

# Great Things are Happening at Bess T. Shepherd Elementary School

## Working Hard Together: HCDE, PEF and Bess T. Shepherd

Hamilton County schools and the Public Education Foundation are strong partners in providing training for teachers, helping principals become more effective school leaders, improving literacy in elementary schools, and improving secondary education in Hamilton County. Bess T. has made great use of this partnership:

- Bess T. principal **Valerie Brown** collaborates with other Hamilton County principals in regular meetings and annual leadership institutes.
- **Ms. Brown** and assistant principal **Jennifer Spates** have gained leadership skills through the Leadership Fellows program.
- Bess T.'s successful reading instruction program is reinforced by new teaching methods that were proven highly effective in Hamilton County's elementary reform initiative.
- As part of a PEF-funded Networked Learning Community, Bess T. Shepherd leaders communicate regularly with leaders from Tyner Academy, Tyner Middle Academy and Lakeside Academy to develop a plan for improving student success from kindergarten through high school.
- With funding from PEF, Bess T. educators have formed a book club to hone effective teaching practices.
- **Ms. Spates** has also participated in the Osborne Fellows program to earn a Master's degree in urban education.

## Good News! Tests will be harder!

Why is that good news? Because the state is raising its academic standards as part of the Tennessee Diploma Project (<http://tn.gov/TDP/>), beginning with tests taken in spring of 2010. Test scores are likely to dip at first, but they will rise quickly to meet the new standards, and Tennessee's students – your children – will be better prepared to compete for good jobs in our global economy.

“This school is the best because they help you learn new things and help you with things you're not so good at.”

- Jolonne Mack, Grade 4

## 2009 Report Card

### Highlights:

- 25.8% scored **advanced** in math – up from 18% in 2003.
- 24.8% scored **advanced** in reading – up from 20% in 2003.

Achievement (NCLB)				
	Proficient & Advanced		Advanced	
	School	District	School	District
Math	78%	89%	25.8%	44.8%
Lang Arts	82%	90%	24.8%	39.3%

Value-Added*	School
Math	B
Reading/Lang	B
Social Studies	A
Science	B

\*\*"Value-added" scores measure student progress within a grade or subject. A value-added score of A indicates exceptional growth, meaning that students in this school made significantly more progress in this subject than students in the average school in the state. Reported scores are 3-year averages.

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## HCDE and PEF: Partners for Strong Schools

The Public Education Foundation (PEF) is a local non-profit organization that partners with the Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) to improve student achievement by improving public schools.

PEF contributes:

- Research into best practices
- Training for teachers and school leaders
- Opportunities for educators to share great ideas
- Fundraising to support this work

Together, HCDE and PEF are changing education in Hamilton County, and changing students' lives. Learn more at [www.HCDE.org](http://www.HCDE.org) or [www.pefchattanooga.org](http://www.pefchattanooga.org).

### *Elementary Reform*

*The Benwood Initiative is a nationally renowned, highly successful school improvement initiative that began in 2001 in Hamilton County's eight most challenged elementary schools. Lessons learned are being shared with other elementary schools, including Bess T. Shepherd, through a principals' network and other types of professional development.*

There are excellent teachers in every school in Hamilton County. Read about 20 of them, visit their classrooms, and tell your own story at [www.pefchattanooga.org/ExcellentTeachers](http://www.pefchattanooga.org/ExcellentTeachers).

## Exciting New Initiatives!

**Teacher Residency** - Like a medical residency program that provides "on-the-job training" for doctors, teacher residents will spend a year working with a master teacher in the classroom while also taking classes to earn a master's degree and a teaching certificate. Recruits will specialize in math, science, or other hard-to-fill subject areas.

**Principal Leadership Academy** – It's not easy being a principal! This year, HCDE and PEF will provide a series of workshops for 15-20 assistant principals to help prepare them to move smoothly into the responsibility of being a principal. HCDE, PEF, the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce and UT Chattanooga are currently developing a full-scale Academy that will provide more intensive training, mentoring and support for assistant principals who are likely to become principals.

## College Begins in Kindergarten

PEF has recently merged with the local College Access Center – a long-standing partner in our college access work. With help from the Hamilton County Department of Education and the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, we have placed part-time college advisors in every high school in Hamilton County, and are working to encourage students to start thinking as early as middle school about post-high school college or technical training.

Partly as a result of this work, the number of graduates who enrolled in college from Tyner Academy, where many Shepherd students are zoned, increased from 67.4% in 2004 to 80% in 2008. For more on Tyner, go to [www.pefchattanooga.org/TynerAcademy](http://www.pefchattanooga.org/TynerAcademy).

Get info on helping your child go to college at [www.pefchattanooga.org/CollegeAccess](http://www.pefchattanooga.org/CollegeAccess)