

*Germantown Municipal School District  
Strategic Plan  
May 2016-June 2021*

**VISION:**

Unconditional Excellence. Always.

**MISSION:**

To prepare, inspire, and empower students to become engaged learners and socially responsible citizens

**BELIEFS:**

*WE BELIEVE IN FOCUSING ON WHAT MATTERS MOST*

Our Germantown Municipal School District's focus is: to place students at the forefront of all our decisions; to respect our state department of education's plan and ambitions with [Tennessee Succeeds](#); and to focus on developing a local public school system that excels in all academic and non-academic areas.

*WE BELIEVE IN BUILDING ON OUR HISTORY*

The Germantown Municipal School District (GMSD) was formed on July 1, 2014. Prior to this time the Germantown Schools had been a part of Shelby County Schools. Our first year in operation, 2014-2015, emphasized operational necessities such as staffing, transportation, physical plant preparation, and the distribution of school and teacher materials. Our next five years are critical as we establish the foundation for our students, as they become engaged learners and socially responsible citizens.

Our challenges and successes are connected to our history. Thus, as we implement this strategic plan, and before we pursue our goals, it is important that we consider factors that could saddle our desire to be the best.

These factors include:

- Resting on past successes while devoting little consideration towards what other educational entities/markets are doing that proactively support students.
- Operating from a place of trepidation that restricts time, talent, and energy and prohibits the initiation of new ideas.
- Becoming too ambitious, and not being mindful on what has worked traditionally.
- Not dedicating appropriate resources to our primary focus: students and the costs associated with maximizing their ability levels.

Taking into account these considerations, it would be sensible to follow past state and local precedents that have instrumentally defined our current exemplary status.

Assessing state and district benchmarks will allow us to **MEASURE** what changes will

need to be incorporated as we outline our improvement opportunities. **MEASURE** is defined as follows:

**Mission:** *connect the strategic plan to the mission of the schools and to the goals of the annual school improvement plans*

**Elements:** *identify the critical metrics that are important to the internal and external stakeholders*

**Analyze:** *discuss carefully which metrics need to be aggregated or disaggregated and why*

**Stakeholders - Unite:** *determine which stakeholders need to be involved in addressing these improvement opportunities and then unite to develop powerful practices that promote change*

**Reanalyze:** *examine our results in order to refine deficient strategies and allow for us to refocus our efforts*

**Educate:** *Stakeholder introduction and explanations of our growth opportunities associated with our efforts as they align to our goals (American School Counselor Association National Model)*

#### **WE BELIEVE IN ACCOUNTABILITY AND DATA RESPONSIBILITY**

Accountability and data analysis on the GMSD system are absolutes in our quest for excellence always. Data will be collected with the intentional purpose of ensuring quality programs and resource allocations in meeting the mission. Work plans will have specific and measurable goals that will be affirmed by program partners in the various departments and schools.

We will also stay vigilant in our response to this question, "How have our students excelled by being enrolled in our schools?" Specific data sources that will assist us in our answer include:

- **Process data** that offers evidence only that an event or activity occurred. For example, course offerings and student enrollment numbers may present the interest students have in meeting the challenges of a rigorous curriculum.
- **Perception data** is gathered from needs assessments or surveys and report opinions at the time of data collection.
- **Results data** answers the question "so what?" and provides evidence that a student competency is not just mastered but has affected course-taking patterns, graduation rates, knowledge attainment, attendance, behavior, and/or academic achievement (American School Counseling Association Model)
- **School improvement data** presents the picture of the current status of student needs, accomplishments and progress.

Although accountability has always been a part of our professional responsibility, as our state department of education has established data expectations with various annual measurable objectives (AMO's), we strive for higher aspirations. These higher aspirations are: to be the best in growing students beyond their predicted scores;

providing students access points to develop their innate intelligences; and ensuring that students have opportunities to showcase their preferential talents. In order to do this, we will need the autonomy to identify issues, assess our possibilities, and allocate necessary funds that promote positive change for our students.

Stakeholders at all levels have a compelling interest in *Tennessee Succeeds* and the *Germantown Municipal School District* excelling as we continue to seek evidence that promote student achievement and provide adequate educational opportunities for all of our children. Thus, how we use data becomes an imperative necessity.

### **Using Data**

State Department of Education school based annual report cards publicize data in areas as attendance rates, student demographics, graduation rates, postsecondary planning rates, and standardized test results. When data is disaggregated into categories such as ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, or teacher assignment it provides information for student and staff performance analysis. Analysis will make it possible to scrutinize which groups of students are excelling and which are falling short. This information will then be shared with specific program leaders to evaluate whether or not equitable access to academically rigorous course-work or interventions was available to all students.

A viable school system uses data to affect systemic change while looking at the equity issues in educational placement practices. Every student is entitled to an excellent education and the opportunity to benefit from various offerings such as career and technical programs, music, art, languages, technology and/or advanced placement courses. Data analysis will confirm that every student has a program of study and career plan that aligns with his or her interests and ambitions.

### ***WE BELIEVE IN VALUING FEEDBACK***

As we map our plan, we realize the importance of implementation discipline in meeting our established goals. Our intent is to institute a pragmatic and results-driven approach that inserts student personalization strategies, best instructional practices, and supportive emerging educational trends. We will establish ways to be efficient, secure community trust, and develop students who are accomplished as they develop career and college readiness skills.

In opening this school district, we have gained an appreciation from the feedback provided by numerous compassionate and committed student-centered people. Invaluable opinions have been shared from staff, parents, board members, students, and community members. This valued input reinforces the privilege of living in a caring community that cherishes an emerging excellent school system. Committee work in the future will be the expected norm as this school district continues to form. We realize that our current knowledge assumptions are open to review and may lead us to re-focus our work based on variables that are susceptible to change (i.e. revenue allowances,

student enrollment numbers, policy changes, state legislative acts and/or Federal Legislative actions).<sup>1</sup>

*WE BELIEVE IN MOVING TOWARDS LEARNING AS THE CONSTANT*

The Germantown Municipal School District has an obligation to establish high learning expectations for **all** students. We strive to personally address our students with efforts from our teachers, administrators, coaches, support staff and community as we transition from a historical notion of time being the constant (an industrial model approach) and move towards *learning being constant*.<sup>2</sup> To make this change, we will effectively use assessments and implement differentiated instructional practices to meet students' particular learning styles and intelligences. Furthermore, a collaborative teacher learner-centric expectation will be embedded in our school cultures to affirm our quest to provide effective interventions, enrichments and mastery of standards.<sup>3</sup>

**Germantown Municipal School District School Board's Goals:**

The Germantown School Board has expressed the following goals:

- ***Maximize student potential- Goal #1***
- ***Recruit, develop and retain an exemplary staff- Goal #2***
- ***Mobilize community engagement for the system's benefit- Goal #3***
- ***Establish 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms and schools- Goal #4***
- ***Work effectively and efficiently as a school board- Goal #5***

**Goal 1: MAXIMIZE STUDENT POTENTIAL**

Every Germantown Municipal School District student should have the opportunity to pursue and attain excellence through a successful personalized educational experience.

Our focus in maximizing student potential is to:

- *Objective 1.1:* Ensure academic programming that differentiates to meet the various student-learning styles.
- *Objective 1.2:* Provide fine arts & athletic extra-curricular opportunities that promote participation, cooperation and competition.
- *Objective 1.3:* Provide opportunities for all students to experience service learning.

Indicators and critical metrics to support this goal are as follows:

**GOAL # 1 MAXIMIZE STUDENT POTENTIAL**

Indicator	2015-2016	2016-2017
<b>ACT Subject Area Test Results:</b> % of students who meet the ACT College Readiness benchmark scores in subject areas to have a high probability of success in credit bearing college courses: English Composition, Social Sciences, College Algebra, and Biology. <i>(Objective 1.1)</i>	44% of the 2015 graduating class scored college and career ready in all areas (English, Math, Reading, Science)  74.4% scored 21 or higher (Using the ACT profile Report)	2016 2 <sup>nd</sup> year baseline data 2017 Graduating class 46% students will meet or exceed all 4 benchmarks for College Readiness 2018 Graduating class 48% 2019 Graduating class 49% 2020 Graduating class 50%  Increase students scoring ACT average of 21 by 2% per year
<b>TNReady- Achievement:</b> % of 3-8th students who scored at a proficient or advanced level in reading and math. <i>(Objective 1.1)</i>	Baseline	Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) Annual Measurable Objectives
<b>Literacy Rate-</b> % of K-2 students who are reading on or above grade level <i>(Objective 1.1)</i>	Baseline	Increase students who are reading on or above grade level by 2% each year.
<b>Graduates-</b> % of students who graduate within four (4) years. <i>(Objective 1.1)</i>	89.5%	Statistically significant % increase established by TDOE to reach 95%
<b>Community Service:</b> % of students involved in community service <i>(Objective 1.3)</i>	Baseline	Elementary and Middle Schools will offer at least 1 per semester school-wide community service program  60% of high school students will participate in community service projects
<b>Extra-curricular Activities:</b> % of students who have been recognized for sports/fine arts national/state/regional/district level competitions <i>(Objective 1.2)</i>	Baseline	50% of students will be recognized for outstanding achievement
<b>Mentor for every Student:</b> % of students who have a positive connection to an adult in their school building	Baseline from AdvancED survey	2% increase of students who have a positive adult connection in their school building.

## **Goal 2: RECRUIT, DEVELOP AND RETAIN AN EXEMPLARY STAFF**

Every student should have access to a highly qualified and engaged staff. These staff members will be held to high performance standards. Best practice staff professional development opportunities will also be offered.

Our focus in recruiting, developing and retaining an exemplary staff is to:

- *Objective 2.1:* To recruit the highest qualified pool of staff for District Positions.
- *Objective 2.2:* To develop all staff through our performance evaluations and professional development opportunities
- *Objective 2.3:* To retain the most highly and engaged staff

Our efforts in **recruiting and developing** a quality staff include the following:

- Train our teachers on how the implementation of our [Team Teacher Evaluation Model](#) and the ELEOT Model (Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool) as recommended by [AdvancED](#), our accreditation agency, impacts student achievement.
- Leverage teacher leaders to share pedagogical strategies in timely professional differentiated development sessions.
- Collaborative work with *Education Plan Providers* (Teacher Placement Institutions) so that we can host practicum and student teachers.
- Recruit recent graduates who aim to work in the education field.
- Establish a “Developmental Non-Tenured Program” that provides a pathway towards success.
- Launch an exemplary staff pay performance plan pending budgetary constraints.

We aspire to **retain** excellent employees by preserving positive job-satisfaction fundamentals that will nullify de-motivational influences.<sup>4</sup>

Job satisfaction variables to be reviewed include:

- Promoting a culture that supports work-life balance
- Providing opportunities for learning for ALL staff members
- Supporting autonomous decision making that promotes creativity and risk taking for the benefit of students
- Promoting the evaluation process with proactive supervisor training that supports the employee and recognizes exemplary staff
- Building community
- Ensuring employee satisfaction with earnings, benefits, and job security

Indicators and critical metrics to support this goal are as follows:

**GOAL # 2 RECRUIT, DEVELOP, AND RETAIN AN EXEMPLARY STAFF**

Indicator	2015-2016	2016-2017
<b>Recruitment</b> % of applicants who complete the on-line application from Universities and Colleges where we recruit. (Objective 2.1)	Baseline	1:5 Ratio based on recruitment contact lists complete an on-line application as evidence that we are attracting applicants to explore our system.
<b>Development:</b> There is a sufficient number of highly effective teachers in the District (Objective 2.2)	Baseline	75% or > of our teachers are at level 4 or 5 of overall effectiveness (State of TN 4/5 is 62%)
<b>Development/Retention:</b> Teachers perceive that they are being recognized fairly through an evaluation system and professional development program that is unique to their needs and is evident by individual improvement of overall effectiveness scores. (Objective 2.2/ 2.3)	Survey Results: 56% of teachers perceive post conferences in the evaluative process to be judgmental; 5% feel post conferences focus on improvement practices. State level is 17%. Team evaluation model's premise is based on improvement practices deemed as supportive and not judgmental.	Embed best practices training and development sessions with our administrators and teachers so that post-conferences are based on improvement. Increase teacher perception survey results so that at least 50% of teachers feel they are supported for growth and improvement over the course of this strategic plan.
<b>Development/Planning Time</b> Teachers need adequate planning time to develop essential learning targets, standard and content of lesson alignment, and assessments that support the content individually and collectively as collaboration teams.	Survey Results: 39% of our instructional staff stated that they do not have enough adequate planning time.	Embed district wide-initiatives to provide more collaboration/planning time to decrease this percentage significantly: 5-7% per year over the course of of this strategic plan.
<b>Retention:</b> Survey assessment needs to continue to review responses on the stresses of working at "these schools are not worth it."	State response: 20% agree with this statement; GMSD response is 9%.	Continue to outperform the state response and develop work-life balance measures of value.
<b>All: Recruitment, Development, and Retention:</b> Differentiated Employee Performance Plan that rewards exemplary attendance and performance and has an average teacher base pay in the top 10% state-wide (Objective 2.1 & 2.3)	Currently 7 <sup>th</sup> in the state	Embed a plan that moves us towards the top 3 in the State by over the course of this strategic plan.

**Goal 3: MOBILIZE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR SYSTEMS BENEFIT**

Germantown Municipal School District respects the positive impact the community voice articulates in supporting quality schools. This voice is an important facet of allowing us to assess our overall performance level.

As we interact with the community we aspire to:

- *Objective 3.1:* Use a multi-faceted communication approach when making decisions of significant importance that impact students and families.
- *Objective 3.2:* Provide informative educational sessions and communications that assist families with issues such as the registration processes, the curriculum, the developing child, and other critical concerns related to transitioning from one school to another.
- *Objective 3.3:* Promote Capital Improvement meetings to address fiscal planning issues.
- *Objective 3.4:* Encourage community members to assist with student volunteerism, guest speaker presentations, cultural awareness events and/or field trips.
- *Objective 3.5:* Establish community partnerships with local civic and business leaders, church officials, social service agencies with the express goal of creating programs that respect diversity, career exploration, and student well-being.<sup>6</sup>
- *Objective 3.6:* Show appreciation to school donors and volunteers who share time, talents and treasure with our schools. Since parental support and student achievement have a strong correlation, we need to continue to advocate volunteerism in our schools.<sup>7</sup>

Indicators and critical metrics to support this goal are as follows:

**GOAL # 3: MOBILIZE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR SYSTEMS BENEFIT**

Indicator	2015-2016	2016-2017
<b>Communication/Family Engagement:</b> % of parents and students who feel that their children are having a positive educational experience <i>(Objectives 3.1 &amp; 3.2)</i>	No data to report	AdvancED Survey Results
<b>Programs:</b> Number of programs by the District or at the School Level that engaged multiple stakeholders in the GMSD community <i>(Objective 3.3 &amp; 3.4)</i>	Baseline	Quarterly reviews
<b>Partnerships:</b> Establish and nurture partnerships with volunteers and local organizations including churches, businesses, and social service agencies <i>(Objective 3.5 &amp; 3.6)</i>	Baseline	Quarterly reviews

## **Goal 4: ESTABLISH 21st CENTURY CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS**

### **Foundational Priority**

The Germantown Municipal School District strives to develop students, who are responsible in their use of technology, can use technology advantageously as a communication and presentation device, and can stay current with creative opportunities. In accordance with this, we wish to transition to blended classrooms and the use of 1:1 devices for heightened engagement. Teachers who are comfortable with this tool in a manner that supports instructional best practices will lead this transition. This approach will change our classroom ambiance to meet the current day realities and future opportunities society presents.

We need to concurrently ensure that our schools and the school district are 21<sup>st</sup> century ready so that the safety and health of *All* students is evident on our campuses (i.e. athletic facilities, classrooms, community areas, and parking lots). Comfortable well-maintained schools have healthy teacher-student classroom ratios; updated security systems; and, emergency plans that all work together to provide a stable learning community.

### **Blended Learning Communities**

Blended learning classroom communities and the use of 1:1 learning devices will begin to be implemented to help create learning environments conducive to teacher style and student preferences. As we progress, we will provide supportive teacher technology-training sessions that place an emphasis on how technology assists student engagement. Unobstructed professional development training is a non-negotiable for our teachers. This training will need to be applied so that teachers can become familiar with computer devices, educational software, digital citizenship, and lesson planning. Teacher autonomy, however, is also important. Creativity in meeting students' needs should triumph over the required use of technology to promote student achievement.<sup>8</sup>

Revenue streams, building infrastructure changes, and expenditures are integral parts in meeting this new reality. Establishing program based budgeting practices that are adequate and equitable for all stakeholders is a necessity as we repurpose the school and classroom infrastructure.

In conclusion, these are the objectives that align to our goal:

- *Objective 4.1:* Provide students the opportunity to appropriately engage with technology to support their learning styles.
- *Objective 4.2:* Provide teachers opportunities to learn how to effectively use computers as a tool to enrich the student learning process.
- *Objective 4.3:* Maintain and develop our facility infrastructures to guarantee a safe and well-maintained learning environment.

These viewing samples describe our aspirations:

- Supporting a classroom culture of [21st century](#) teaching strategies in grades K-12 beginning with and modeled by the 2015 pilot group.

- Creating a **Blended-Learning environment (1:1)** in grades 6-12 in **four years**.

Indicators and critical metrics to support this goal are as follows:

**Goal #4: ESTABLISH 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CLASSROOM AND SCHOOLS**

Indicator	2015-2016	2016-2017
<b>Engagement- Devices</b> (Objective: 4.1)	Baseline	Device Ratio for instructional and assessment purposes: 1) 1-1 devices (6 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> ) 2) K-5 Classroom devices-ratio of students to effective devices (0-4 years old)
<b>Engagement- Instructional Programs</b> (Objective: 4.1)	Baseline	Minimum of two (2) digital programs to supplement curriculum  Pilot eBooks for Science and Social Studies
<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Staff Development</b> (Objective 4.2)	Baseline	Provide five (5) professional development sessions per semester per school
<b>Infrastructure:</b> Increase network security through an access management system while increasing network capacity (Objective 4.3)	Baseline	1) Less than 10% personal devices discovered 2) 802.1x authentication based on Active Directory 3) Increase district bandwidth to 1 Gbps, install virtualization monitoring software

**Goal 5: WORK EFFECTIVELY AS A SCHOOL BOARD**

Governance and leadership begins with our school board as they approve policy, review and approve the budget, collect feedback from their constituencies and have discussions in work and business sessions.

The school board's emerging best practices should be centered on doing what is best for students in this community. As a collective body, they realize how important they are as decision-makers in assisting in the structuring of Germantown Municipal Schools, assessing operations and associated costs, and in determining how to engage in cooperative dialogue when critical defining issues need to be addressed.

Effective school boards realize the fluidity of their corporate body. At times they respond to stakeholders and what they are *experiencing* as people. At times they are *examining* and understanding the parts of what the school system needs and objectively thinking of the final product. At times they are *aligning* the steps or the processes that need to be followed moving from reflection to action as they manifest the vision into reality. Lastly, at times they are *defending* and *advocating for* the actions and the visible presentation of continuous improvement while enhancing their own competence.<sup>9</sup>

Most importantly, effective school boards understand the value of this service opportunity and their roles in supporting the school district in an ethical and productive manner. We believe that by collaborating together and having an effective school board, a compelled staff, and an involved community that our students will excel in their pursuits of becoming a life-long learner.

In summary, these are the objectives that align to our goal:

- *Objective 5.1:* Establish a vision, identify mission and goals and develop a strategic plan for accomplishing the mission.
- *Objective: 5.2:* To implement the vision by setting district policies.
- *Objective 5.3:* To build public support to implement the vision and plan for promotion of the school system.
- *Objective 5.4:* Participate in board development, including the TSBA Boardmanship Program and establish the board as a Board of Distinction.
- *Objective 5.5:* Be fiscally responsible and good stewards of resources.
- *Objective 5.6:* Manage and control all public schools established or that may be established under its jurisdiction in accordance to TCA 49-2-203(2).

Indicators and critical metrics to support this goal are as follows:

**GOAL # 5: WORK EFFECTIVELY AS A SCHOOL BOARD**

Indicator	2015-2016	2016-2017
<b>Approve Strategic Plan and review quarterly</b> (Objective 5.1, 5.2, 5.5, 5.6))	Approve Plan	Review quarterly
<b>Develop/maintain a promotional plan to build public support by participating in community events/organizations</b> (Objective 5.3)	Approve Plan	Attend two events on a quarterly basis
<b>Board Members achieve Level 1/Level II in the TSBA Boardmanship Program</b> (Objective 5.4)	Level I	Level II at 100%
<b>Achieve Board of Distinction</b> (Objective 5.4)	Complete 10/15 of the checklist	Complete 15/15 of the checklist

**Continuing the journey**

Upon approval of this plan, we will move immediately into productive phases of implementation. A quality profile, a scorecard, will begin to be formulated. We will also begin standardized practices in developing work plans that support our identified deficiency areas thus far in our infancy. These work plans will include a complete district wide effort that will include essential communication, implementation, and evaluation processes. This phase, initial work plan development, should be completed no later than September 2016. Thus, the next few months will involve:

- Establishing an implementation work group and plan
- Building awareness and commitment at all levels
- Developing a quality scorecard that aligns with schools and the District Office
- Ensuring that finances, management, and operational processes are congruent to the plan
- Listening and responding to stakeholder feedback about initial implementation challenges that need to be hurdled for the plan to gain momentum.

## References

1. Yamamoto, Y., & Holloway, S. D. (2010). Parental expectations and children's academic performance in sociocultural context. *Educational Psychology Review*, 22(3), 189-214.
2. Vollmer, Jamie. Schools Cannot Do It Alone, Enlightenment Press, (2010).
3. Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). *Differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*; Association for School and Curriculum Development.
4. Christensen, Clayton M. How will you measure your life, Harper-Collins, (2012).
5. Galinsky, Ellen. "Relationship Management: The New Flexibility." HR Magazine, December/January 2016.
6. Vollmer, Jamie, *ibid*.
7. Epstein, J. L. and K. Salinas. 1992. School and Family Partnerships Encyclopedia of Education Research, 6th edition, New York: Macmillan.
8. Fullan, Michael, The Principal-Three Keys to Maximizing Impact, John Wiley & Sons (2014).
9. McCarthy, Bernice, About Learning, About Learning, Inc (1996).