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## PRESS RELEASE

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## Unum Makes Major Contribution to Principal Leadership Academy

*Academy will help prepare assistant principals for top leadership role*

**CHATTANOOGA, Tenn.** – Recognizing the connection between strong public schools and the economic vitality of our community, Unum is providing \$100,000 to help the Hamilton County Department of Education establish a Principal Leadership Academy that will better prepare future principals to lead their schools.

“A school principal is much like the CEO of a business,” said Unum’s Bob Best, chief operating officer for the Chattanooga-based employee benefits provider. “He or she must have a clear vision for success and the skills and preparation to make that vision a reality. If we want strong schools, we must have strong school leaders.”

In addition to the Hamilton County Department of Education, partners in the Principal Leadership Academy include the Public Education Foundation, the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce, and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, all of whom have been working collaboratively to build the Academy for more than a year.

The Principal Leadership Academy will involve 12 to 16 assistant principals who have expressed interest in becoming principals. The Academy will launch in July 2010 and features two full weeks of intensive training along with monthly one-day seminars covering a variety of leadership topics. Topics include instructional leadership, culture and climate, building management, finances, human resources, strategic leadership, community relations and micro-political leadership.

“Since I came to Hamilton County, one of my primary goals has been to establish this principal preparation Academy,” says Hamilton County Schools Superintendent Dr. Jim Scales. “Being a

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principal is an incredibly demanding job, and we need to give new principals every tool available to be successful in that role. I am very pleased that we have created a community partnership to build the Academy, and very grateful to Unum and our other investors for helping with the funds needed to get this Academy off to a good start.”

Each Academy participant will be assigned two mentors over the course of the program: a veteran HCDE principal and an executive partner from the business community. Academy participants will have opportunities to shadow mentors and receive input and advice regarding leadership issues. Participants will also visit at least one high-performing school outside of Hamilton County.

Currently, HCDE and PEF are providing 26 assistant principals with a series of workshops, supported financially by the Benwood Foundation, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee and Electrical Motor Sales & Supply, Inc. These workshops feature introductions to some of the same concepts that will be developed more fully in the Academy.

“Research shows that no school has ever reached greatness without a strong principal at its helm,” says PEF President Dan Challener. “Helping develop strong school leaders is vital to PEF’s mission of improving student achievement, and we are pleased to work with our partners to administer the Principal Leadership Academy. The director of the Academy will work with our staff and partners to coordinate all of the elements of the Academy, and to help upcoming principals learn to use data in a targeted way, recognize effective teaching, and build the collaboration needed to create academic success for students.”

The Principal Leadership Academy also includes a significant business component.

“By combining a strong focus on business skills with administrative topics, we are pioneering a whole new way to prepare Hamilton County’s Future principals,” said Tom Edd Wilson, president and CEO of the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce. “The Chamber will continue to engage the business community in Principal Leadership Academy by recruiting business leaders to serve as mentors, helping to shape the curriculum, and participating in fundraising efforts.”

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) is also a core partner in the establishment of the Principal Leadership Academy through the engagement of both Dr. Mary Tanner, Dean of the School of Education and Dr. Richard Casavant, Dean of the College of Business. Professors from both departments will help design and deliver a curriculum focused on critical leadership and management skills as well as instructional leadership, the use of instructional data, and establishing a positive school culture. “This is a great example of how the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is an engaged metropolitan university,” said Dr. Roger Brown, chancellor of UTC. “Through the Principal Leadership Academy we will be helping to shape not only the future leaders of our public schools but also by extension the students they serve.”

### **About the Hamilton County Department of Education**

The Hamilton County Department of Education is a diverse school system, providing roughly 42,000 students with a world-class education. The system is nationally renowned for urban school success as well as middle school and high school reform. The district offers a variety of educational programs for all students including magnet schools, career academies and gender-based classes as well as a focus on individual student success and the goal of preparing all students to compete in the Global Economy.

### **About the Public Education Foundation**

The Public Education Foundation is a local non-profit that works closely with Hamilton County schools and other partners to improve student achievement. PEF has been a major partner in designing and implementing the elementary Benwood Initiative, Middle Schools for a New Society, High Schools for a New Society, the Leadership Initiative for school administrators and teacher leaders, and a recently announced Teacher Residency initiative designed to recruit and train highly qualified math and science teachers.

### **About the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce**

The Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce is the organization where local business focuses on job creation and education. For more than 125 years, we have brought Chattanooga area businesses together to support economic growth. We are more than 1,600 members, ranging from single employee operations to companies with more than 3,000 employees.

### **About the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga**

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is a national model for metropolitan universities. In collaboration with our many regional partners, we offer our students an experiential learning environment graced with outstanding teaching scholars in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs.

### **About Unum**

Unum is one of the leading providers of employee benefits products and services in the United States and the United Kingdom. Through its subsidiaries, Unum Group provided \$5.9 billion in total benefits to customers in 2009.

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