

OBION COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

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To Whom It May Concern:

Obion County's Tennessee Comprehensive Systemwide Plan contains three goals, which are based on data. Goal II deals with the improvement of student achievement; Goal III addresses the improvement of our graduation rate (90 percent by 2015). Both goals are, of course, tied to student success. It is our belief that we can reach both goals by improving the way we deliver content, assess our students, and keep the students engaged so that they will stay in school. Our implementation of the Tennessee Diploma Project necessitates that our Obion County Scope of Work for the Tennessee First to the Top includes four activities for the 2010-2011 school year:

- Activity 1: The proposal is to purchase three distance learning labs—one for Obion County Central High School, one for South Fulton Middle/High School, and one for the career technical facility/alternative school. We believe we can utilize the labs to offer dual enrollment classes for both academic as well as career/technical classes. We are near the University of Tennessee at Martin, Dyersburg State Community College, and Newbern Vo-Tech Institute. Of course, with distance learning capability, we can partner with any institution of higher learning regardless of proximity. Also our alternative school is housed at the Career Technology Center, which is a separate campus from the two high schools. Distance learning capabilities will enhance our effectiveness in helping students, especially those who are placed in the alternative setting for an extended period of time, become more successful in their classwork. With distance learning capabilities, our instructors can actually instruct, question, and aid students who are struggling in their classes. We have plans to enhance our credit recovery offerings; at present these offerings are web-based for core courses only. Also with distance learning labs, we can offer classes at both high school campuses in all courses, especially those for which we have difficulty finding qualified teachers: for example, physics, chemistry, or foreign language. We can offer more electives at the smaller of the two high schools—South Fulton Middle/High School—by utilizing the teachers at the larger of the schools—Obion County Central High School. At present Obion County Central offers numerous courses which South Fulton Middle/High School cannot offer—anatomy/physiology, art, earth science, culinary arts, health occupations, Chemistry II, criminal justice, calculus, marketing, accounting, broadcasting, business management, various agriculture and family and consumer science classes, to name a few. We will begin our offerings by allowing our South Fulton students to take art, an opportunity which they do not have at present time. Our teachers can team teach and offer supplemental lessons with virtual field trips at a

fraction of the cost of an actual field trip, thus engaging students who might otherwise lack enthusiasm for traditional methods of delivery. The budget figure includes professional development for the teachers who will utilize the labs and technical support for three years. The estimated cost includes supplies, equipment maintenance for three years, professional development, and the capital purchase and installation of equipment. After the initial training of teachers, those teachers who are trained can assist any other teachers who use the labs.

- Activity 2: The plan is to contract with five teachers to analyze the new curriculum standards for 5th grade math. Our scores in 5th grade math have been less than stellar for the past several years. We will provide staff development for the teachers who accept the contracts. Our teachers will analyze the standards, identify resources and teaching strategies, and expand our formative assessments to include common benchmark tests for the subject. We will also contract with five teachers to analyze the 6th grade social studies curriculum and five teachers to analyze the Algebra I curriculum on the high school level. These are the three target areas for the 2010-1011 school year. These target areas are based on our 2009 Report Card analysis. We will expand the process for the next three years, adding subjects as needed. The next subjects we will address will be dependent on the 2010 Report Card. The teachers who work on individual subjects will conduct staff development with other teachers systemwide in the results of the projects. The success of our work will be based on a comparison of the 2010-2011 to the 2011-2012 Report Cards. Our choices for measuring success are increasing value added scores, increasing achievement scores, or decreasing the number of students in Accelerate 1. We have chosen to focus on academic achievement.
- Activity 3: Because eight of our twenty-two (36 percent) administrators could retire at any time and four (18 percent) more could retire in the next five years, we propose to offer an administrators' academy of sorts. Our objective is to provide support for existing administrators (in addition to the beginning principals' academy, beginning assistant principals' academy, and beginning supervisors' academy) to the policies/procedures of our school system; evaluations of both professional and support staff; the mentoring of new teachers in teaching strategies, classroom management, etc.; financial planning; the school plant; athletics; discipline; and public relations. We want our administrators to receive an in-depth understanding of increasing student achievement. We will pay ten prospective administrators a stipend to attend sessions on these disciplines. We will hire consultants to instruct these prospective administrators as well as our existing administrators. We can utilize our distance learning labs to "bring in" consultants as well as conduct meetings utilizing all three sites so that our employees do not necessarily have to travel very far to attend the sessions. We will send our prospective administrators to the state's LEAD conference.
- Activity 4: With accountability expectations of teachers so high, we believe we need to expand our technology to both aide our teachers in immediate feedback of data to adjust instruction and also to allow them mobility in their classrooms to ensure all students stay on task. Both measures will help students achieve, thus stay in school and graduate. We will provide professional development for classroom teachers on the use of interactive boards, electronic tablets, and individual response systems so that they can utilize the technology in their classes. We feel that our students are probably more technologically savvy than many of our teachers and will readily accept any technological "gadgets" we can provide. Such purchases will enhance the technology we already provide to our teachers. Teachers' use of individual response systems will enable teachers to evaluate student achievement on each standard/objective to drive instruction, that is, to allow

teachers to either move on to the next standard/objective or reteach, try another strategy, etc. With such capability, a teacher can better prepare a student for high-stakes state testing, thus increasing student achievement. Interactive boards allow students to stay engaged, allow teachers the freedom to walk about the room as students work, and allow all students to learn from other students. Such technology will enable teachers to identify students who are struggling so that interventions can be put in place immediately to help students achieve and to prevent them from falling behind.

Please contact this office if you have any questions or if I can provide additional details.

Yours truly,

David W. Huss, Director
Obion County Schools