

**FORWARD
TOGETHER**

2021

**REPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY**

**CHATTA
NOOGA**

2.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LOOKING BACK

In the 5 years since the launch of Chattanooga 2.0, the residents of Chattanooga-Hamilton County have much to be proud of in the way of big wins from cradle to career.

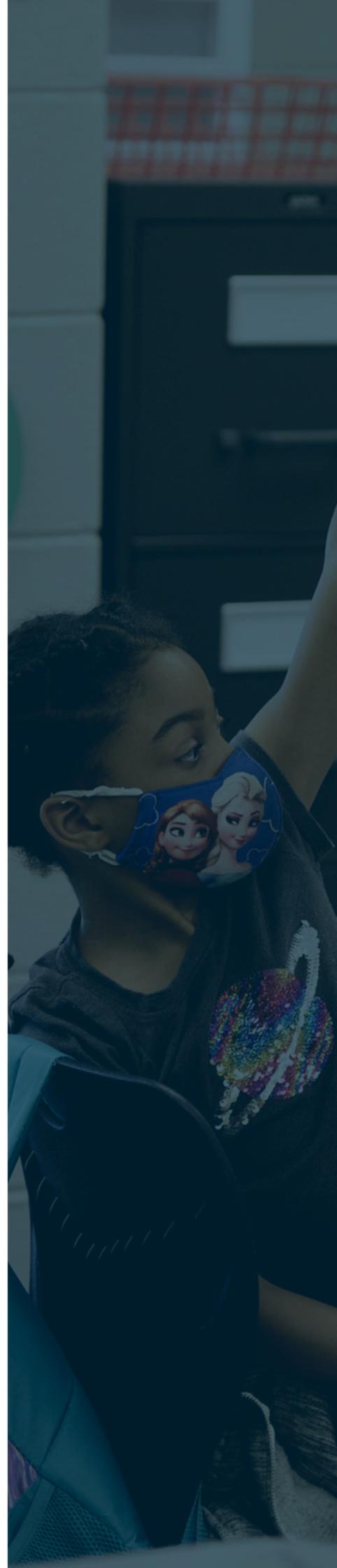
Hundreds of high-quality early learning seats have been added, schools across the district are showing significant growth, and graduation rates for both high school and postsecondary are up. Each area of the cradle-to-career continuum, however, from early childhood through postsecondary completion, shows ample opportunities for improvement. The community faces an economic imperative to seize them.

In 2020, the collaborative spirit among Chattanooga 2.0 partners served as the foundation for the county's response to the impacts of COVID-19 on children and students. As a result, the community witnessed what can be achieved when working together with urgency toward a common goal.

LOOKING FORWARD

Chattanooga 2.0 staff and partners are renewing their commitment to educational equity and, specifically, to ending the long history of racial inequity for children and students in local education systems. In order for the community to achieve overarching cradle-to-career goals, a focus on adequately resourcing and supporting those children and youth who are most behind will be required. Contained in this report is a new equity statement and a racial equity scorecard showing persistent racial achievement gaps that need the community's attention.

The goals and strategies outlined for the next decade of collaborative work center around supporting the whole-child needs of children and youth by engaging everyone in the community and working to align and coordinate the systems that seek to serve them. The updated vision for the work looks beyond educational success to the attainment of a Thriving Wage job, so that all young adults can participate in an inclusive and thriving economy.



CHATTANOOGA

ADVANCING EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY IN HAMILTON COUNTY

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WHAT IS CHATTANOOGA 2.0?

Chattanooga 2.0 is the cradle-to-career collaborative of Chattanooga-Hamilton County, Tennessee. Formed in 2015 with a goal to transform education and workforce development outcomes, Chattanooga 2.0 is a cross-sector partnership led by stakeholders representing community, business, nonprofit, public, and educational institutions.

In the spirit of collaboration unique to Chattanooga-Hamilton County and with a focus on systems change, Chattanooga 2.0 brings partners together to solve tough challenges, doing together what no one entity can do alone: ensuring the success of every child from birth to career.

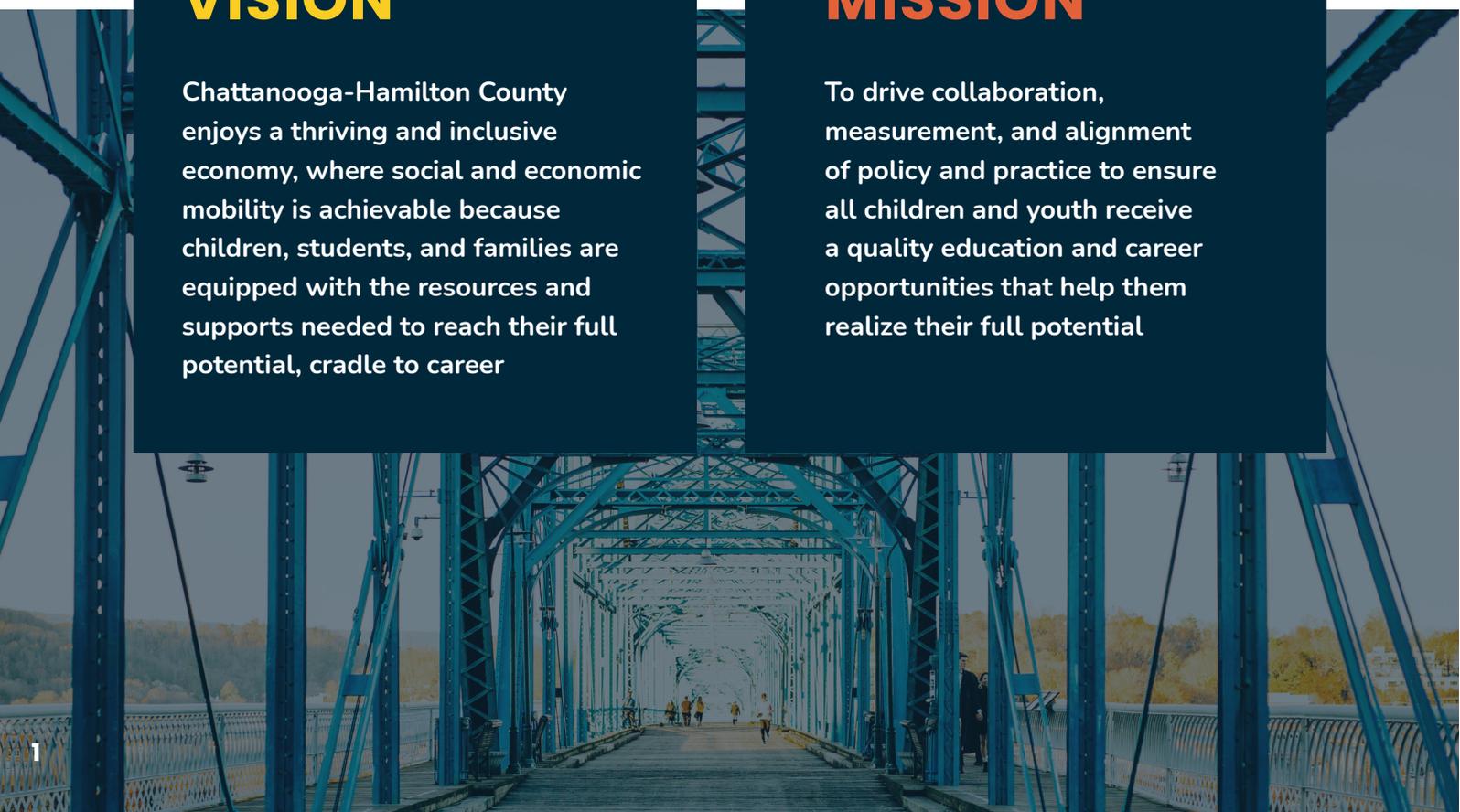
YOU are Chattanooga 2.0. We are **ALL** Chattanooga 2.0. Together, we're working to ensure that every resident in our community can thrive.

VISION

Chattanooga-Hamilton County enjoys a thriving and inclusive economy, where social and economic mobility is achievable because children, students, and families are equipped with the resources and supports needed to reach their full potential, cradle to career

MISSION

To drive collaboration, measurement, and alignment of policy and practice to ensure all children and youth receive a quality education and career opportunities that help them realize their full potential



BACKBONE ORGANIZATION



The Chattanooga 2.0 backbone staff supports our partners by aligning resources and strategic focus along the cradle-to-career pipeline to improve outcomes for over 96,000 learners including early childhood, K-12, and higher education students. We measure results along each step of the continuum, from early childhood to higher education and into the workforce. Our team works to create the conditions that stimulate transformation and progress by Aligning Priorities, Driving Change, Fostering Shared Accountability, and Convening and Championing Partners.

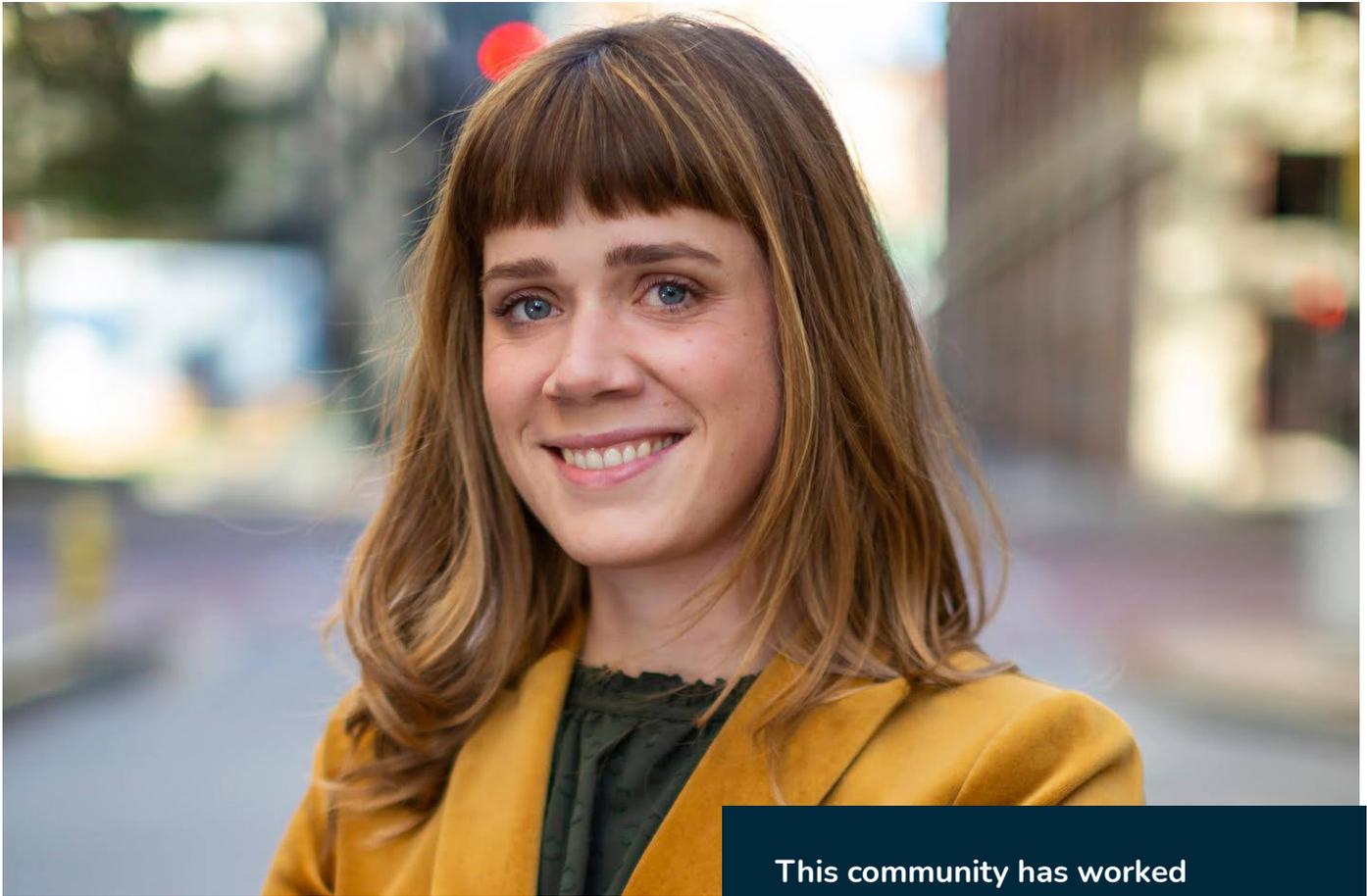
WHAT IS COLLECTIVE IMPACT?

Collective impact is a multi-sector, collaborative approach to change systems and solve deep-rooted community challenges. By building long-term alignment in order to address problems at their root cause, we can improve outcomes at the population level.

Systems change initiatives, like Chattanooga 2.0, move beyond programmatic or charitable responses to a challenge and, rather, focus on addressing the structures that hold a problem in place—fundamentally changing the way systems behave and the outcomes they produce.

A systems change approach ensures that we are not only treating the symptoms of systems that don't serve our children, students, families, employers, and community overall. Instead, together we can solve our greatest challenges permanently, moving from a “bandaid” approach to lasting change.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This community has worked together to pilot or implement 21 of the original 37 strategies in our 2016 strategic plan.

WHERE WE BEGAN:

The initial Chattanooga 2.0 report, published in 2015, brought into the spotlight that by 2025, more than 80% of well-paying jobs in Chattanooga-Hamilton County will require a postsecondary degree or credential. Together as a community, we confronted the reality that our residents would not be adequately prepared and credentialed to attain these jobs. A bold, cross-sector approach would be required to ensure every resident could reap the benefits of living and working in this wonderful community. Months of subsequent community input, data analysis, and national research have guided Chattanooga 2.0's strategic efforts over the past 5 years.

We achieved the goal of Hamilton County Schools (HCS) becoming the fastest improving public school system in Tennessee, due in large part to the outstanding leadership of Superintendent Bryan Johnson, the Hamilton County School Board, and so many of you as collaborative partners.

Yet, we still face a steep hill to climb in addressing what's been missing for our community: **the guarantee of a quality education with a clear pathway to a meaningful career for every resident.**

WHAT ABOUT 2020?

We began the year by launching a strategic planning process to accelerate our collaborative work. Soon after, our community began to grapple with the challenges brought by a global pandemic, an economic downturn, and a nationwide reckoning with racial injustice. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will be reflected in student outcomes for years to come. The pandemic's health and financial effects have disproportionately impacted poor and underserved communities, exacerbating existing inequities. All of these challenges and tragedies for which we have grieved as a community have also given rise to inspiration, innovation, and great hope. **Out of great loss and recognition of injustice came renewed commitments to improve our world.**

RECENT EVENTS WILL SHAPE OUR WORK IN 2021 AND BEYOND.

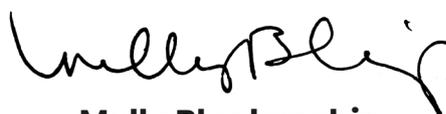
These most recent tragedies and our collective response showed us what is possible when urgency, collaboration, and a commitment to addressing the needs of our most vulnerable residents drives our work. **We will maintain that urgency, our spirit of collaboration, and our commitment to equity as we continue our work to transform outcomes for all of our community's children, students, and families.**

Chattanooga 2.0 will continue to bring together partners and institutions who are working hard on solutions toward achieving our **shared vision of a thriving and inclusive economy where social and economic mobility is achievable for all residents.**

We recognize that true, large-scale transformation will require collaboration, an aligned set of priorities, and a culture of shared responsibility. We will continue to bring data to the forefront, elevate the voices of those with lived experience, and work tirelessly to resource and support our community in its efforts to create a more seamless, equitable cradle-to-career pipeline. We will be intentional in deepening our work around equity and placing it at the center of our efforts. We will broaden our focus to prioritize addressing the whole-child needs of our community's children and students, because we recognize that what takes place out of school shapes a child's future success as much as what happens in school.

We look forward to working closely with you as partners, colleagues, and friends in the years to come. We thank you for your passion and commitment. Together we will create a more prosperous, hopeful, and vigorous community — where every resident has the true opportunity to realize their full potential. **We will move forward together, stronger.**

Onward,



Molly Blankenship
Executive Director

BY THE NUMBERS

CHATTANOOGA-HAMILTON COUNTY



367,804
RESIDENTS



1 CITY MAYOR & **1** COUNTY MAYOR



21,300
CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OLD



31,158
RESIDENTS OF TRADITIONAL POSTSECONDARY AGE (18-24)



4,000
BABIES BORN EACH YEAR



COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION (CEP)

CEP schools are those located in designated low-income areas. All students attending CEP schools receive free breakfast and lunch regardless of household income.

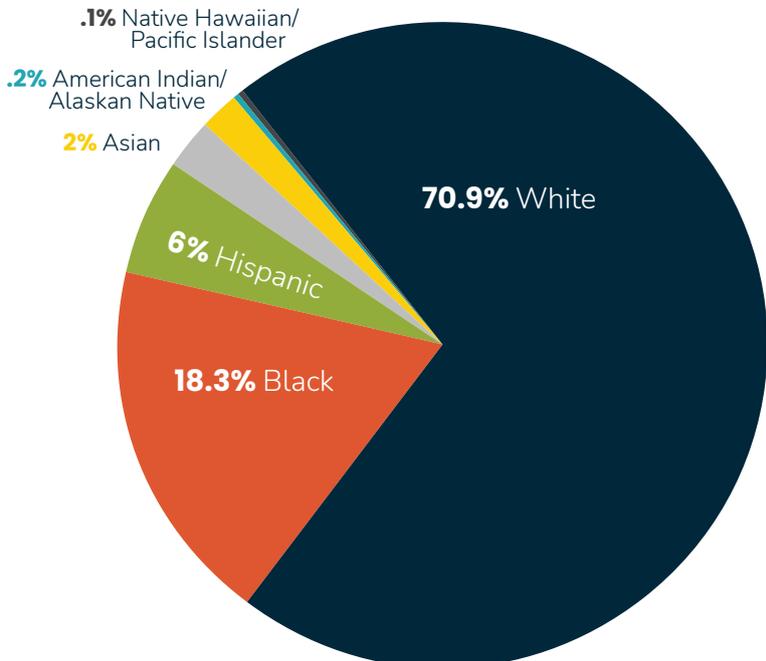


4.7%
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

19.5%
OF CHILDREN & YOUTH (0-18) ARE LIVING IN POVERTY

42%
OF HOUSEHOLDS CANNOT AFFORD BASIC NECESSITIES¹

HAMILTON COUNTY POPULATION



The majority of the numbers listed here are from the 2019 US Census,² American Community Survey,³ and the '18-'19 TN State Report Card.⁴

45,432

PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

3,375

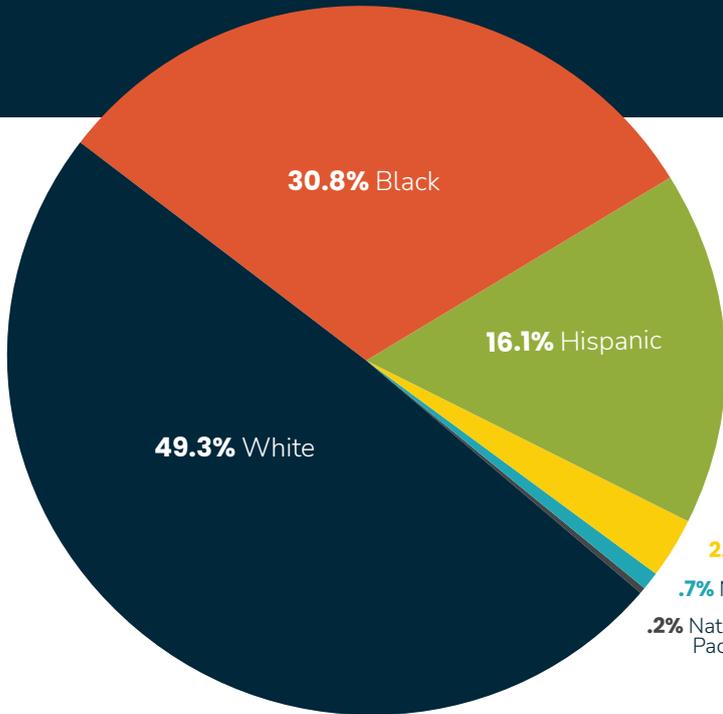
PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS & ADMINISTRATORS

78

SCHOOLS ACROSS 550 SQ MILES

3

PUBLIC POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS



HCS STUDENTS

2.9% Asian
 .7% Native American
 .2% Native Hawaiian/
 Pacific Islander



ONLY 1 IN 4 CHILDREN ENROLLED IN EARLY LEARNING

14.6%
CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM
 (MISSING 10% OR MORE SCHOOL DAYS)

7.6%
HCS HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST RATES OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS IN TENNESSEE

6.9%
 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

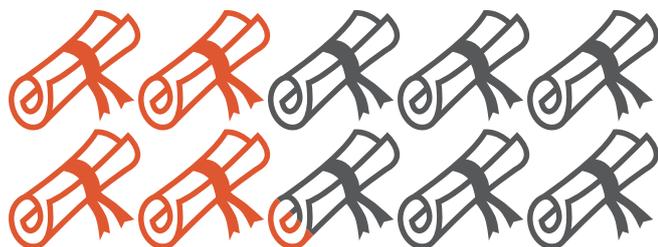
12.5%
 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

32.7%
 ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS



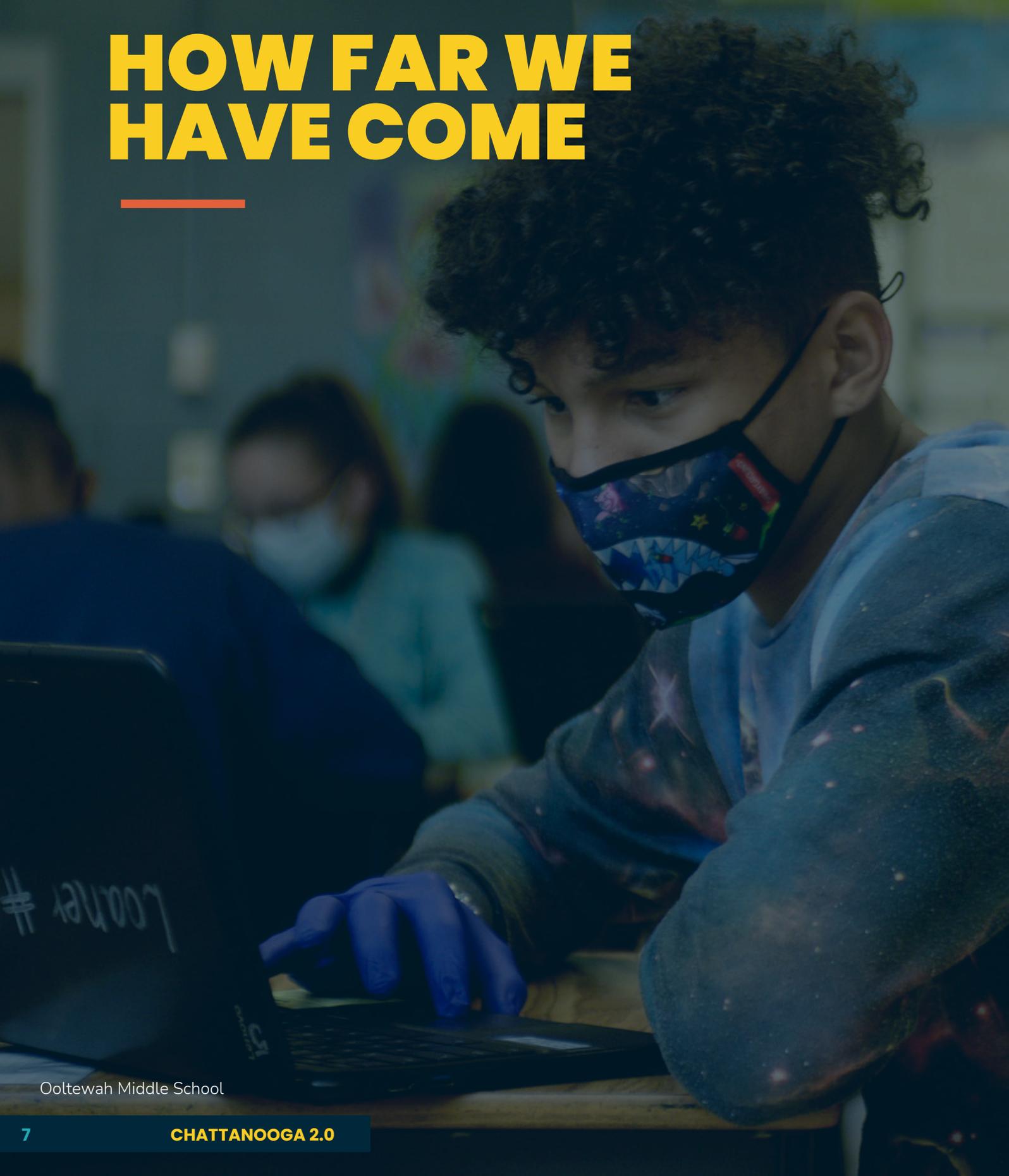
41.5%

OF RESIDENTS OVER AGE 25 HAVE A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL



PART I:

HOW FAR WE HAVE COME



CHATTANOOGA 2.0 HISTORY

2015

“A Bold Vision for Our Future Workforce”

- Initial report released summarizing significant workforce challenges and educational opportunities for Chattanooga-Hamilton County and the region

2016

Chattanooga 2.0 Launches with Community Input

- Over 3,700 community members provide input during 100 Days of Community Conversation⁵
- “10 Urgent Strategies to Transform Our Future” strategic plan is published, outlining 37 strategies, 13 metrics, and 2 bold goals
- Cross-sector action teams are formed to implement strategies from cradle to career

2017

- Launch of the Smart City Venture Fund, a private social venture capital fund aligned closely with Chattanooga 2.0 goals and strategies
- Chattanooga 2.0 hosts By the Numbers annual coalition meeting
- Dr. Bryan Johnson hired as HCS Superintendent

2018

- Chattanooga 2.0 hosts Align, Amplify, and Accelerate with Agility annual coalition meeting
- Dr. Rebecca Ashford hired as President of Chattanooga State Community College

2019

- The Hamilton County Children's Cabinet is established
- Goal of HCS becoming the fastest improving public school system in TN is achieved
- Molly Blankenship named Executive Director of Chattanooga 2.0
- Data Council and Communications Advisory Team are launched

2020

Strategic Planning & Crisis Response

- Launch of strategic planning process
- Chattanooga 2.0 partners respond to the impacts of COVID-19 by tapping into collaborative infrastructure
- Chattanooga 2.0 makes bold commitment to fight systemic racism
- Chattanooga 2.0 co-hosts virtual Hamilton County School Board debates earning 83,000 views
- Chattanooga 2.0 releases its first-ever equity questionnaire for school board candidates⁶

2021

FORWARD TOGETHER

Launch new strategic plan focused on advancing equity and opportunity in Chattanooga-Hamilton County

KEY MILESTONES OVER THE PAST 5 YEARS

When Chattanooga 2.0 launched 5 years ago, we released 10 strategies to transform our community's future by 2025. Since then, education, workforce, business and community leaders have united around a shared vision of increasing excellence in education and workforce development. Here are a few of the key milestones and big wins aligned to Chattanooga 2.0's original strategies.*

- 2019:** HCS is recognized as the **fastest improving school district** in the state of Tennessee.⁷
- 2019:** The number of adults with a postsecondary degree or credential in Chattanooga-Hamilton County **increases to 41.5%**, up from 38%.⁸
- 2019:** **The Hamilton County Children's Cabinet is launched**, bringing together city and county agencies as well as nonprofits for the first time to better align their services to whole-child needs.
- 2020:** Six-year completion rates for first-year students at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) **increase by 4 percentage points**.
- 2020:** Three-year completion rates for first-year students at Chattanooga State Community College **increase by 9 percentage points**.
- 2020:** **600 high-quality early learning seats** are added to our community, greatly reducing the deficit.⁹
- 2020:** School board districts 1, 2, 4 and 7 experience a **202% increase in voter turnout** over the previous voting year.¹⁰

*While Chattanooga 2.0 served as the backbone organization for some of these efforts, many have been fueled by the initiative and determination of partners and champions working across our community.





District!

HOW FAR WE HAVE COME

ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Strengthen Supports for Parents & Families**

- 880 families of infants were equipped with tools to become their children's first and best teachers through the Early Matters Hospital Visitation program, a partnership between Signal Centers, Speech and Hearing Center, United Way of Greater Chattanooga, Erlanger Hospital and Parkridge Hospital.
- The Early Matters early childhood action team adopted and implemented Chattanooga Basics, an evidence-based engagement campaign providing parents and caregivers with vital tips, tools and resources to care for infants and toddlers during critical early development.
- Chattanooga 2.0 working group members educated over 2,000 caregivers, teachers, and community members on the negative effects of toxic stress caused by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Create an Early Learning Network**

- United Way has served 125 families through the Early Learning Scholarship, a program that helps Chattanooga-Hamilton County families who have income above the eligibility cutoff for state or federally subsidized child care, but don't earn enough to be able to reasonably afford child care tuition.
- Thanks to public-private partnerships in the community like the Quality Matters Fund, which offers child care capital investment grants, and the Office of Early Learning's Seats to Success initiative, as many as 600 high-quality early learning seats had been added by March of 2020
- The Camp K program pilot for rising kindergarten students was launched, providing a free four-week summer program aimed at addressing kindergarten readiness and giving Chattanooga-Hamilton County parents resources to help their children succeed.
- The City of Chattanooga and Signal Centers launched the Child Care Wages Program to provide salary supplements to early childhood educators who have or pursue postsecondary education and remain at their licensed provider, addressing the need for stability, increased wages, and higher education in the Early Education field.

One of the greatest wins for early childhood in our community is the development of the Early Matters action team. It has created a place for all those working in early childhood to come together, identify needs, and tackle big issues collaboratively. This will prove to be a powerful force in advancing early childhood education in our community in the future.



Katie Harbison

President, Chambliss Center for Children



Wolftever Creek Elementary School

ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Reimagine Learning for the 21st Century**

- HCS was recognized as a global leader in digital fabrication education after partnering with Public Education Foundation (PEF) and Volkswagen to open 16 Fab Labs in 2017-2019, and then, by 2021, expanding their network to house 25 school-based Fab Labs.
- HCS EdConnect, a landmark public-private partnership, helped close the digital divide for students who qualify for free and reduced lunch thanks to the support of EPB, the City of Chattanooga, Hamilton County government, HCS, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Foundation, the Smart City Venture Fund, and the Enterprise Center through a grant funded under the State of Tennessee.
- PEF partnered with HCS to support schools pursuing Tennessee STEM Designation in 2019-2020 through PEF's STEM Fellows program. As a result, HCS now boasts the largest number of designated schools in the state.
- 750 teachers have been trained to integrate STEM education through project-based learning strategies since 2017 thanks to HCS and PEF.

HOW FAR WE HAVE COME

ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Increase the Focus on Literacy for All Students**

- HCS invested \$11 million to implement new literacy curriculum grounded in the science of reading.

ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Great Teachers Great Leaders**

- With support from the Smart City Venture Fund and The Tennessee New Teacher Project, HCS developed a comprehensive strategic plan to incentivize, recruit and retain high-quality teachers and school leaders.
- The Project Inspire teacher residency program, an initiative led by PEF, graduated its 100th new teacher committed to working in HCS's most challenged schools.
- HCS saw a record 12% increase in first-year teacher retention after the launch of its Induction Program, offering support to all teachers, novice and experienced, during their first 3 years with the district.
- The base salary for teachers in HCS was increased to \$40,500, raising the district's ranking to 23rd out of 144 in Tennessee.
- HCS launched the Grow Your Own program, providing a pathway to teacher licensure for classified employees in order to diversify the teaching force, close opportunity gaps, and improve educational outcomes for students.

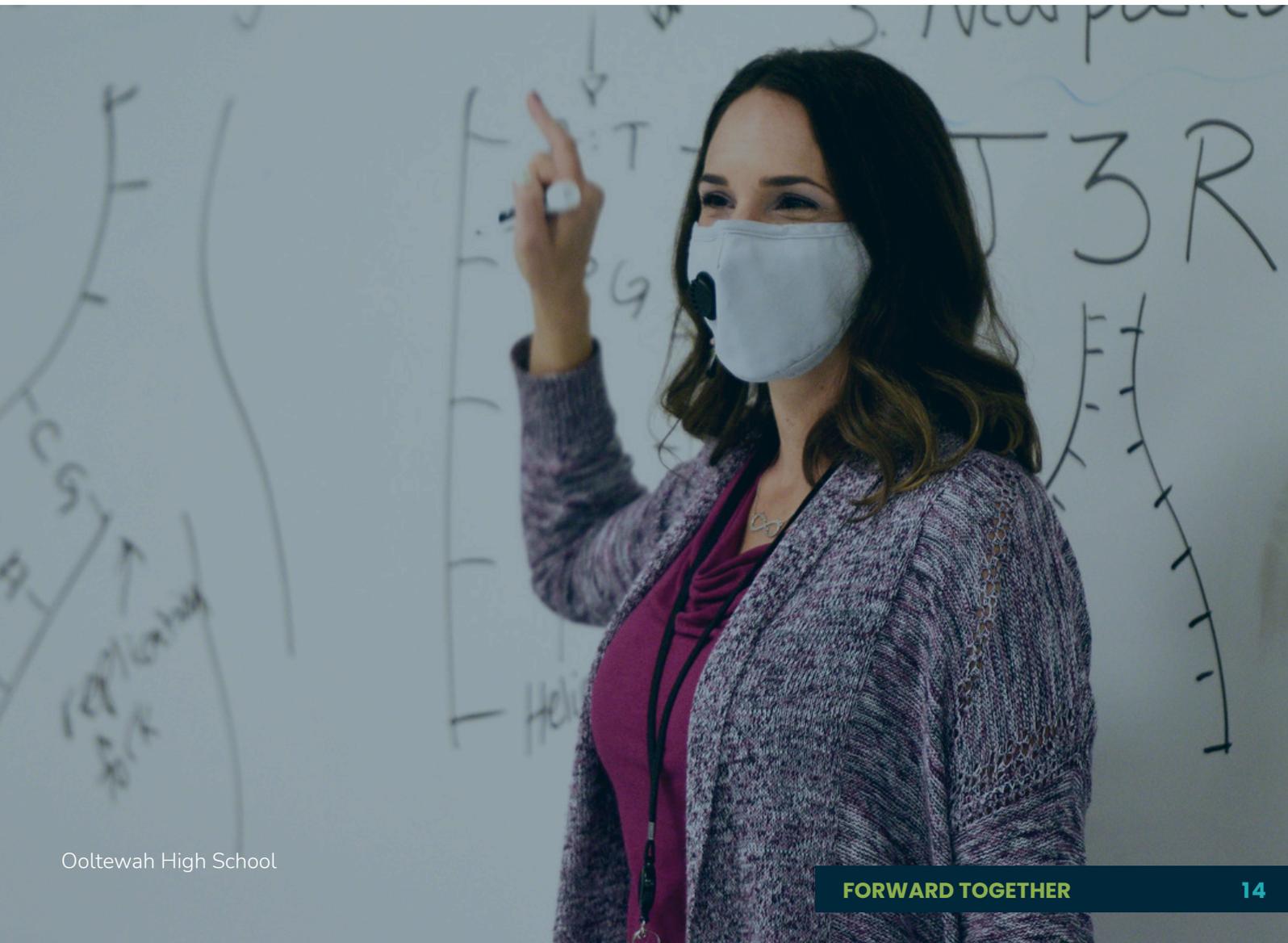
I think I would have quit last year (my first year) if it wasn't for the new teacher Induction program. Everything was so overwhelming, but the most helpful thing was to know that I had people to support me and a place that I could go where other new teachers would share their experiences too and we could lean on each other for support.

Grace Leffew

3rd Grade Teacher, Rivermont Elementary

ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Empower School Leaders**

- Principal Leadership Academy, a partnership between PEF, the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce, UTC, and more, celebrated 10 years of providing intensive training, mentoring, and support to aspiring school leaders.
- HCS established Director of Leadership Development on its talent team and launched McRel Balanced Leadership training for new principals.
- HCS created LEAD (leadership, exploration and development) program for aspiring school leaders and selected inaugural cohort in 2020.
- Since 2016, 148 HCS teachers completed PEF's Leadership Fellows program to prepare for leadership opportunities across the district.



HOW FAR WE HAVE COME

ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Ensure High Expectations and Equity for All Students**

- The first community school in Chattanooga-Hamilton County was launched at Red Bank High School through a partnership between HCS and Northside Neighborhood House. Since then, the school's graduation rates have risen 7.2%. Eight schools across the county are now using a community school model.
- The Hamilton County School Board adopted the Inclusive Education and Opportunities action team's three-year plan for special education in HCS, outlining the transition to evidence-based inclusion for students with special needs and their typically-developing peers.
- The Individualized Student Success Planning pilot was launched in 14 schools, designed to identify and meet the unique, whole-child needs of each learner.

Part of being a community school is creating that community for kids who aren't plugged in otherwise. We have kids who aren't plugged into sports or theatre and don't have anything going on at home. So we get to create a space for kids on the margins who might otherwise sit by themselves, or stare at a computer, or might be off in a corner. They get to come together and we don't really let them sit on the margins. We pull them into the fold and make them engage.

Brody Scott

Community School Coordinator, Soddy Daisy Middle



ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Prepare All Students for College & Career**

- HCS launched the Future Ready Institutes offering a unique career-themed education through a small learning community model.
- The Gestamp work-based learning program was the first youth apprenticeship program in Tennessee to earn the U.S. Department of Labor's registered apprenticeship designation.
- HCS added full-time College and Career Advisors at every high school.
- In-demand Education & Career Pathways were created through a partnership between the Chattanooga Chamber, Chattanooga 2.0, HCS, Chattanooga State, and UTC. The first of their nature in the country, these documents clearly outline a student's program of study from ninth grade through postsecondary completion and job attainment, including average salaries.
- Over 1,100 internships were created with support from 100+ businesses through PEF's STEP-UP Chattanooga program for HCS high school students and recent graduates.
- Chattanooga 2.0 partners received the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation P-16 Community Investment Grant to support a set of strategies in six high schools aimed at increasing the number of Black, Hispanic, and low-income students who graduate high school, enroll in a postsecondary institution, and are on track to graduate from college.

The Future Ready program makes me want to come to school every day, because you never know what's going to be planned. That's what I like most about it. I always wanted to be an anesthesiologist or a neurosurgeon. But it was always just out of my head - I can't do this, I've got to play football, I've got to play some type of sport. This program has really opened up my horizon. It's given me connections and mentors.

Jamall Macon, Jr.

Sophomore, Erlanger Institute of Healthcare and Innovation, The Howard School



HOW FAR WE HAVE COME



Chattanooga State Community College

In the 2016 report published by Chattanooga 2.0, these questions were posed:

Q: Is the school district prepared to respond with a bold and comprehensive plan of action to address the troubling trends highlighted in this report and elsewhere?

A: In 2018, under the leadership of Superintendent Bryan Johnson and Chairman Joe Wingate, the Hamilton County School Board did create such a comprehensive strategic plan, Future Ready 2023. And in less than 2 years, the district achieved unprecedented academic gains in student growth and achievement.

ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Increase Postsecondary Completion**

- Chattanooga State and UTC formed “Start Here, Finish Here”, creating a more seamless pathway from an associate to a bachelor’s degree.¹¹
- Chattanooga State and UTC formalize the 2+2 Engineering Technology Degree transfer program, allowing students completing associate degrees in Engineering Technology to seamlessly transfer to UTC and major in Engineering, Engineering Management, or Mechatronics.

ORIGINAL STRATEGY: **Connect More Residents to High Demand Jobs**

- Chattanooga State and the Chattanooga Chamber launched an effort to expand apprenticeships across Chattanooga-Hamilton County.
- The Chattanooga Chamber launched Chattanooga Calling, an online portal designed to connect job-seekers to work and training opportunities.¹²
- The Regions Foundation, Chattanooga Chamber, Chattanooga State and United Way partnered to expand Skill Up, an earn-while-you-learn workforce training program deployed in high-poverty neighborhoods.



How can businesses and our institutions of higher education partner with the district to help build stronger connections to college and career?

A: In 2018, businesses, postsecondary institutions, and schools came together to launch the Future Ready Institutes, creating stronger cross-sector partnerships in order to better prepare students for the transition from high school to college and career.



How can community leaders and organizations work together with the district to ensure that every child comes to school ready to learn, and that students and families have the supports they need to achieve success?

A: In the 5 years since Chattanooga 2.0’s launch, we’ve seen unprecedented partnerships form in order to ensure the success of area children and families. From out-of-school-time providers working to expand summer learning during COVID-19 to community organizations engaging parent participants in the Camp K pilot, to the implementation of individualized student success planning and more, we’ve made significant advancements in our ability to work together and share in the responsibility to support the needs of children, students, and families.

BETTER TOGETHER

LEADING THROUGH A PANDEMIC



When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, leaders, organizations, and community volunteers across Chattanooga-Hamilton County quickly sprang into action to address the impacts of the pandemic on children and families. We grappled with big challenges and questions like: how would families access vital meals they rely on receiving at school? How would students without WiFi engage in remote learning? How would teachers transition to successfully engage students in a virtual environment? How do we ensure the survival of critical child care programs? How do we ensure students continue their path toward college and career even amid disruption and uncertainty?

As we faced these questions together, heroes arose across the community in unexpected places. Amid great challenge and loss, we found hope. Here are a few bright spots and community heroes we want to recognize from our shared response to COVID-19.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

Hamilton County Schools (HCS) quickly pivoted to virtual learning in March of 2020 and then was one of a few districts across the state to open their doors for in-person instruction in the Fall. The district worked quickly to equip teachers and families with the information and resources they needed to continue student learning. They worked with community partners to reach students who fell out of contact when schools closed, to craft a comprehensive reopening plan,

and much more. Our postsecondary institutions also worked diligently to continue their vital work of preparing students for life and career. Chattanooga State, where only 25% of courses were offered online prior to COVID-19, moved to completely virtual in only two weeks. **By the Fall semester, 95% of their offerings had an online component.** UTC also worked to continue instruction as well as advisory, counseling, and career services for undergraduate students.

When COVID-19 hit, HCS's network of digital fabrication labs and PEF scrambled to assemble a 3D printer farm at STEM School Chattanooga where HCS teachers and students collaborated with healthcare officials and local manufacturers to design, print, assemble, and distribute **7,199 3D-printed face shields** to local health care providers.

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

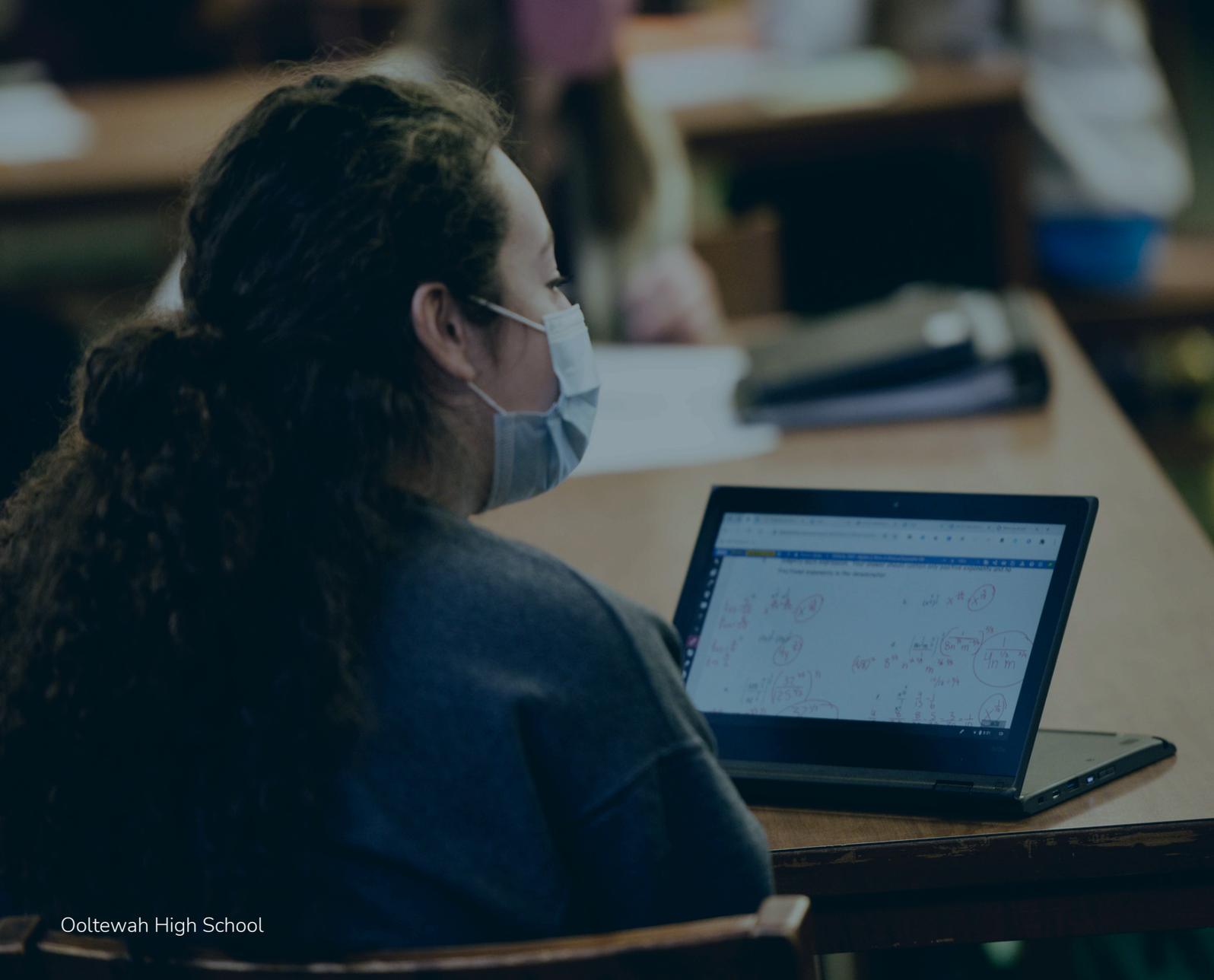
Prior to COVID-19, HCS had already implemented a one-to-one device ratio in middle and high schools. As schools went virtual, community partners recognized that there was still a technology gap to fill for elementary students. By May, **local businesses and foundations had raised \$100,000 to purchase devices for HCS students.** Simultaneously, EPB worked with the district, the Enterprise Center, the City of Chattanooga, and UTC to install **over 100 free WiFi hotspots so that youth and adults could access remote work and school.**

Then, through a landmark public-private partnership, **HCS EdConnect was launched to help permanently close the digital divide for HCS students.** The service provides free in-home WiFi to households with students who qualify for free and reduced lunch and is part of a 10-year commitment made possible by EPB, the City of Chattanooga, Hamilton County government, HCS, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Foundation, the Smart City Venture Fund, and The Enterprise Center through a grant funded under the State of Tennessee.¹³

We know that the key barriers to digital equity include income and affordability of service. But we also know there are rural areas where access is not available at any cost. This includes residents in parts of Sale Creek, Birchwood, and Harrison who are outside the footprint EPB can legally serve, who did not have high speed home access well before the pandemic hit. In order to ensure every student is able to learn from home, HCS EdConnect has provided nearly 500 4G hotspots with unlimited data to families living in north Hamilton County. In our community, regardless of income or address, all students can access remote learning. That's true digital equity.

Deb Socia

President & CEO, The Enterprise Center



Ooltewah High School

COLLABORATING FOR CONTINUED LEARNING

Together, and in tandem with the district, out-of-school time (OST) providers worked collaboratively last summer to provide over 5,000 of HCS's highest-needs students with summer learning enrichment aimed at addressing learning loss, giving students a jumpstart for the coming academic year, and helping students maintain social and emotional connections. HCS and the Hamilton County Children's Cabinet worked with OST providers to identify and reach out

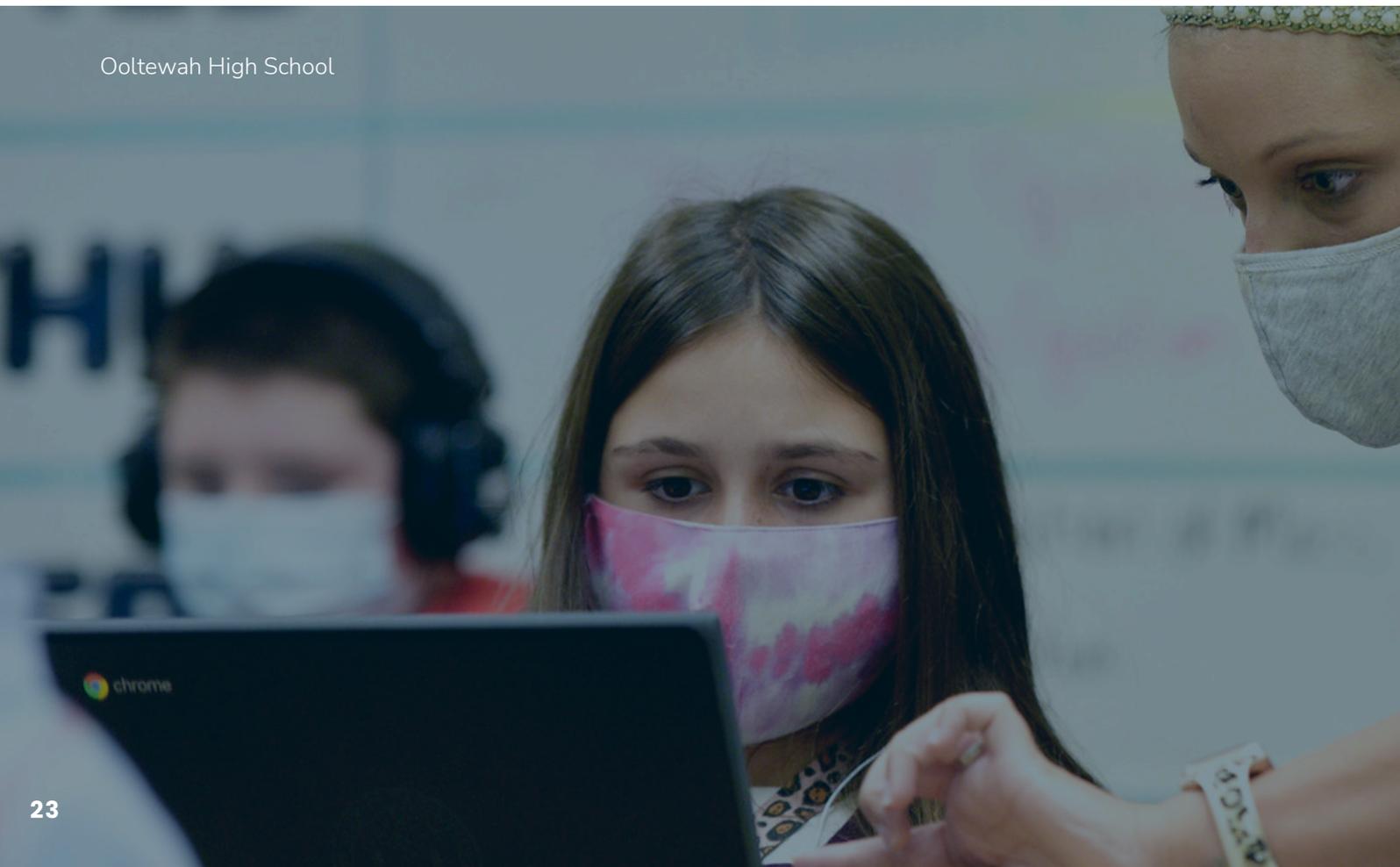
to underserved students who could most benefit from this support.¹⁴ In Fall 2020, OST providers and the district joined forces with local faith-based organizations to open virtual learning centers across the district, providing either full or part-time support to working families with children engaging in remote learning. **There are currently over 30 organizations providing virtual learning support to students and their caregivers across our community.**

SAFEGUARDING THE CHILD CARE SECTOR

For families with children of all ages, child care being an “essential” service has taken on a whole new meaning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Facing the stark reality that **we may lose 30-50% of child care providers due to the financial impacts of COVID-19**, Early Matters Chattanooga, the Smart City Venture Fund, the City of Chattanooga, and United Way worked together to provide one-time emergency bridge funds to ensure

child care businesses’ viability until state and federal relief funds arrived.¹⁵ Though many challenges lie ahead in protecting and building a robust, accessible child care system, this important public-private partnership helped curb COVID-19’s impact on the child care industry and mitigate the lack of access to high-quality early learning services for children and their working caregivers.

Ooltewah High School



CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO VITAL RESOURCES

Our community pulled together time and time again this year to meet the basic needs of children, students, and families when they were separated from the resources and services they rely on. HCS employees and volunteers delivered over one million student meals via school bus and community pick-up sites.¹⁶ Partners like the YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga, the Boys and Girls Club of Chattanooga, WeOverMe, and countless

others helped provide meals to families in need. La Paz Chattanooga supported translation efforts to ensure Hispanic residents could access vital information to protect their families and continue their work and education. **The United Way convened the COVID-19 task force of over 200 partners** focused on addressing emergency needs related to food distribution, supporting the homeless population, mental health, and so much more.



This list of bright spots is far from comprehensive. Countless individuals and organizations have done inspiring, challenging, and tiresome work to help our community weather the COVID-19 pandemic. And perhaps one of the most important lessons we've learned from nearly a year spent in crisis is that **we truly are better together.**

BlueCross

TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY

AT RED BANK HIGH SCHOOL





CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

The successes of Chattanooga 2.0's partners these past 5 years have already made a notable difference in the lives of countless children, students, and families.

Yet there are still significant challenges and opportunities ahead as we seek to guarantee every resident a high-quality education and pathway to the workforce. Chattanooga 2.0 works to address the factors that negatively impact educational and workforce outcomes for children and youth from the time a baby is born through the attainment of a thriving-wage career. Each area of this timeline plays a critical part in the development of future-ready students and residents.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD:

EARLY CHILDHOOD

In the 2018-2019 school year, only 40% of Chattanooga-Hamilton County children entering Kindergarten tested proficient on the district's kindergarten readiness screener.

In order for children in Chattanooga-Hamilton County to arrive at school equipped with the skills needed to be successful, it is important that we pay particular attention to their experiences during the first 5 years of life.

WHY IT MATTERS

90% of brain growth happens before kindergarten.¹⁷

Research demonstrates that a child's brain development is dramatically influenced by life experiences. Instead of being genetically hardwired, our environment shapes our cognitive development and thus our long-term success.¹⁸ Positive early childhood experiences – especially within high-quality early learning and child care programs– are linked to increased school readiness, as well as lifelong benefits such as higher earnings, improved health, lower

participation in social service programs, and lower chances of involvement with the criminal justice system.¹⁹ **Despite the benefits, only 1 in 4 of Chattanooga-Hamilton County's youngest residents are currently enrolled in an early learning program.** While some parents are able to stay home to provide care for their young children, it's critical that we ensure adequate support for those who cannot.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Only 1 in 4 children in our area are enrolled in an early learning program.

In Chattanooga-Hamilton County, there are roughly 4,000 babies born annually and at the last count by the US Census Bureau, one-fifth of the 21,300 children under 5-years-old in our area were living in poverty.³ For all children, but especially those living in poverty,

attending a high-quality child care program is correlated with positive long-term life outcomes.²⁰ Poverty does not discriminate, however, and the lack of access to quality health, food, and early care services is prevalent in every corner of our county.



Hamilton County Schools Camp K Program (2019)

Working families are struggling to find child care.

We know that for 15,940 children in Chattanooga-Hamilton County, all available parents work full-time,²¹ which means that without access to affordable high-quality child care, parents and caregivers are at risk of leaving the workforce altogether. Across the nation, it's

estimated that 42% of women with children under the age of two have left the workforce to care for their children during this year's child care crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.²² And this challenge isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

Child care is unaffordable for many Chattanooga-Hamilton County families.

Locally, for those families who can access care, it is far from affordable. The typical cost of center-based care for an infant in Tennessee is around \$10,800 per year, more than the amount of public university tuition. If a family also has a child of PreK age, the cost rises to \$19,500. This is 24%

of the median income of a married family and 82% of the median income of a single parent. While some experiencing poverty may qualify for subsidies, these high costs make child care unaffordable for many of Chattanooga-Hamilton County's hard-working families.

Child care workers are underpaid.

The high cost of child care does not equate to well-paid child care workers. The average annual salary for a child care educator in Chattanooga-Hamilton County is just over \$21,000, without benefits.²⁶ The starting salary for the majority of public school teachers in Tennessee, who play equally critical roles in developing young minds, is close to double that. Incentivizing, recruiting, and retaining high-quality child care and early learning professionals is critical given the vitally important role they play in children's future success.

Child care programs are struggling.

Many child care programs are small businesses that operate with tight margins during the best of times, and are now facing permanent closure in light of the pandemic. The story is the same across the country. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) estimates that as many as 30-50% of child care programs will remain permanently closed in light of the pandemic's economic impacts.²⁷

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



EVERY \$1 WE INVEST IN HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS YIELDS A \$7.50 RETURN ON INVESTMENT.²⁴

Child care contributes to regional economic growth by helping to sustainably employ our area's existing labor force. When our residents lack access to affordable and reliable child care, it can cause them to take a reduction in hours or force them to opt out of the workforce altogether, exacerbating challenges for employers and families alike.²⁵

Chattanooga-Hamilton County's working parents and their families lose a whopping **\$47 million per year** due to child care issues. The lost revenue to Chattanooga-Hamilton County businesses due to child care problems for parents of young children is **\$15 million per year** and for taxpayers as a whole, that's a loss of **\$12 million annually.**²¹

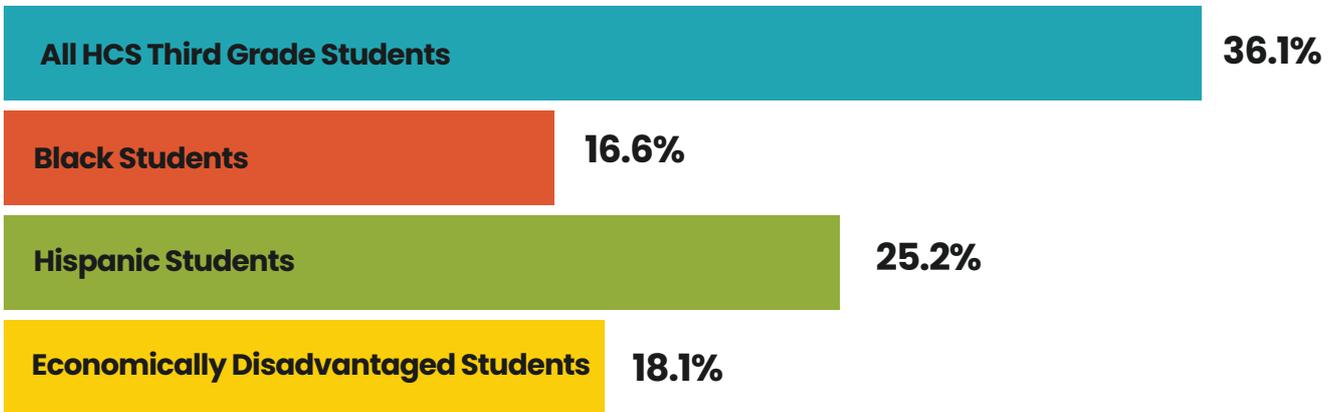
CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD:

EARLY GRADE SUCCESS

Proficiency in reading by third grade is the single most important predictor of long-term educational and life success.

WHY IT MATTERS

HCS Third Grade Reading Proficiency (2019)⁴



In third grade, students stop learning to read and start reading to learn. A student who does not meet reading expectations by third grade is four times less likely to graduate high school by age 19 than a child who reads proficiently by that time.²⁸

These rates increase dramatically for students living in poverty. According to a study from the American Educational Research Foundation, students who are both not reading proficiently by third grade and living in poverty are 13 times less likely to graduate from high school on time compared to their proficient, more affluent peers.

The benefits of proficiency in reading by the end of third grade extend beyond high school and significantly impact the trajectory of a student's education. Research from the Ohio Department of Education found that:

“Students reading proficiently by the end of third grade are five times more successful at achieving college and career readiness as their non-proficient peers.”²⁹

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Cultural representation matters.

Teacher quality is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement, but quality doesn't stop at pedagogy. It's comprised of other factors, including, but not limited to, cultural competence and the diversity of our teaching force. Black students who have even one Black teacher by third grade are 13% more likely to enroll in college, and low-income, young Black men are 39% less likely to drop out of high school if they had at least one Black teacher in elementary school.³⁰ Almost half of students in HCS are children of color, yet nearly 10% of Black students in Chattanooga-Hamilton County attend a school where there is no teacher of their same race. For Hispanic students, that number is close to

one-third.³¹ In our public school system, the ratio of teachers of color to students of color is 1:62. That ratio for white teachers to white students is 1:7.

Leadership within HCS has acknowledged this challenge and in Spring of 2020, launched the Grow Your Own talent pipeline program in order to recruit talent from within the school district. A specific goal of the program is to increase the district's teacher diversity index so that it more closely aligns with the student population. To-date, 16 classified staff have started the program, with 12 becoming full-time teachers in Fall 2020.

Poverty and food insecurity create more learning difficulties.

One out of every five Chattanooga-Hamilton County youth aged 0-18 lives in poverty, with 17.6% facing food insecurity.³² The effects of poverty and food insecurity have a significant impact on early grade success. Children and youth from low-income families have lower test scores in core subjects and are

likely to complete fewer years of schooling.³² These challenges are not isolated to any one geography or demographic. Significant portions of Hamilton County are grappling with rural poverty and food insecurity, just like those living in low-income neighborhoods in Chattanooga's urban core.

I have had the opportunity to participate in 'Cultural Conversations', where HCS faculty share an open discussion about our teaching methods and how they relate to the cultural backgrounds of those we teach. Ideas shared from these discussions have helped me connect with students more.

Thomas Axton

Band Director, East Lake Academy

Individualized whole-child supports enable student success.

School-aged children in our community spend over 80% of their time outside of school. To ensure that they are on track by third grade, it is important to address not only in-school factors, but out-of-school as well. Doing so ensures that students are physically and emotionally safe, civically and socially connected, and thus able to be academically and vocationally productive. We've already seen tremendous partnership and momentum in Chattanooga-Hamilton County aimed at addressing student needs both in and out of school. As part of an

initiative anchored by the Hamilton County Children's Cabinet, 14 of the district's schools are participating in the individualized student success planning (ISSP) pilot, which assesses both in and out-of-school strengths and needs of students, intentionally matching each student with tailored supports, services, and opportunities. Simultaneously, OST providers and faith-based organizations across the county have played an invaluable role during the pandemic by aligning with HCS to expand out-of-school-time programs and mitigate learning loss.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EARLY GRADE SUCCESS

The difference between having an above-average kindergarten teacher and a below-average kindergarten teacher could translate into **more than \$300,000 in future earnings** for a classroom of 20 students.³³

Due to learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is estimated that the average K-12 student in the United States could lose **\$61,000 to \$82,000 in lifetime earnings** or the equivalent of one year of full-time work.³⁴

Every student who does not graduate high school costs our society an estimated **\$260,000 in lost earnings**.³⁵



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD:

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

Although 86.9% of HCS students graduate successfully, only one-third graduate ready for college and careers after high school.⁴

WHY IT MATTERS

It is estimated that 80% of high-quality jobs in Hamilton County will require a post-secondary degree or credential by 2025, and meanwhile, the number of jobs requiring a high school diploma or less is shrinking.³⁶ **To be competitive in the 21st century economy, Chattanooga-Hamilton County students need the academic preparation, exposure, soft skills, social capital and more to be successful in college and career.**

“Ready Graduates” are defined by the state of Tennessee as students who meet success milestones that increase their probability of seamlessly enrolling in postsecondary education and securing high-quality employment.³⁷ Simply put, College and Career Ready Graduates receive supports during their K-12 education to graduate from high school on time and prepared for their next step. **Increasing the number of students who graduate from high school college-and-career-ready ensures that more students are ultimately connected with good jobs and a meaningful career.**

We become licensed professionals before we go off to college. Once we turn 18, we can actually work in a healthcare facility while still being college students. It is a great opportunity.

Student, Institute of Health Careers and Medical Advancement, Hixson High School

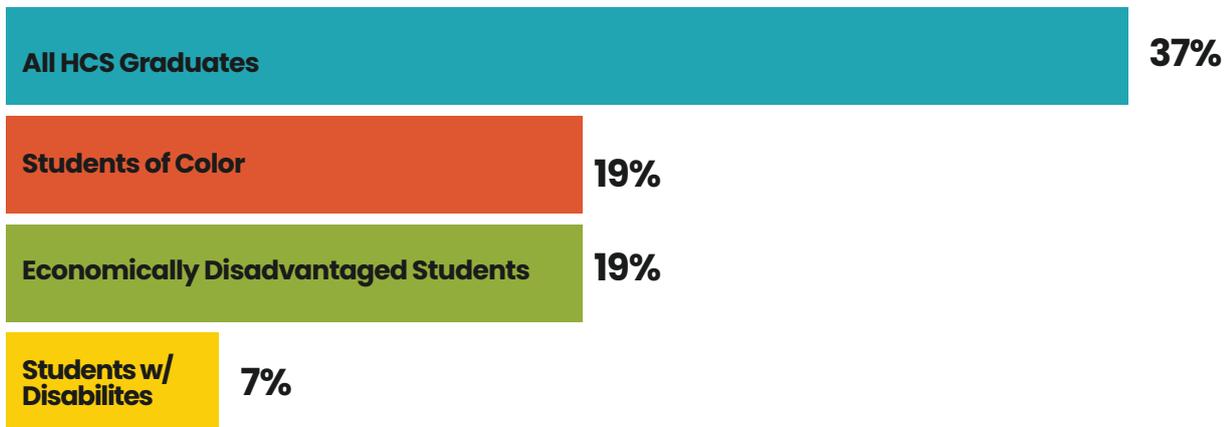


HOW ARE WE DOING?

Achievement gaps persist among HCS graduates.

In 2019, 37% of all HCS graduates were considered Ready Graduates by the Tennessee Department of Education. That number drops significantly when disaggregated by race or socioeconomic status.³⁷

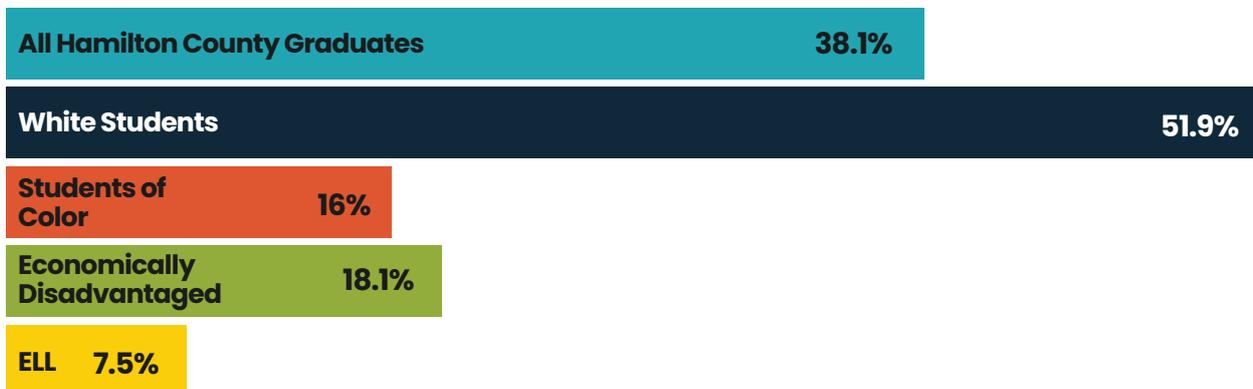
2019 HCS "Ready Graduates" | Tennessee Department of Education



Hamilton County ACT scores also show disparities.

In 2019, only 38.1% of Hamilton County students scored a 21 or higher on the ACT - a key indicator of college and career readiness.³⁸ When disaggregated, wide achievement gaps are present in ACT scores as well. These disparities often persist into postsecondary, hindering student success.

Percentage of HCS Students Scoring a 21 or Higher on the ACT, 2019



Students attending schools of concentrated poverty are less prepared for college and career.

In 2018, 3% of graduates attending schools of concentrated poverty in our county were college and career ready, while 30% of students attending schools without a large share of poor students met these college and career benchmarks.⁴²

Early postsecondary opportunities fuel readiness.

Participation and completion of early postsecondary opportunities (EPSOs) including Advanced Placement, Dual Enrollment, Dual Credit, International Baccalaureate, and Industry Certification pathways give students a leg up for their future education and career. **Today, the full complement of EPSOs are not universally available to all students and oftentimes there are financial or other barriers to participation.**³⁹ The district set a goal for every high school to offer at least four EPSOs that are accessible to students across all ability levels.

The reality is, whether a student chooses to get a certificate, or go to a two or four-year college, or straight into the military, everything ends at a job. To be productive citizens, they need to be employed.



Dr. Bryan Johnson

Superintendent, Hamilton County Schools

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS

Nationally, students and their families spend **\$1.5 billion** on remedial education in college, which has been shown to hinder student success and postsecondary completion.⁴⁰

Increasing the number of college-and-career ready graduates in Chattanooga-Hamilton County could mean:

- \$3 million in additional earnings for those students
- \$190,000 in additional state and local tax revenue
- \$7.3 million in savings on healthcare⁴¹



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD:

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

Only **35%** of HCS graduates earn a postsecondary degree or credential within 6 years.⁴³



WHY IT MATTERS

Today, 65% of jobs in the United States require some form of postsecondary education or training, and that number will only continue to increase in the years to come, further accelerated by COVID-19's economic disruption. **In the Chattanooga region, it is estimated that 6,000 jobs requiring a high school diploma will not return post-pandemic.**

In today's economy, some form of higher education is a necessity for individual economic opportunity and America's competitiveness in the global economy.

A postsecondary education means higher lifetime earnings, lower jobless rates, a competitive edge in the global marketplace and is also linked to improved health outcomes, community vitality, and prevention of criminal justice involvement.⁴⁴



HOW ARE WE DOING?

Postsecondary enrollment is stagnant.

In 2019, 66% of all HCS graduates enrolled in a 2-year, 4-year, or TCAT postsecondary program, an increase of 1% since 2015.⁴⁵ Half of those graduates enrolled at either UTC or Chattanooga State. For students of color, only 55% enrolled in a postsecondary program after high school graduation.³⁸

Financial barriers persist.

The creation of the Tennessee Promise (TN Promise) scholarship made Tennessee the first state in the nation to provide a fully-funded K-14 education.⁴⁶ Then in 2019, the University of Tennessee system announced the UT Promise, a last-dollar scholarship covering eligible students' tuition and mandatory fees. And while these programs are timely and necessary supports, like many scholarships, they do not provide for other important expenses that often come with postsecondary education such as textbooks, housing, administrative fees and more.

Many local postsecondary students are first-generation college goers.

In 2019, 1 in 4 UTC freshmen were first-generation students. At Chattanooga State, that number was 1 in 3. The postsecondary environment can be overwhelming for any student, but especially for first-

Overall, Chattanooga-Hamilton County has more students in the postsecondary pipeline, more enrolling in college and more earning degrees. While the increases in enrollment and completion aren't significant yet, we are learning from data and pilot strategies what interventions are needed.

Many postsecondary students are one financial emergency away from being unable to afford and complete their postsecondary training. When faced with an expensive car repair or utility bill, low-income students must often choose between paying tuition or covering their necessities. Non-routine expenses like these have spurred the creation of food pantries and emergency financial supports, which have been a saving grace for hundreds of local postsecondary students, but a more comprehensive, systemic approach is required to address this challenge long-term.⁴⁷

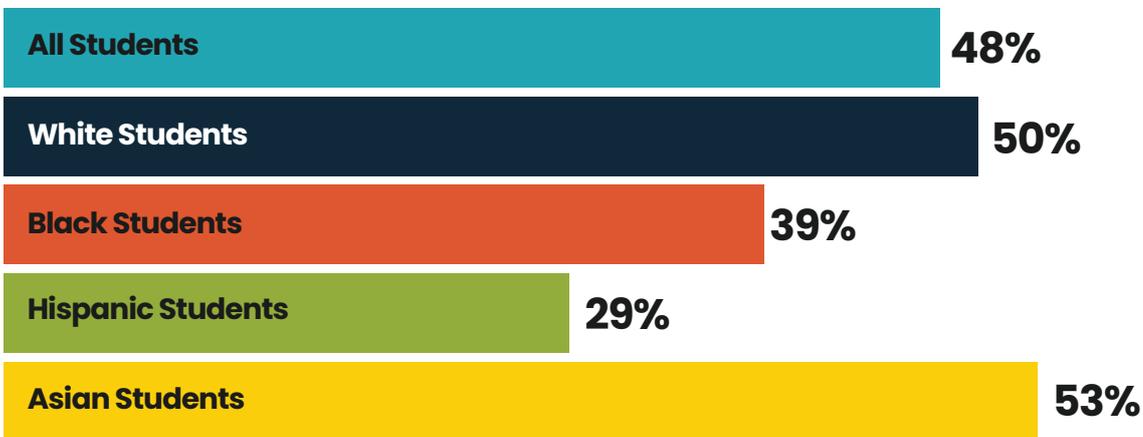
generation college goers and students from underrepresented communities. Without adequate enrollment and navigation supports, many students get the sense that they don't belong and leave.

Inequities extend into postsecondary.

In 2019, the six-year graduation rate for first-time full-time students at UTC was 48%⁴⁸ and the three-year graduation rate for the same population at Chattanooga State was 20%.⁴⁹ Students of color are significantly underrepresented on each campus (less than a quarter of enrollment), but new data from UTC, shows that racial achievement gaps are closing.⁵⁰

Both institutions are working to implement solutions that address racial and socioeconomic completion gaps. At Chattanooga State, programs like Focus on Completion and Achieving the Dream helped to increase the number of graduates from low-income households by 19% over the past 4 years.⁵¹

2019 UTC Six-Year Graduation Rates



THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

For the one-third of students in the Tennessee high school graduating class of 2017 who directly entered the workforce without postsecondary education, average annual wages are little more than **\$13,000**.⁸

In 2019, 22% of 18-25 year-olds in Chattanooga-Hamilton County held a postsecondary degree, yet only **13.4%** earned a Thriving Wage of \$32,000 or more.⁵²

College graduates with a bachelor's degree typically earn **66% more** than those with only a high school diploma; and are also far less likely to face unemployment.⁵³

Over the course of a lifetime, the average worker with a bachelor's degree will earn approximately **\$1 million more** than a worker without a postsecondary education.⁵³





ALL MEANS ALL

A COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

In June of 2020, we released a statement committing to placing equity at the center of our work. That commitment to equity encompasses issues beyond race; it includes gender, disability, socioeconomic status and more. However, we recognize that we face both a moral and an economic imperative to work boldly and explicitly to end systemic racism in our educational systems, economy, and community overall.

Today, young people of color in our community are not being adequately prepared to succeed in the knowledge-driven economy. Closing wide and persistent racial gaps in educational attainment is key to building a strong workforce and will be required if we are to achieve our overarching goals from cradle to career. Together, we can ensure that every child in Chattanooga-Hamilton County, no matter their ability, zip code, background, or skin color has a true opportunity at success.

Chattanooga 2.0 coalition members **DEFINE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY** as:

Intentional supports, resources, and policies designed to meet the individual needs of each learner and eliminate disparities in outcomes, ultimately ensuring that all students have the opportunity to unlock their full potential.

CHATTANOOGA

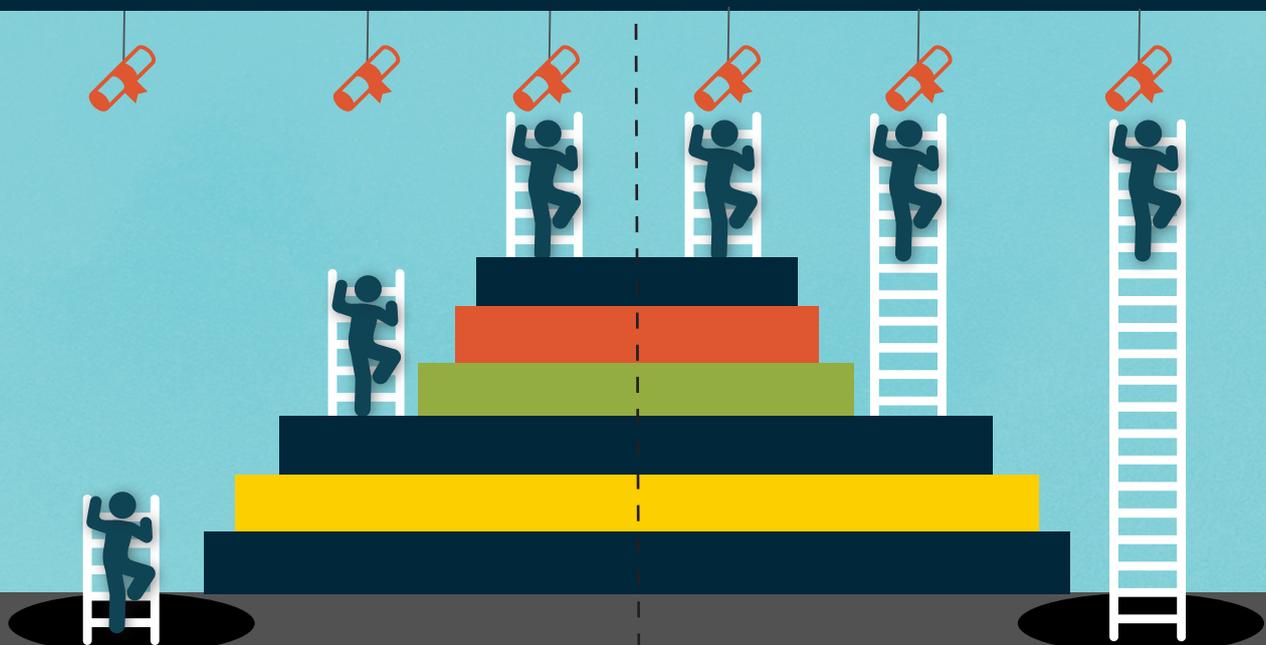
EQUITY STATEMENT

While Chattanooga and Hamilton County have enjoyed impressive levels of growth and progress over recent decades, we realize that the benefits of this growth have not been equally enjoyed by all our community's residents. Too many Chattanooga-Hamilton County children, students and families continue to face significant obstacles to achieving their full potential. Opportunity and access to success are not equitably available to all our children and residents, and the American dream remains out of reach for too many of our community's families.

Through generations of collective history in our community – and confirmed by bodies of significant research⁵⁴ – we know inequities in opportunity and disparities in outcomes are driven by race, gender, socioeconomic

status, culture, disabilities, and other societal factors. Without a commitment to equity and systemic change, our systems and structures will continue to compound and perpetuate disadvantage for too many residents. A rigorous and sustained commitment to addressing systemic and institutional barriers for all our community's residents is essential to achieving our overall objectives from cradle-to-career. We recognize our responsibility to eliminate past, present, and predictable barriers to student success. Our work will embrace equity-centered, culturally competent, and inclusive strategies that meet specific needs of our vulnerable children and residents, while improving conditions, outcomes and prosperity for everyone who calls Chattanooga-Hamilton County home.

EQUALITY vs. EQUITY



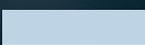
RACIAL EQUITY

IN CHATTANOOGA-HAMILTON COUNTY

- 23 years ago, the predominantly-Black city school district merged with the predominantly-white county school district, but since then, public schools have remained largely segregated.⁵⁵
 - » In 2015, Black students are 33 times more likely than the county's white students to attend schools ranked in the bottom 5% of all Tennessee schools.³⁶
 - » In 2016, students of color were 3.2 times more likely to attend a high-poverty school than their white peers.⁵⁶
 - » Black students make up 30% of the student population in HCS, yet they are 2.5 times more likely to be suspended than their white peers, and in 2020 HCS had one of the highest suspension rates in the state.⁴
 - » The dropout rate for HCS has declined 2.5% over the past 2 years. However, Hispanic students are 2 times as likely to drop out as Black students and over 2.5 times as likely to drop out as white students.
- In 2015, 11 Chattanooga-Hamilton County neighborhoods with poverty levels of 40% or greater were comprised of 73% Black residents.
- The infant mortality rate for Black babies is 2.6 times greater than other races in the county.⁵⁷
- The three-year graduation rate for first-time full-time students at Chattanooga State in 2019 was 20% in total, however, it was only 6% for Black students and 16% for Hispanic students.
- Racial gaps also existed at UTC in 2019, with a 48% six-year graduation rate overall and a 39% and 29% six-year rate for Black and Hispanic students respectively.⁴⁷

RACIAL EQUITY SCORECARD

STUDENTS MEETING MILESTONES:

WHITE STUDENTS 
 ***STUDENTS OF COLOR 

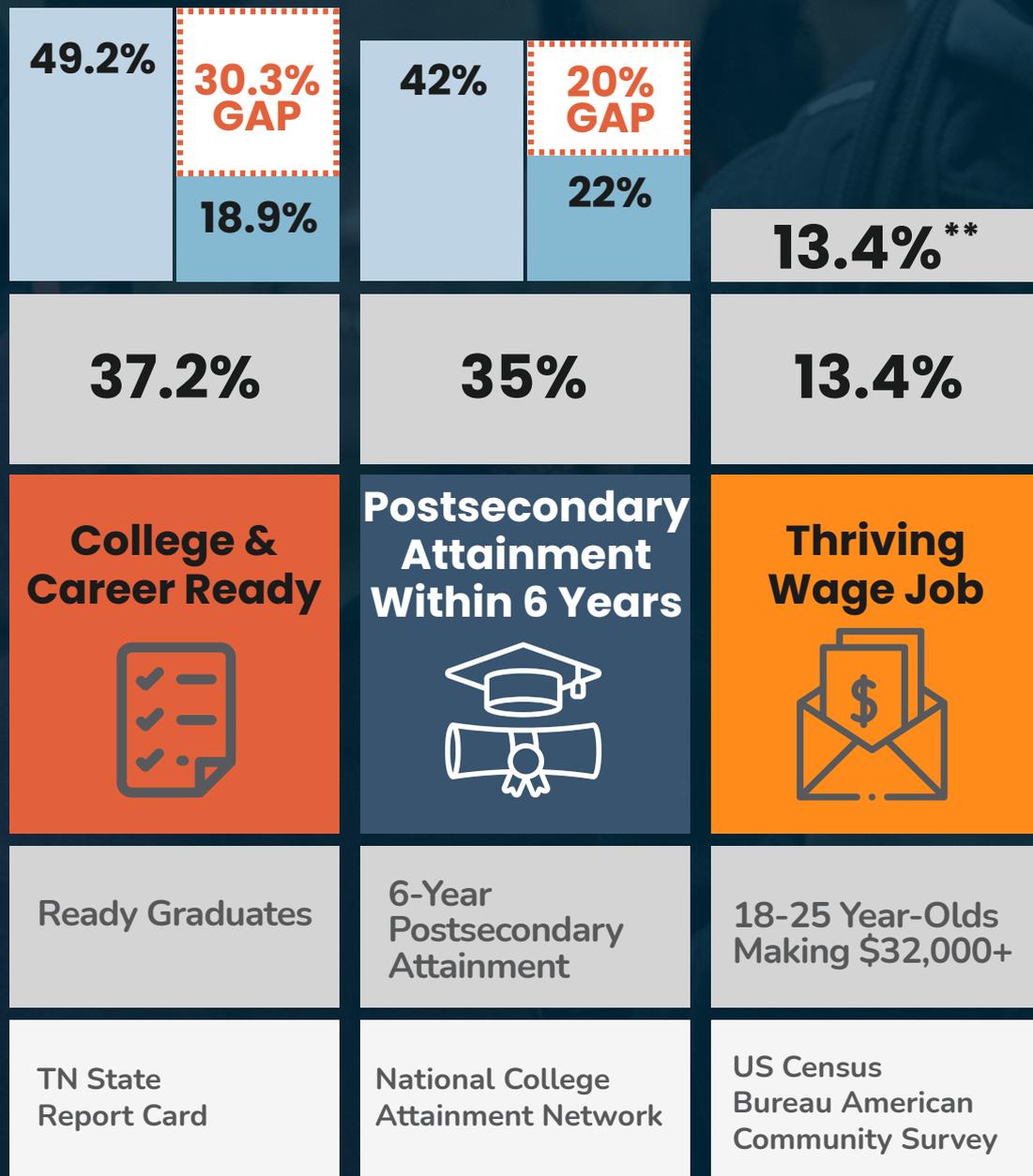
ALL STUDENTS
MEETING MILESTONES

CRADLE 

INDICATORS

DATA SOURCES⁵⁸

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| 47.6% | 14.2% GAP 33.4% | 49.7% | 29.9% GAP 19.8% |
| 40.1% | | 36.1% | |
| Kindergarten Preparation  | | Early Literacy  | |
| K Readiness | | 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency | |
| HCS Read20 Screener* | | TN State Report Card | |



60%
40%
20%
0%

CAREER

* All data shown is for the 2018-2019 school year.⁴

** Disaggregated data is not yet available from American Community Survey.

*** Students of color is synonymous with reporting language "non-white" and "Black, Hispanic, Native American (BHN)".

TAKING ACTION ON RACIAL EQUITY

While we have much important and challenging work ahead of us, champions across our community are already working boldly to address racial disparities..

- Chattanooga State, under the leadership of President Rebecca Ashford, is working to become more student-centered and student-ready—systemically. She recognizes that equity is about changing systems to better support students and capitalizing on the assets that diverse students have to offer.
- Thanks to the leadership of Chancellor Steve Angle, UTC has already narrowed the completion rates between white students and students of color and has worked diligently to support first-generation college students by fostering a sense of belonging on their campus.
- In 2018, HCS established an Equity Task Force and, in partnership with postsecondary institutions, PEF, and other nonprofits, is currently working to increase postsecondary success in high schools predominantly attended by students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.
- The Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga, the Benwood Foundation, the Urban League of Greater Chattanooga and others have already provided racial equity training to dozens of community members.
- In 2020, coordinated by the Chattanooga Chamber, Hamilton County's largest employers released a joint statement condemning systemic racism and committing to take action for real change.



CHATTANOOGA

COMMITTS TO:

- Establish a Chattanooga 2.0 Equity Council whose charge will be to guide and champion our shared efforts to advance greater equity in cradle-to-career education and workforce development.
- Together with the Equity Council:
 - » Conduct a cradle-to-career equity audit to more fully understand the challenge and inform recommendations and strategies specifically related to advancing greater equity.
 - » Work with local educational institutions and employers to evaluate current policy and practice, then implement recommendations to create more equitable policies and systems of support.
 - » Launch a community-wide effort to provide racial equity and cultural competence training to stakeholders and influencers along the cradle-to-career continuum.
- At every opportunity, elevate the voices of those with lived experience.
- Ensure our coalition and governance is representative and inclusive of our broader community.
- Consistently share information and data with the broader community to inform learning and action related to advancing equity.







PART II: FORWARD TOGETHER

In 2020, we reached an important five-year milestone and launched a strategic planning process to hone and accelerate our next phase of work. Through a results-based process and sourcing broad stakeholder feedback, we re-evaluated our vision, mission, and goals. We sought to validate and clarify the key strategies that we believe are necessary to reach our goals from cradle to career. As a result, **five updated bold goals** and **eight updated key strategies** have been put forth by the Chattanooga 2.0 coalition for the next decade of work in Chattanooga-Hamilton County.

THE PROCESS

The Chattanooga 2.0 staff convened a diverse, cross-sector Guiding Team of 26 people to lead the planning process. The Guiding Team worked to analyze critical factors that inhibit or enable educational success, executed a comprehensive research agenda, and built out evidence-based strategies pulling from best practice examples both locally and from across the country.

254 PEOPLE contributed **816 HOURS**
to the updated strategic plan.

Coalition Survey
(July 2019)

Stakeholder Interviews
(August 2019)

Strategic Planning Meetings
(November 2019 - November 2020)

Data Walk & Whole-Coalition Meeting
(February 2021)

Community Input & Engagement
(November 2020 and Forward)





Thank you to the below individuals for their dedication of time, energy, and passion.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Angela Hayes | City of Chattanooga - Office of Early Learning |
| Ariel Ford | City of Chattanooga - Office of Early Learning |
| Becky Covington | Hamilton County Schools |
| Dr. Beth Norton | Chattanooga State Community College |
| Blake Freeman | Hamilton County Schools |
| Bo Drake | Chattanooga State Community College |
| Deb Socia | The Enterprise Center |
| Eduardo Centurion | The MacLellan Foundation |
| Dr. Elaine Swafford | Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy |
| Jim Boles | Chattanooga School for the Arts & Sciences |
| Jimmy Jones | Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) |
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| Silvia Ramos | United Way of Greater Chattanooga |
| Shawn Kurrelmeier-Lee | Read 20 |
| Stacy Johnson | La Paz Chattanooga |
| Stacy Lightfoot | Public Education Foundation - Chattanooga |
| Tom Glenn | Elder's Ace Hardware |
| Tom Griscom | Q Strategies |
| Wayne Brown | Tennessee PTA |
| Lee Pierce | University of Tennessee at Chattanooga |

CHATTANOOGA

ADVANCING EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY IN HAMILTON COUNTY

VISION

Chattanooga-Hamilton County enjoys a thriving and inclusive economy, where social and economic mobility is achievable because children, students, and families are equipped with the resources and supports needed to reach their full potential, cradle to career

MISSION

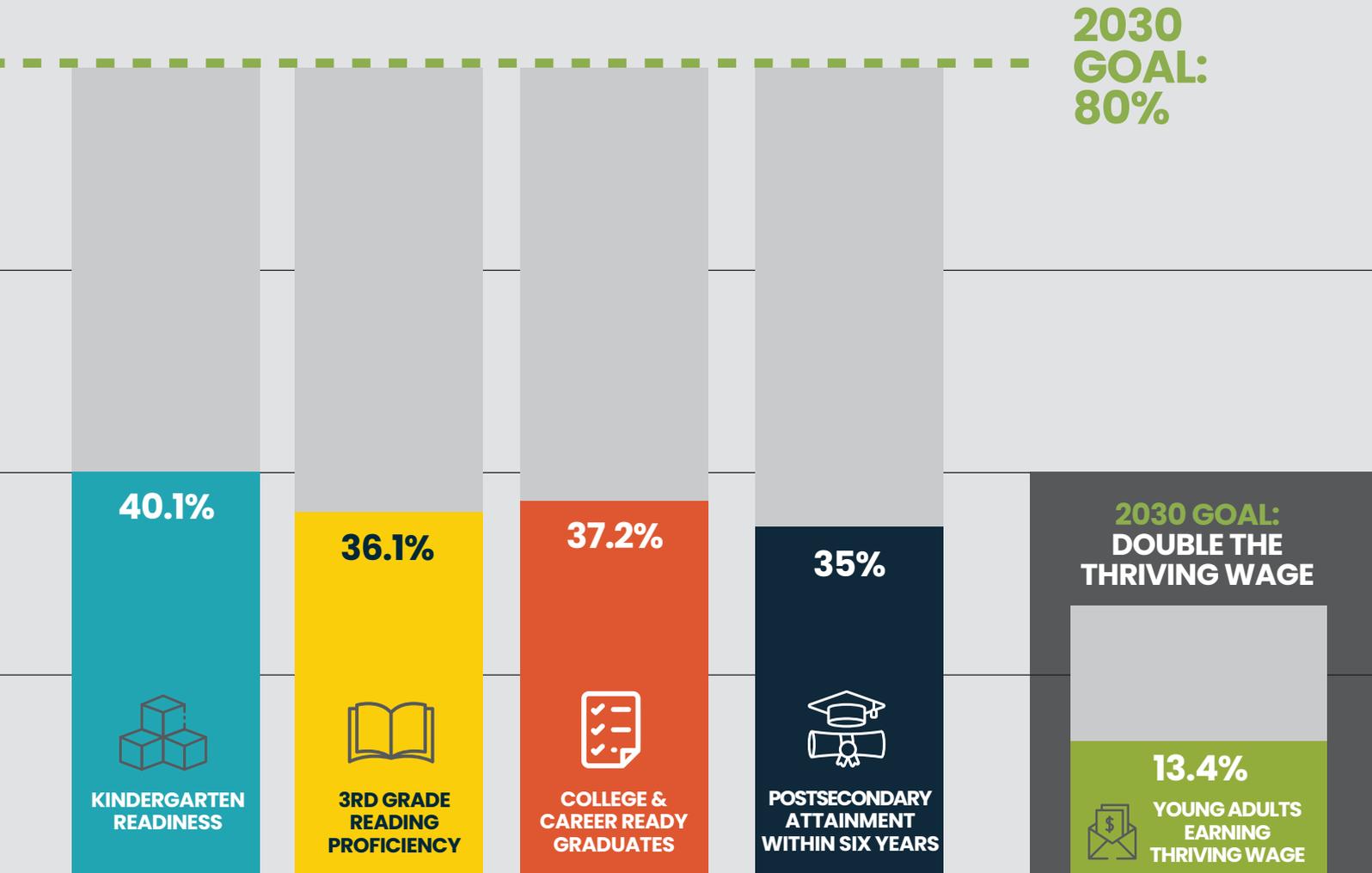
To drive collaboration, measurement, and alignment of policy and practice to ensure all children and youth receive a quality education and career opportunities that help them realize their full potential

OUR GOALS

By 2030:

- 80% of children arrive at kindergarten with the skills needed to be successful in school
- 80% of Hamilton County Schools students are proficient in reading by third grade
- 80% of students graduate on time from Hamilton County Schools prepared for college and career
- 80% of graduates from Hamilton County Schools obtain a postsecondary degree or credential of value within six years
- **Double** the number of young adults aged 18-25 who obtain meaningful, self-sustaining careers and successfully transition to the workforce

CHATTANOOGA 2.0 2030 GOALS



WHAT IS A THRIVING WAGE?

Chattanooga 2.0 defines a Thriving Wage as the annual income needed for a single 18 to 25 year-old to live and contribute to a thriving economy in our county and is currently calculated at **\$32,000 or more annually.**

OUR THRIVING WAGE CALCULATION =

United Way of Tennessee's ALICE surviving wage¹ + a realistic housing and utilities adjustment + savings and extra spending as a percentage of salary

As the rates of college-and-career readiness and postsecondary attainment increase, so too should the share of young adults earning a Thriving Wage in our community.

THE CHATTANOOGA 2.0 THEORY OF ACTION

A theory of action is a connected set of propositions; a logical chain of reasoning that explains how actions will lead to improved outcomes and desired change. The work of Chattanooga 2.0 is about impact — permanently changing the odds for children, students, and families in our community. **This is how we get there.**

| ENABLING CONDITIONS | STRATEGIES | OUTCOMES |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Equity is embedded in every facet of our collective work, from data use to implementation, to decision-making and beyond</p> <p>Integrated education and workforce data systems are used to drive decisions, continuous improvement, and transparent reporting</p> <p>Public policy and funding is adequate, equitable, and responsive to the unique needs of learners across the cradle-to-career continuum</p> <p>An inclusive, accountable, and collaborative culture surrounds our collective work</p> <p>Our economy is inclusive with culturally representative leaders, cultural offering that create a sense of belonging, and equitable access to meaningful careers</p> <p>Narratives and mental models are shifted to build political will for equity, public education, and policies that support our collective work</p> <p>Strong leadership is present across the cradle-to-career continuum</p> | <p>IF WE CHANGE SYSTEMS TO...</p> <p>Expand access and participation in high-quality early care and education programs</p> <p>Ensure learning environments are supportive, safe, culturally competent, and free from systemic racism and implicit bias</p> <p>Provide equitable, high-quality, rigorous learning experiences from cradle to career</p> <p>Ensure every student has high-quality, culturally representative teachers and leaders</p> <p>Provide equitable navigation, enrollment, and completion supports to postsecondary students</p> <p>Activate employers and communities to advance policies and supports that remove roadblocks for students and reduce stress on families</p> <p>Align public and nonprofit sectors to the whole-child needs of children and youth</p> <p>Engage with and learn from families and communities</p> | <p>THEN...</p> <p>Opportunity and achievement gaps will be closed, ensuring that all:</p> <p>→ Children have the skills needed to be successful in Kindergarten</p> <p>→ Children are proficient in reading by third grade</p> <p>→ Students graduate on time, ready for college and career</p> <p>→ Students successfully complete their postsecondary education, obtaining degrees or credentials of value</p> <p>→ Young adults are connected to meaningful, self-sustaining careers and successfully transition to the workforce</p> |

IMPACT

Chattanooga-Hamilton County has a thriving and inclusive economy where social and economic mobility is achievable, because children, students and families are equipped with the resources and supports needed to reach their full potential, cradle to career



2021-2030 **STRATEGIES**

Building on the success to date, our coalition will broaden its focus to prioritize addressing the whole-child needs of our community's children and students. The **Whole Child** approach⁵⁹ acknowledges that developing and preparing students for life and career requires a focus on ensuring that every child, in every school, is **healthy, engaged, supported, and challenged**. It engages all stakeholders — parents, community members, policymakers — around the shared responsibility of enabling student success.

The new Chattanooga 2.0 strategic plan identifies **eight strategies** as key levers for change along the cradle-to-career continuum that we will work with partners to implement over the next 10 years. Every strategy is supported by evidence-based Actions, and each Action has specific performance measures designed to gauge how well they are working. Strategies were built from factors that were determined to have a high impact on the cradle-to-career continuum and that we have a strong ability to impact through our collaborative efforts.

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES & RESOURCES

All children and youth have access to and take advantage of quality services to create a **healthy** foundation from which to achieve success in school and life.

STRATEGY 1:

Expand access to and participation in high-quality early care and education programs.

Because one of the most important investments we can make in cradle-to-career education is in early childhood, we will work with partners, providers, and community members to build an aligned, coordinated, and stable early childhood system. We will ensure that working families have access to affordable, high-quality care and that the children who need early learning supports the most are prioritized in efforts to expand access to these critical services.

This includes High-Impact Actions such as:

- Supporting collaboration and alignment across child and family-serving sectors
- Continual mapping and assessment of the needs of the early childhood system
- Advocating for high-quality, community and data-informed, coordinated early childhood systems and services

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY:

Access to Early Childhood Services
Quality of Early Learning Services



SUPPORTIVE, SAFE, AND CULTURALLY COMPETENT ENVIRONMENTS

All children and youth have access to personalized learning and are **supported** by qualified, caring, culturally-competent adults in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe**.

STRATEGY 2:

Ensure learning environments are supportive, safe, culturally competent, and free from systemic racism and implicit bias.

Student success is supported by environments that promote positive relationships, high expectations, and are intentional about addressing implicit bias and other structural barriers to educational attainment. The Chattanooga 2.0 coalition will work to ensure learning environments across the cradle-to-career continuum enable the success and recognize the potential of every student with an intentional focus on addressing historical inequities.

This includes High-Impact Actions such as:

- Establishing an Equity Council whose charge is to craft, implement, and track recommendations to foster greater equity in cradle-to-career education and workforce development
- Launching a community-wide initiative to train educators and stakeholders across the cradle-to-career continuum on racial equity, implicit bias, and cultural competence
- Developing a public-private partnership to address Hamilton County Schools' facilities challenges, ensuring every student has a learning environment they can be proud of

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY:

Cultural Competence
Advising and Coaching Supports

STRATEGY 3:

Provide equitable navigation, enrollment, and completion supports to postsecondary students.

Supports that help students navigate the postsecondary environment contribute to an increased likelihood of postsecondary completion.

This includes High-Impact Actions such as:

- Scaling and sustaining the College Access Mentor program to provide students who face barriers to postsecondary success with case management to support needs both in and out of school
- Expanding summer bridge programs that provide academic, social, and college readiness supports
- Launching and expanding financial assistance programs on college campuses to address critical funding needs caused by poverty and emergency circumstances

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY: Peer Connections in Postsecondary
Postsecondary Enrollment and Completion Supports
Advising and Coaching Supports
Postsecondary Transition

QUALITY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

All children and youth are **challenged** academically and prepared for their next step after high school.

STRATEGY 4:

Provide equitable, high-quality, rigorous learning experiences from cradle to career.

Across the cradle-to-career continuum, we will work to ensure that all children and students have equitable access to rigorous coursework, experiences, and supports that adequately prepare them for postsecondary, career, and life.

This includes High-Impact Actions such as:

- Expanding the number of high-quality early learning programs
- Increasing participation in high-quality out-of-school-time programs, especially among low-income students and students of color
- Expanding ACT prep across the county, ensuring access and tailored supports for economically disadvantaged students and students of color
- Guaranteeing five fully-funded early postsecondary opportunities to Hamilton County Schools high school students

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY:

Early Literacy and Numeracy
Rigorous Coursework
Early Postsecondary Opportunities



STRATEGY 5:

Ensure every student has high-quality, culturally representative teachers and leaders from birth to career.

We've made great strides toward developing a strong pipeline of, and retaining, great teachers and leaders. We will sharpen our focus to ensure Chattanooga-Hamilton County's teaching workforce and all stakeholders directly supporting children and students are representative of our broader community and those we serve. We'll also work to ensure that teachers are trained, supported, and equipped to respond to the unique needs and challenges of 21st century learners, and that students who need the most support have access to our most effective educators.

This includes High-Impact Actions such as:

- Supporting and expanding “Grow Your Own” efforts to provide teacher licensure to classified K-12 staff
- Developing and supporting non-financial incentives for Hamilton County’s most effective teachers to teach in high need schools
- Supporting and expanding programs like “Project Inspire” that graduates annual classes with twice the diversity of the current Hamilton County Schools' teaching force
- Developing mentoring programs and other initiatives that help recruit and retain racially diverse educators
- Supporting child care providers in recruiting teachers that are high-quality and culturally representative

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY: Teacher Quality



SUPPORTIVE, SAFE, AND CULTURALLY COMPETENT ENVIRONMENTS

Children and youth benefit from the seamless **alignment** of the systems designed to support their success.

STRATEGY 6:

Activate employers and communities to advance policies and supports that remove roadblocks for students and reduce stress on families.

Employers play a key role in providing access to relevant training opportunities, internships, and shaping curriculum. As end consumers of the talent pipeline, businesses are also powerful advocates for increased support for high-quality education systems. We will work to engage the private sector to expand equitable access to jobs, experiences, and services.

This includes High-Impact Actions such as:

- Expanding work-based learning programs, internships, and youth apprenticeships in partnership with employers
- Establishing a business-education coalition who will advocate for increased education supports in the community and reduce barriers to high-quality careers for Hamilton County Schools graduates
- Permanently closing the digital divide in Chattanooga-Hamilton County, ensuring every student has a device and access to broadband internet

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY:

Access to Wraparound Supports
Business Engagement
College and Career Exposure



Wolftever Creek Elementary School

STRATEGY 7:

Align public and nonprofit sectors to the whole-child needs of children and youth.

Achieving our goals from cradle to career requires an all-hands-on-deck approach. When the social-emotional, mental, and physical needs of children are met, they are empowered to pursue and achieve their goals in school, work, and life. Chattanooga 2.0 will work closely with nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations in order to align the whole community to the whole-child needs of children across Chattanooga-Hamilton County.

This includes High-Impact Actions such as:

- Establishing a community school presence at every high-need school in Hamilton County to provide wraparound supports
- Expanding the Individual Student Success Planning pilot to all Hamilton County Schools, elevating student strengths and needs in academic, health, social, and family domains
- Increasing the alignment and effectiveness of child and family-serving systems through the Hamilton County Children’s Cabinet

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY:

Access to Wraparound Supports
Family and Community Engagement



ENGAGED STUDENTS, ENGAGED COMMUNITY

Students and their families are actively **engaged** in learning and connected to their educational institutions and the broader community.

STRATEGY 8:

Engage with and learn from families and communities.

Those most impacted by community challenges should have a say in designing and implementing solutions. Inclusion of intended beneficiaries and their families, neighbors, and trusted leaders lends context and lived experience to our work, enabling us to achieve better results. When we empower families and communities with data, they are better equipped to advocate on behalf of their children.

This includes High-Impact Actions such as:

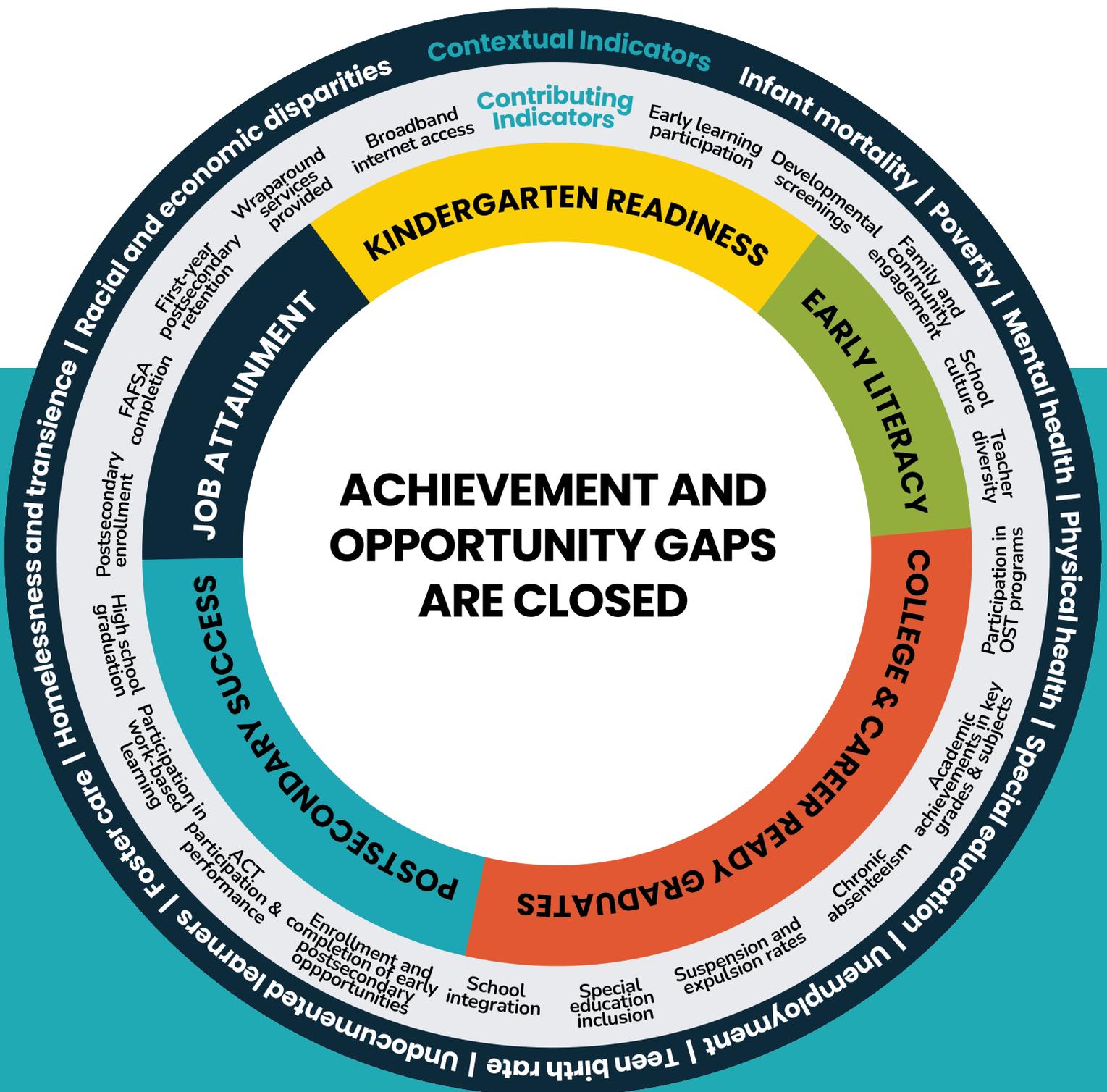
- Establishing a Community Council to serve as a hub of authentic community voice and action
- Publishing an annual report to the community including an equity scorecard
- Creating a public dashboard of Chattanooga 2.0 indicators, disaggregating data and tracking disparities

FACTORS THAT SUPPORT THIS STRATEGY:

Family and Community Engagement

THE INDICATORS

We have identified core, contributing, and contextual indicators that will be used to track and report progress, increase transparency, drive continuous improvement, and inform decision-making.





Red Bank High School (2019)



THE WORK OF NOW

FIRST-YEAR PRIORITIES

- Continue to engage political candidates and elected officials on key issues related to cradle-to-career education.
- Deepen our work in equity by establishing the Chattanooga 2.0 Equity Council and growing the diversity of our coalition membership to be representative and inclusive of the community we seek to serve.
- Establish a Community Council to serve as a hub of authentic community voice and action.
- Conduct a high-quality, comprehensive needs assessment and landscape analysis of the early childhood system.
- Close the digital divide in Chattanooga-Hamilton County, ensuring every student has a device and access to broadband internet.
- Develop a public data dashboard where the community can track progress to-date across all of Chattanooga 2.0's indicators.
- In partnership with employers, expand work-based learning programs, internships, and youth apprenticeships to reinforce and deepen classroom learning.
- Work with community partners to address COVID-19's impacts on student progress in early literacy, postsecondary training, and more.

RENEWING OUR COMMITMENT



Chattanooga 2.0 staff and many partners across our community have already committed ourselves to the work ahead. We invite you to join us in **moving forward together, stronger.**

With facilitation, communications, and data support from backbone staff, our coalition members work together to make long-term changes that benefit children, families, employers, and our community overall.

TO GET INVOLVED

Commit to the vision.

New and existing community partners interested in joining our work are invited to become members of the Chattanooga 2.0 coalition and sign on to our shared vision by visiting chatt2.org/GetInvolved.

Advocate for education.

Talk to your elected officials about the vision of Chattanooga 2.0, challenge and support them, and vote in all elections. Make sure that you, your family, and your friends are registered to vote.

Stay informed.

Visit the Chattanooga 2.0 website to sign up for our monthly newsletter, read local education and workforce news, hear stories from community members, and learn about volunteer opportunities.

Champion equity.

Educate yourself on racial injustice and how it plays out in our community. Commit to having uncomfortable, but crucial, conversations with your friends, colleagues, and family. Listen to and learn from those who do not look like you. And finally, give your time, resources and compassion to those closest to the issue.

INVESTING

IN THE TRANSFORMATION



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS.



BENWOOD

BILL &
MELINDA
GATES
foundation



CHATTANOOGA CHAMBER
FOUNDATION



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF GREATER
CHATTANOOGA



LYNDHURST
FOUNDATION



BlueCross BlueShield
of Tennessee

**SMART CITY
VENTURE FUND**

Nearly \$11 million has been invested in interventions
and strategies aligned to Chattanooga 2.0.*

This does not include funding secured by individual partners to support their contributions or organizational funds redirected in order to align with and support our collaborative work. We thank you.

BECOME AN INVESTOR.

To become an investor in the transformation, visit chatt2.org.

*Chattanooga 2.0's staff and operational costs are funded through grants and in-kind contributions from local nonprofits and foundations. These contributions are not included in the above calculation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you.

Thank you to our **Executive Committee** for their steady, student-centered leadership, support of Chattanooga 2.0's staff, and guidance on the path forward.

Thank you to our past **Steering Committee** members for championing the work of Chattanooga 2.0 and opening the doors for collaboration before most of the community was familiar with the concept of "collective impact".

| | |
|---|--|
| Debbie Adams Chattanooga State | Alison Lebovitz WTCI-PBS |
| Dr. Steve Angle UTC | Jill Levine HCS |
| Valoria Armstrong American Water | Stacy Lightfoot PEF |
| Dr. Rebecca Ashford Chattanooga State | Warren Logan Urban League of Greater Chattanooga |
| Dr. Jim Barrott TCAT | Warren Mackey Hamilton County Commission |
| Julie Baumgardner First Things First | Donna McConnico Signal Centers |
| Mayor Andy Berke City of Chattanooga | Juan Moreno Spring Creek Elementary School |
| Dr. Carol Berz Chattanooga City Council | Sarah Morgan Benwood Foundation |
| Wayne Brown Tennessee PTA | Renee Murley UTC |
| Dan Challenger PEF | Nancy Patterson Chattanooga State |
| Pete Cooper Community Member | Gladys Pineda International Consultant |
| Mayor Jim Coppinger Hamilton County | Lori Quillen Benwood Foundation |
| Rachel Gammon Northside Neighborhood House | Valerie Rutledge UTC |
| Christy Gillenwater Chattanooga Chamber | Lesley Scarce United Way |
| Erin Glenn East Lake Middle School | David Sneed Soddy Daisy High School |
| Kerry Hayes City of Chattanooga | David Steele UTC |
| Steve Highlander Hamilton County School Board | Maura Black Sullivan City of Chattanooga |
| Lisa Iglesias Unum | Carolyn Tatum NAACP |
| Stacy Johnson LaPaz Chattanooga | Tim Tinsley First Presbyterian Church |
| Dr. Bryan Johnson HCS | Nakia Towns HCS |
| Hamp Johnston RockPoint Bank | Roy Vaughn BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee |
| Maeghan Jones Community Foundation | Judge Gerald Webb Hamilton County |
| Tim Kelly Community Member | Scott Wilson BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee |
| Pam Ladd Partnership for Families, Children & Adults | Jeffrey Wilson New United Missionary Baptist Church |

Thank you to our **Founding Partners** for their bold, visionary, servant leadership that opened new possibilities for our community's children, students, and families.



Thank you to our past and present **Action Team Members**. Dozens of community members have led the vital collaborative work on the ground and within their own organizations. Their time and trust dedicated to building this coalition is the foundation for our progress forward.

Thank you to our **Partners** and **Staff** who contributed to and edited this report.

Report designed by CRISP Communications.



University of Tennessee
at Chattanooga (2019)

OUR LEADERSHIP

As we move forward, Chattanooga 2.0's work and progress will be overseen by a Steering Committee comprised of diverse leaders selected for both expertise and lived-experience. Strategy Action Team members will work together to implement strategies and track progress against action plans and key performance indicators. Functional Action Teams will lead subject-specific work that cuts across all strategies and all levels of the initiative.

LEADERSHIP

Steering Committee

Executive Committee

Hamilton County Children's Cabinet

STAFF

Molly Blankenship
Executive Director

Jennifer Andrews
Communications & Engagement Manager

STRATEGY ACTION TEAMS

Early Matters Chattanooga

Early Grade Success

Out-of-School Time (OST) Alliance

College & Career Ready Graduates

Postsecondary Success

FUNCTIONAL ACTION TEAMS

Communications Advisory Team

Community Council

Data Council

Equity Council

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