on the final ACT exam.

The ACT EXPLORE² program is provided for eighth and ninth grade students so that they can prepare for the ACT and project what type of courses to take in high school. The PLAN program is for tenth grade students so as to prepare them even further for the final ACT. Both tests are intended to guide students through high school as they prepare for the ACT and their post-high school work. Hamilton County schools should require that these programs be enforced at all local schools so as to increase ACT scores and the number of students who are able to attend college.

4. RECOMMENDATION: Make it mandatory for counselor to meet with parents regarding ACT scores.

Parents are an integral part in preparing a student for high school and college. The school and parents must discuss with students the importance of their ACT score. Counselors should be required to meet with every student and parent so that both understand the ramifications of a poor ACT score on future opportunities. Continued contact with parents by a counselor will ensure that

5. RECOMMENDATION: Expose students to college campuses

Hamilton County High Schools need to provide a way for students to be exposed to college campuses. Many students are overwhelmed by the thought of going to college. By exposing them early on to college life, student will have a clearer picture of what to expect and a goal for which to aspire.

6. RECOMMENDATION: Tennessee State Career Center needs to form a relationship with local high schools

The Tennessee State Career Center can be a valuable asset for local high schools by providing educational opportunities on possible career options. Many students are unaware of the many career possibilities available, so they do not see the need of attending college. By learning about a career that interests them, a student can gain the motivation needed to attend college. The Center could also be a site where students can take practice ACT tests.

² For more information on the ACT EXPLORE and PLAN program, see <http://actstudent.org/explore/index.html>.

V. TRUANCY

Goal: To decrease the number of truant students within the Hamilton County school district.

Truancy is an ongoing battle that has plagued our schools for a number of years. The incentive for students to consistently attend class has been lost, thus contributing to the decline in student performance. According to the Comptroller of the Treasury, John G. Morgan, “Students who exhibit truant behavior tend to have lower achievement levels, lower earning potential and higher dropout rates.”³ Within the Hamilton County schools, a need exists to monitor the attendance of its students before the strain on our community worsens.

Little consistency exists in reporting truancy and its repercussions. According to Tennessee Compulsory Law T.C.A. 49-6-3007 (see Appendix 1), teachers and principals are required to notify the director of schools if a student has been absent five days without excuse. The director must then notify the parent or other person in “parental relation” that the child is required to attend school. However, a number of problems are met when reporting these absences. In order for a truancy program to function effectively, parents must be involved in the process. The only way to decrease recidivism is to have parents contacted consistently when their child is missing class.

1. RECOMMENDATION: Parents are contacted daily if their child is absent or tardy

Hamilton County Schools will be adopting the Connect-ED service, which will “notify parents on their cell phones or by e-mail about emergencies or upcoming events.”⁴ This system could also prove effective in informing parents if their child is absent or tardy. Parents who are aware on a daily basis of their child’s whereabouts will be more likely to address the situation before the student fails or becomes criminally active. Each school also needs to explain clearly to parents and students their attendance policies.

The Connect-ED system could prove an effective system for a majority of the population, but certain families without the needed technology will still require the work of truant officers or social workers to notify them of their child’s absence.

³ “Teaching to empty desks: the effects of truancy in Tennessee schools,” was written in January 2004 by the Comptroller of the Treasury Office of Education Accountability. The report examined Tennessee compulsory school attendance laws and the scope of the problem that truancy has in Tennessee schools.

⁴ Wilson, Matt. “Hamilton County Schools unveil parent notification system.” Chattanooga Times Free Press. May 3, 2008.

Due to the shortage of truant officers/social workers, however, a delay in notifying the parent(s) or guardian results in the continued truant behavior of the student.

2. *RECOMMENDATION: Examine the number and quality of truant officers/social workers for Hamilton County Schools*

Tennessee Compulsory Law T.C.A. 49-6-3006 (See Appendix 2) allows for each board of education within Tennessee to employ at least one fulltime teacher to monitor student attendance. However, Hamilton County experiences a shortage of truant officers and/or social workers who can follow-up with parents on a regular basis. This lack of personnel has allowed for many students to continue the habit of skipping school without the proper attention. According to Morgan, most truant officers/social workers' caseloads are too large and they do not receive the training necessary to prevent truancy. Therefore, in order for truant students to receive the attention necessary, more attendance officers must be hired and provided with proper training. The current system of training the officers needs to be evaluated and determine if changes should be made.

3. *RECOMMENDATION: Develop a stronger relationship with Juvenile Court*

According to Tennessee Compulsory Law T.C.A. 49-6-3007 (See Appendix 1), once a student has more than five unexcused absences and the parent or guardian does not ensure that their child is in school within three days of the notice, the local juvenile court will become involved. The parent can then be fined up to fifty dollars or assigned five hours of community services, but only if the child is considered "unruly." When considering the caseload of the juvenile court and the severity of other offences, truancy is not a top priority of most judges. In order for parents to understand the severity of truancy, the juvenile court needs to become more involved in the process.

A number of programs have been implemented to address the problem of truancy, but few have been proven effective in truly reducing the growing rates. Some programs have experienced promising beginnings, but little was done to continue their work. The Education Task Force concluded that certain programs could be successful in tackling the problem of truancy.

4. *RECOMMENDATION: Conduct truancy court session one day a week in each of the three superintendent areas*

Another means by which the juvenile court could become more involved is by establishing truancy courts in the different superintendent areas. This allows for juvenile court judges, police officers, mental health workers, social workers, and other interested parties to become involved in the process instead of limiting it to the courts. Many within the community realize that truancy had damaging effects and would be willing to become involved in a solution. A joint effort by the parties involved is needed to truly bring about change. A truancy court system would also catch students before they are brought before a juvenile court judge.

5. *RECOMMENDATION: Establish a Teen Court/Peer Jury*

A few Hamilton County schools experienced an effective teen court system in the past, but the personnel and funding were not available to keep it functioning. The opportunity to have students face their peers presents another roadblock in preventing excessive absences and an appearance before the juvenile court. The opinion of a friend can have a greater influence on a student than that of an adult. This program encourages students to become involved in the legal process and create a positive change within their own school.

6. *RECOMMENDATION: Incentive programs that recognize students with acceptable attendance records*

Another solution is to establish prevention programs that acknowledge students with good standing attendance records. The response to most truancy problems is punishment in the form of suspension or expulsion. Such a response is not effective in encouraging students to attend school since they are already in danger of failing due to their absences. Therefore, students need to be encouraged to come to school. Some ideas brought by the Education Task Force are to allow students with acceptable attendance records to pay a reduced cost for school functions. Another idea is to allow students to wear casual dress on Fridays instead of their uniforms. Recommendations for good attendance records proposed by the Hillsborough County Public Schools of Tampa, Florida⁵ include the following: homework passes, meals with the principal, school supplies, food gift certificate (McDonald's, Wendy's, etc.), acknowledgement on a school attendance wall, larger incentives for perfect attendance all year, and reward parties for classes with the highest average attendance.

⁵ The Hillsborough County Public School system is located 901 East Kennedy Boulevard, Tampa, Florida 33602 USA - (813-272-4000). Website: <http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/>

7. RECOMMENDATION: *Establishment of a truancy center*

As recommended by Judge Suzanne Bailey of the Hamilton County Juvenile Court, a Truancy Center for each superintendent would be beneficial in addressing the problem. If the center was given legislative power, it could function as central location for issues dealing with truancy. It would act as an office site for attendance officers/social workers. The center could also provide counseling sessions for parents so that they are more equipped to deal with the problem. The police would have a location to drop off children who are picked up during school hours. The center could also conduct make-up sessions for time missed during a student's absence. Such a center could also eventually be expanded and offer other tutoring sessions that improves student performance.

VI. SHORTAGE OF MINORITY TEACHERS

The *GOALS* and some specific local strategies for recruitment and retention are to:

1. Establish new teacher networks.
2. Provide enhanced staff development.
3. Assign mentors to assist new teachers in adjusting to the district.
4. Assess on a continuous basis the needs of new teachers.
5. Provide extended social support and community orientation.
6. Assign community volunteers to help acclimate and involve the new teachers in community activities as well as social and civic organizations.
7. Provide support for minority teachers to obtain an advanced college degree including limited cost assistance.

Over the course of the education task force meeting it was determined that another of the priority areas that needed to be addressed is the shortage of qualified minority teachers in Hamilton County schools. The recruitment and retention of minority teachers has been an issue since the Task Force report of the 2005 African American Summit. According to a report to the State Board of Education on the Status of Minority Classroom Teachers in Tennessee in November of 2006, “Legislation was actually adopted in 1993 urging local boards of education to establish reasonable incremental goals for recruitment, employment, and retention of African American teachers in numbers which reflect the percentage of African Americans within the community served by local education agency.” In Hamilton County 34% of the school system student body is African American but only 11% of the teachers are African American. This disproportionate minority teacher to student ratio does not aid in helping the school system attract and recruit minority teachers. In regards to retention the data from the State Board of Education report on the status of minority classroom teachers in Tennessee indicates that more than 22,000 teachers have left the profession by means other than retirement.

The data also indicates that 30% of those teachers left with less than 5 years of service, 17% with at least one year of service, and 12% with two years service and 9% with at least three years service. Why do almost 70% of teachers leave with less than 5 years experience? Some of the challenges that Hamilton County Schools are faced with in their attempt to recruit and retain qualified minority teachers are:

- ♦ Low teacher salaries
- ♦ Lack of incentives that are enticing to candidates
- ♦ Lack of candidates wanting to teach in Chattanooga

While these are a few specific local strategies for retention there is a Task Force on Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention that brings together stakeholders from across Tennessee.

This task force has been convened to review existing minority recruitment and retention programs and to find ways to improve them through combining resources. The task force is broken into subgroups whose focus and primary tasks are:

- ♦ Mainstream and current minority recruitment and retention programs through a critical examination of current initiatives.
- ♦ Produce a list of 'Best Practices' in recruitment and retention, both in Tennessee and from around the nation.
- ♦ Create a mission statement and brand a diverse teaching force as an 'ideal state' through a marketing campaign.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Continue to recruit to from historically Black Colleges and Universities in Tennessee and throughout the southeast region.
2. Expand recruitment efforts from regionally focused to nationwide.
3. Increase attendance of job fairs on college and university campuses.
4. Invite candidates to visit the school system and community in Chattanooga and pay their expenses.
5. Offer scholarships for a commitment from teachers to come back and teach for a five year period.
6. Use Title 1 money to offer signing and differentiated pay bonuses to minorities.
7. Encourage high school graduates to enter education field as a career, and educate them on available scholarship and grant money available.
8. Establish a committee of educators and community leaders to plan activities and strategies to assist in the recruitment of minority teachers.
9. Establish a minority teacher recruiter position.

Appendix 1

Tennessee Compulsory Law T.C.A. 49-6-3007

Attendance and truancy reports - Enforcement of compulsory attendance.

(a) On or before the beginning of the school term each year, the director of schools of each school district shall furnish to the principal teacher in each school, or cause to be furnished, through any duly elected attendance teacher, as herein provided, the names of children depending on their schools for instruction, together with the names of the parents or guardians of the children, the lists to be taken from the census enumeration on file in the office of the director of schools, or from any other available and reliable sources.

(b) It is the duty of every principal or teacher of a public school to report to the director of schools, immediately after the opening of school, the names of all children on the list furnished to the director of schools who have not appeared for enrollment.

(c) It is the duty of the principals and teachers of all schools, public, private, denominational or parochial, to report in writing to the director of schools of the system in which the school is located the names, ages and residences of all pupils in attendance at their schools and classes within thirty (30) days after the beginning of the school year, and to make such other reports of attendance in their schools or classes, including transfers of pupils, as may be required by rule or regulation of the local board of education and of the state board of education. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (g), the provisions of this subsection shall apply to any child less than six (6) years of age who is enrolled in any school to which the provisions of this subsection are applicable.

(d) All public, private and parochial schools shall keep daily reports of attendance, verified by the teacher making such record, which shall be open to inspection at all reasonable times, to the director of schools of the system in which the school is located or to the director of schools' duly authorized representative. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (g), the provisions of this subsection shall apply to any child less than six (6) years of age who is enrolled in any school to which the provisions of this subsection are applicable.

(e)

(1) It is the duty of the principal or teacher of every public, private or parochial school to report promptly to the director of schools, or the director of schools' designated representative, the names of all children who have withdrawn from school, or who have been absent five (5) days (this means an aggregate of five (5) days during the school year and not necessarily five (5) consecutive days) without adequate excuse. Each successive accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences by a student shall also be reported.

(2) Such director of schools shall thereupon serve, or cause to be served, upon the parent, guardian or other person in Tennessee in parental relation to such children unlawfully absent from school, written notice that attendance of such children at school is required. A new notice shall be sent after each successive accumulation of five (5) unexcused absences.

(3) If it appears that, within three (3) days after receipt of the notice, any child, parent, guardian or other person in parental relation has failed to comply with the provisions of this part, the director of schools, in the name of the local school system, shall report the facts of such unlawful attendance to the sheriff, constable, city police officer, district attorney general, or the foreman of the grand jury, who shall proceed against the parent, guardian or other person in parental relation in accordance with the provisions of this part, unless the parent, guardian or person having charge and control of the child shall at once place the child in some day school as aforementioned.

(f) The director of schools of any local school system, after written notice to the parent or guardian of a child, shall report any child who is habitually and unlawfully absent from school to the appropriate judge having juvenile jurisdiction in that county, each case to be dealt with in such manner as the judge may determine to be in the best interest of the child, consistent with the provisions of §§ [37-1-132](#), [37-1-168](#) and [37-1-169](#) and in the event the child is adjudicated to be unruly, the judge may assess a fine of up to fifty dollars (\$50.00) or five (5) hours of community service, in the discretion of the judge, against the parents or legal guardians of children in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) if the child is absent more than five (5) days during any school year.

(g) Except as otherwise provided by § [49-6-3001](#) or § [49-6-3005](#), the provisions of this section shall be applicable to children less than six (6) years of age and their parent, guardian, or other person in a parental relation when such parent, guardian, or other person in a parental relation has enrolled the child in any school which receives funding based on average daily membership; provided, that a child may be withdrawn within six (6) weeks of initial enrollment without penalty.

(h) For the purposes of this part, for recording and coding student absences from school because of disciplinary actions, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) "Expulsion" is defined as removal from attendance for more than ten (10) consecutive days or more than fifteen (15) days in a month of school attendance. Multiple suspensions that occur consecutively shall constitute expulsion. The school district shall not be eligible to receive funding for an expelled student;

(2) "Remand" is defined as assignment to an alternative school. The student so assigned shall be included in ADA/ADM and will continue to be counted as present for funding purposes. The department of education shall establish a set of codes to be used for reporting reasons for students on remand to an alternative school; and

(3) "Suspension" is defined as dismissed from attendance at school for any reason not exceeding ten (10) consecutive days. Multiple suspensions shall not run consecutively nor shall multiple

suspensions be applied to avoid expulsion from school. The school district shall remain eligible to receive funding for a suspended student.

(i)

(1) An LEA may enter into an agreement with the local law enforcement agency serving the area of the LEA and the appropriate local government in that area to assist in the enforcement of compulsory attendance upon complying with the following conditions:

(A) Creation by the local school board of an advisory council to assist the board in formulating the agreement. The board shall include representatives of teachers, parents, administrators, and other community representatives;

(B) Receipt of input from neighborhood groups and other interested parties;

(C) At least one (1) public hearing on the proposed plan prior to its adoption by the board;

(D) Provisions for training teachers, principals, social workers, and other personnel involved in the schools in truancy issues;

(E) Provisions for assuring the training of involved law enforcement personnel in provisions of the truancy law, including categories of students to which the law does not apply, such as private school students or home school students; and

(F) Inclusion in the agreement of safeguards to protect students from discriminatory or selective enforcement and to protect the civil rights of students and parents.

If such an agreement is entered into, then it shall be the duty of the principal or teacher of every public school to report promptly to the director of schools, or the director of schools' designated representative, the names of all children who have been absent two (2) days (this means an aggregate of two (2) days during the school year and not necessarily two (2) consecutive days) without adequate excuse and shall continue to report each subsequent absence without adequate excuse.

(2) Such director of schools shall thereupon serve, or cause to be served, upon the parent, guardian or other person in Tennessee in parental relation to such children unlawfully absent from school, written notice that attendance of such children at school is required, and of the provisions of this subsection.

(3) Under the provisions of such an agreement, and for purposes of this section and § [37-1-102\(b\)\(23\)\(A\)\(i\)](#), a student who has been absent an aggregate three (3) days without adequate excuse may be deemed habitually truant.

(4) The director of schools or director of schools' representative may issue a list of such "truant" students to the local law enforcement agency for the purpose of allowing the law enforcement agency to take such student into temporary custody when such student is found away from the

school premises during school hours, in a public place, in any public or private conveyance, or in any public place of business open to the public, without adequate excuse, unless accompanied by a parent, foster parent or legal guardian. The agreement shall further specify that the law enforcement officer's sole function shall be to deliver the child to:

(A) The parent, foster parent, legal guardian, or other person having control or custody of the child;

(B) The principal of the school in which the child is enrolled;

(C) A truancy center established by the LEA; or

(D) The juvenile court, if there has been a local interagency agreement entered into by the juvenile court and the local law enforcement agency.

(5) The powers conferred under such agreements may be exercised without warrant and without subsequent legal proceedings.

(6) The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to students enrolled in home or non-public schools in accordance with the provisions of §§ [49-6-3050](#) or [49-50-801](#).

(7) Upon issuance of a standing order by the juvenile court, LEA officials shall be allowed to release student record information to local law enforcement agencies and to juvenile justice system officials to assist such officials in effectively serving the student whose record is released. Officials and authorities receiving such information shall not disclose the information to any other party without prior written consent of the parent.

[Acts 1947, ch. 87, §§ 11-13, 19; C. Supp. 1950, §§ 2442.11-2442.13, 2442.19; Acts 1974, ch. 654, §§ 94-97, 102; T.C.A. (orig. ed.), §§ 49-1716 - 49-1718, 49-1726; Acts 1994, ch. 756, § 1; 1994, ch. 910, §§ 1, 2; 1995, ch. 149, § 1; 1995, ch. 333, § 1; 1996, ch. 1035, §§ 1, 2; 1996, ch. 1079, § 144; 1997, ch. 392, §§ 4, 8; 2000, ch. 704, § 1; 2000, ch. 814, § 1; 2002, ch. 823, §§ 1, 2.]

Appendix 2

Tennessee Compulsory Law T.C.A. 49-6-3006

Elementary and Secondary Education - Attendance

(a) The sole responsibility and authority for the enforcement of the compulsory attendance laws, compiled in this part, are hereby placed in the local board of education and its designated employees and officers.

(b) To facilitate the enforcement of this part, each local board of education or appointed director of schools, where appropriate, may employ at least one (1) qualified full-time attendance teacher, whose duty it shall be to assist the board, under the direction of the director of schools, to enforce the compulsory attendance laws of the state, and to discharge such other duties as are usually performed by, or delegated to, attendance teachers.

(c) Any local school system which, because of its size, the paucity of its school population or other good cause, does not need the services of a full-time attendance teacher, may, with the approval of the commissioner, employ either a part-time attendance teacher, or join with a neighboring school system in the joint employment of an attendance teacher, as authorized by the commissioner of education; provided, that no such authorization shall be valid for a longer period than one (1) year, but it may be renewed as often as conditions justify.

(d) (1) Each local board of education shall fix the compensation of each attendance teacher employed, payable from the school funds of the school system, and shall prescribe the duties of such attendance teacher and make such rules and regulations for the performance thereof, not inconsistent with law or the rules and regulations of the state board of education, as will promote the purposes of this part.

(2) Two (2) or more school systems, served by one (1) attendance teacher, shall jointly fix the compensation of the attendance teacher, payable from the school funds of the school systems concerned. The local boards of education shall prescribe the duties of such attendance teacher, jointly employed, and make such rules and regulations for the performance thereof as are not in conflict with law or with the rules and regulations of the state board of education.

(e) Training, certification and employment qualifications of attendance teachers shall be in compliance with rules and regulations prescribed by the commissioner and approved by the state board.

(f) Attendance teachers appointed under the provisions of this part or other persons authorized to serve under this section shall have all the powers and duties now vested, or which hereafter may be vested, in attendance teachers by the compulsory attendance laws of this state.

(g) In the discharge of the duties of their office, attendance teachers or other persons authorized to serve under this section shall work under the direction and supervision of the director of schools and shall comply with the rules and regulations of the local board of education and of the commissioner, as approved by the state board of education.

(h) Attendance teachers employed under the provisions of this part shall have the same status with respect to tenure and teacher retirement as other public school personnel under the laws of Tennessee.

(i) Local school systems participating in the state equalizing funds may, with the approval of the

commissioner, include attendance teachers in the minimum program under the rules and regulations prescribed by the state board of education.

[Acts 1947, ch. 87, §§ 4-6, 9, 10; C. Supp. 1950, §§ 2442.4-2442.6, 2442.9, 2442.10; Acts 1959, ch. 289, § 1; 1974, ch. 654, §§ 91-93; T.C.A. (orig. ed.), §§ 49-1711 - 49-1715; Acts 1984 (1st E.S.), ch. 6, §§ 15, 16; 1992, ch. 535, § 52; 1992, ch. 657, § 6.]

Appendix 3

Hamilton County Department of Education ACT Results for Graduating Classes 2007

	ACT English Score		ACT Math Score		ACT Reading Score		ACT Science Score		ACT Composite Score	
	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count
Overall	19.6	1782	19.1	1782	20.0	1782	19.7	1782	19.7	1782
21 st Century Academy	19.2	25	18.2	25	20.1	25	18.0	25	19.0	25
Brainerd High School	14.5	122	15.7	122	15.4	122	16.1	122	15.6	122
Central High School	19.1	136	18.2	136	19.6	136	19.5	136	19.3	136
Chattanooga High School	21.1	54	18.4	54	21.3	54	19.6	54	20.2	54
CSAS	22.7	100	20.5	100	22.5	100	20.9	100	21.8	100
East Ridge High School	17.6	143	17.8	143	18.2	143	18.8	143	18.3	143
Hamilton County Middle College	25.6	42	22.3	42	25.6	42	23.5	42	24.3	42
Hixson High School	20.5	153	19.4	153	20.8	153	20.7	153	20.5	153
HSAT	13.7	62	16.2	62	15.0	62	15.2	62	15.1	62
Lookout Valley High School	19.3	39	19.4	39	19.0	39	19.1	39	19.3	39
Ooltewah High School	21.0	281	20.2	281	21.8	281	21.0	281	21.1	281
Red Bank High School	20.7	166	19.6	166	20.7	166	20.6	166	20.5	166
Sale Creek High School	19.6	24	18.6	24	20.1	24	19.8	24	19.7	24
Sequoyah High School	15.7	38	16.0	38	16.3	38	16.8	38	16.3	38
Soddy-Daisy High School	21.1	307	20.8	307	21.2	307	20.6	307	21.0	307
Tyner High School	17.0	90	17.2	90	17.5	90	17.5	90	17.5	90

Appendix 4

Hamilton County Department of Education

Percent of Students Meeting ACT College Readiness

Benchmarks for All Four Areas in 2007



