

# Great Things are Happening at Thrasher Elementary School

## Partners for Great Education: HCDE, PEF and Thrasher

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

- Thrasher principal **Aimee Randolph** collaborates with other Hamilton County principals in regular meetings and semi-annual leadership institutes.
- Teacher leaders **Connie McDade** and **Jeff Paulson** and teachers **Heidi Mies**, **Raquel Newton**, **Kelly Willingham** and **Melanie Bautista** have gained leadership skills through the Leadership Fellows program.
- Thrasher's successful reading instruction program is reinforced by new teaching methods that were proven highly effective in Hamilton County's elementary reform initiative.
- With funding from PEF, Thrasher educators have formed a book club to hone effective teaching practices. They will be reading and discussing *Results Now*.

“The teachers have excellent teaching skills that will turn the light bulb on in your child's head.”

- Ian Dolan, Grade 5

## 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.

## 2009 Report Card

Highlights:

- Every student passed the state math exam, with 83.8% scoring **advanced**.
- 99% passed the language arts exam, with 76% scoring **advanced**.

Achievement (NCLB)				
	Proficient & Advanced		Advanced	
	School	District	School	District
Math	100%	88.9%	83.8%	44.8%
Lang Arts	99%	89.8%	76%	39.3%

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

\*\*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 Thrasher, 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 (including Thrasher's **Jeff Paulson!**) 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, 70% of 2008 graduates from Hamilton County schools enrolled in college the following fall.

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