

A photograph of a woman and two young children on a playground structure, with a large green circle overlaying the right side of the image. The woman is at the top, upside down, smiling. The two children are below her, also smiling. The entire image has a green tint.

# A Bold Vision for Our Future Workforce

Chattanooga 2.0 Growing Workforce Talent





CHA2.0

# CHATTANOOGA 2.0: A BOLD VISION FOR HAMILTON COUNTY'S WORKFORCE TALENT

**Hamilton County has heavily invested in bringing attractive jobs to the community, and that investment is paying off. 7**

A NEW KIND OF JOB GROWTH. 8

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITY. 8

**The majority of Hamilton County residents do not have the level of education required by the industries growing in the area. 9**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPTIMISM. 10

**Hamilton County is falling behind its peers and the state on a number of educational outcomes. 12**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: STAGNANT FOUNDATIONS. 15

MIDDLE SCHOOLS: LOSING MOMENTUM. 16

HIGH SCHOOLS: LOSING GROUND. 19

GRADUATION RATES: MILLIONS IN LOST WAGES. 20

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPTIMISM. 23

**Not only are Hamilton County Schools falling behind, but students also lack equal access to good schools. 23**

UNEQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL. 24

THE IZONE EXAMPLE. 26

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPTIMISM. 28

**Despite enrolling in colleges and technical schools, high school graduates in Hamilton County are not attaining advanced education. 32**

POSTSECONDARY GRADUATION: LOSING TALENT. 33

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPTIMISM. 38

**To take advantage of economic growth, Hamilton County must work to increase educational attainment by improving K-12 outcomes and postsecondary completion. 41**

**The life of a student is the pathway to success. 42**

2015-2016

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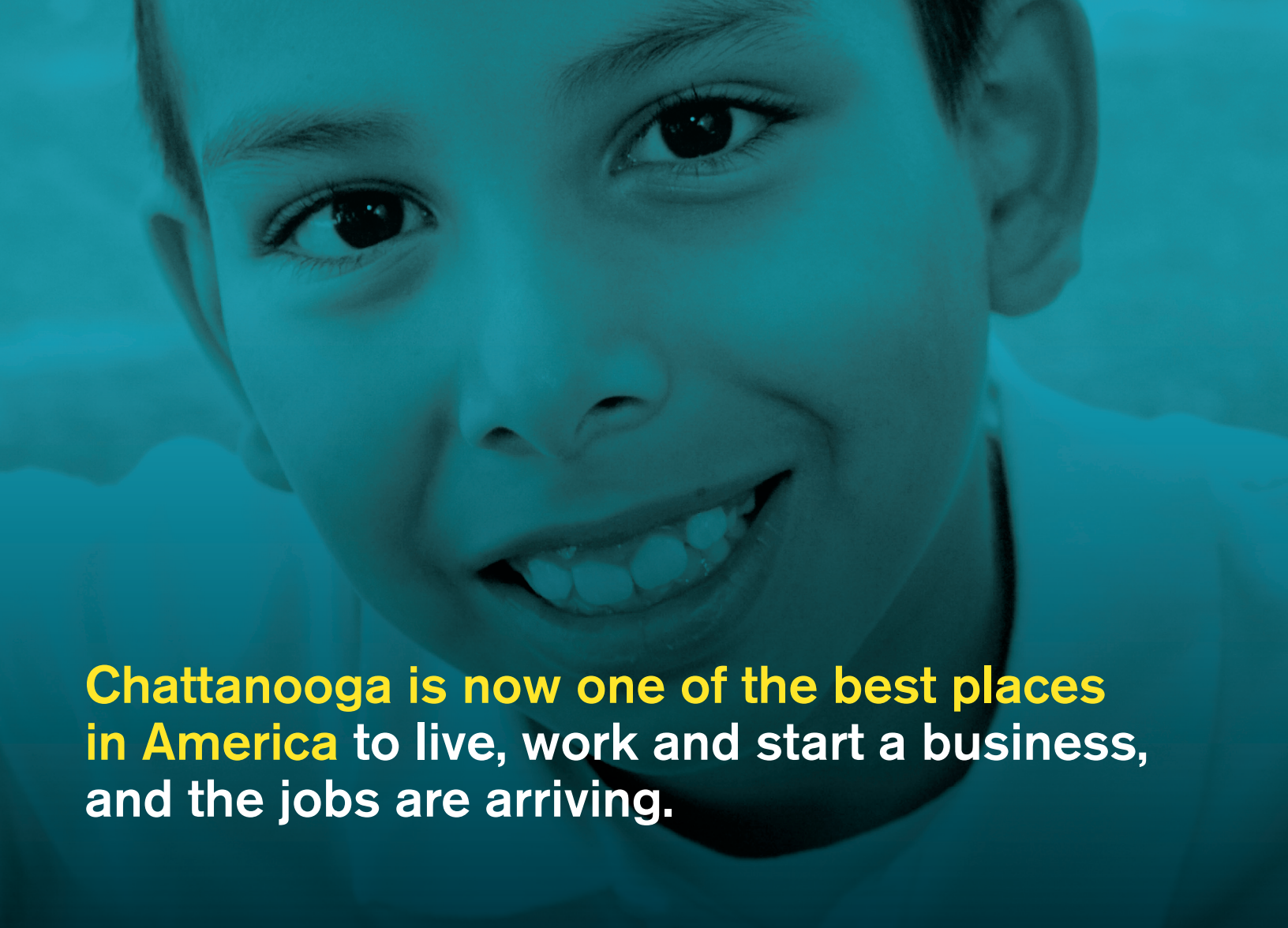
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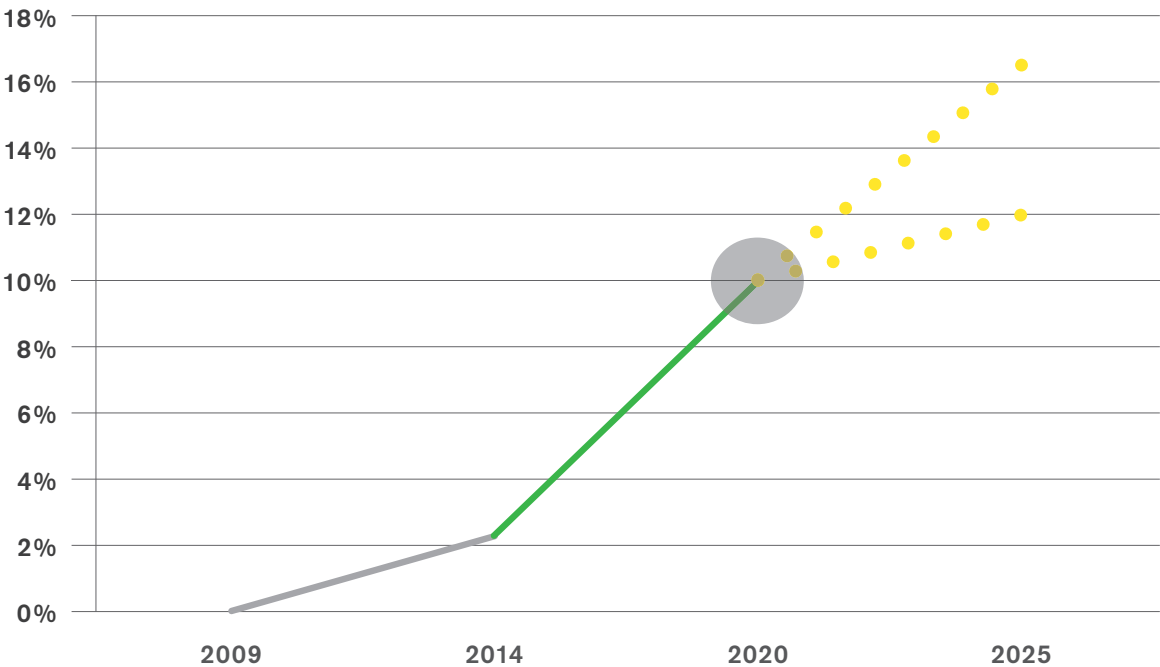
JARED T. BIGHAM





**Chattanooga is now one of the best places in America** to live, work and start a business, and the jobs are arriving.

HAMILTON COUNTY  
PROJECTED JOB GROWTH



**PAST GROWTH**

Volkswagen Expansion  
  
7,000 jobs: the difference between sustaining growth and returning to solid but slow growth.





# Building the Smartest Community in the South

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chattanooga/Hamilton County has become one of the most innovative and economically promising places in America for new job creation and business investment. In just the past five years, Hamilton County has added jobs at a higher rate than Tennessee as a whole, trailing only Nashville among the major metro areas in terms of job growth in the state.

We are nearing 30 years of an incredible renaissance, which has propelled Chattanooga to the forefront as a vibrant and livable community. Our thriving downtown, revitalized neighborhoods, world-class waterfront and public spaces, and gigabit internet infrastructure are the hallmark successes of a community that has pulled together and worked tirelessly to overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges. And the efforts and investments in rebuilding our community's infrastructure and amenities have paid off.

The Chattanooga region's economy is growing in ways that would have been unimaginable 30 years ago. We are experiencing unprecedented job growth, especially in higher-wage industries such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, healthcare, insurance and technology. In fact, Chattanooga is one of the top 10 metro areas in the country for growing advanced industries, having added more than 12,000 of these high-paying jobs since 2010, and that number is expected to quadruple in the next five years.

These recent job gains present a critical opportunity to boost our standard of living and raise family incomes throughout the county. However, despite Chattanooga's enormous economic potential, the region currently lacks the workforce required to sustain our success. In the coming years, over 80 percent of jobs paying a living wage (\$35,000) in our area will require a postsecondary certificate or degree, but currently, just 35 percent of students in Hamilton County are likely to obtain this required level of education.



# In the coming years, over 80% of jobs paying a living annual wage (\$35,000) in our area will require a degree or certificate after high school.

Though our community has overcome huge challenges and made incredible progress, our commitment to education and opportunity has not kept pace and, as a consequence, we are facing some sobering statistics:

- 4 out of 10 students in our county live in poverty, which presents major barriers for academic success.
- Less than half of children entering Kindergarten are “ready to learn.”
- Nearly 60 percent of all 3rd graders do not read on grade level.
- Hamilton County schools have fallen further behind the state and other metro areas in every single high school test and on average ACT scores.
- On the recent state report card, Hamilton County schools trailed the state's other major metro areas in academic growth.
- Only 24 percent of Chattanooga State students and 51 percent of UTC students graduate with a degree within six years.
- 15,000 existing jobs in Hamilton County are not filled by Hamilton County residents due to lack of training, skills and education.

In short, Chattanooga is on a risky trajectory. If we do not act now to promote new approaches and make smart investments to improve educational outcomes for students, the majority of our residents will not be able to benefit from the recent influx of jobs that has been the result of years of hard work and investment. Ultimately, we run the risk that the economic boost we are currently experiencing will only

be temporary, as companies struggle to find outside talent that can fill their jobs, which means our region loses its competitive advantage.

But, despite the current challenges, there are many reasons to believe that our community is equipped with the assets, experience and will to dramatically improve our educational system for all children.

When it comes to public education, there are many talented and dedicated teachers, principals, educators and higher education leaders in our community who are working hard to make a difference. While there is no silver bullet or clear path to transforming education, we can build off of the successes and lessons learned from great efforts both locally and from across the country. There are some things that we know have the potential to make a big difference, including: great teaching and leadership, ensuring strong foundations in early learning, building better college and career connections, creating postsecondary supports, and aligning education for the 21st century.

Going forward, we know the most successful communities will be those that ensure their residents are equipped with the skills to be successful in the new high-tech, digitally-driven, knowledge-based economy.

Imagine Chattanooga as a place that provides a great public education and pathways to promising careers for every child in our community. Imagine Chattanooga as “The Smartest Community in the South.” By committing to the bold—but attainable—goal of having 75 percent of Hamilton County residents earn a postsecondary certification, we will improve the quality of life for all residents.



## ACHIEVING A 75% POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT WILL MEAN:

- 100,000 more local residents with access to jobs that pay over \$35,000
- \$4,500 average raise for every adult worker in Hamilton County
- \$1.1 billion more in total wages in our county every year
- 8,000 adults brought out of poverty

This report is intended to serve as the baseline—the starting point for a community-wide push to ensure that Chattanooga is able to sustain and build upon the success we've created together over the past three decades. The information found within these pages provides a better understanding of the challenge, and recognition that it will take community-wide effort and commitment to implement the bold and transformative solutions that are needed.

Who has a role to play? We all do. The data tells a sobering story in some areas, but it also highlights a definitive moment in time where community partnerships, monetary resources, and focused strategies can be rallied to propel Chattanooga forward.

For some individual leaders and organizations, Chattanooga 2.0 may bring only a willingness to embrace the challenges and endorse the opportunities found in this report. For others, Chattanooga 2.0 creates a chance for organizations and individuals to create much more meaningful community and neighborhood conversations towards bold and actionable steps. For others, it may mean simply moving past what is clearly not working and devoting significantly more time, energy and resources into new strategies and partnerships in a unified approach that clearly draws a definitive line in the sand that the status quo is unacceptable, if we are going to prepare and support our community for the jobs of the future.

Our community has faced and overcome tough challenges before. We have always pulled together to make sure the foundations and infrastructure are in place for a thriving city. Now it is time to invest in our people, ensuring greater opportunity for every neighborhood, and for all of our residents to help drive our community's future.

**If we want Chattanooga to sustain its economic success and improved quality of life, now is the time to set a bold vision for the future of Chattanooga and work together to make it a reality.**

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Nearly 10,000 new jobs will arrive in Hamilton County over the next few years as a result of our rapid expansion in automotive manufacturing and other advanced industries.
- Hamilton County is experiencing the fastest job growth in the area thanks to fast growing sectors in logistics, healthcare, insurance, advanced manufacturing, and technology.
- Chattanooga ranked 1st on Outside Magazine's 2015 list of 'Best Cities to Live'.
- Chattanooga ranked 4th on WalletHub's 2015 list of 'Best Cities to Start a Business.'
- Hamilton County schools already outperform the state on math in grades three-five.

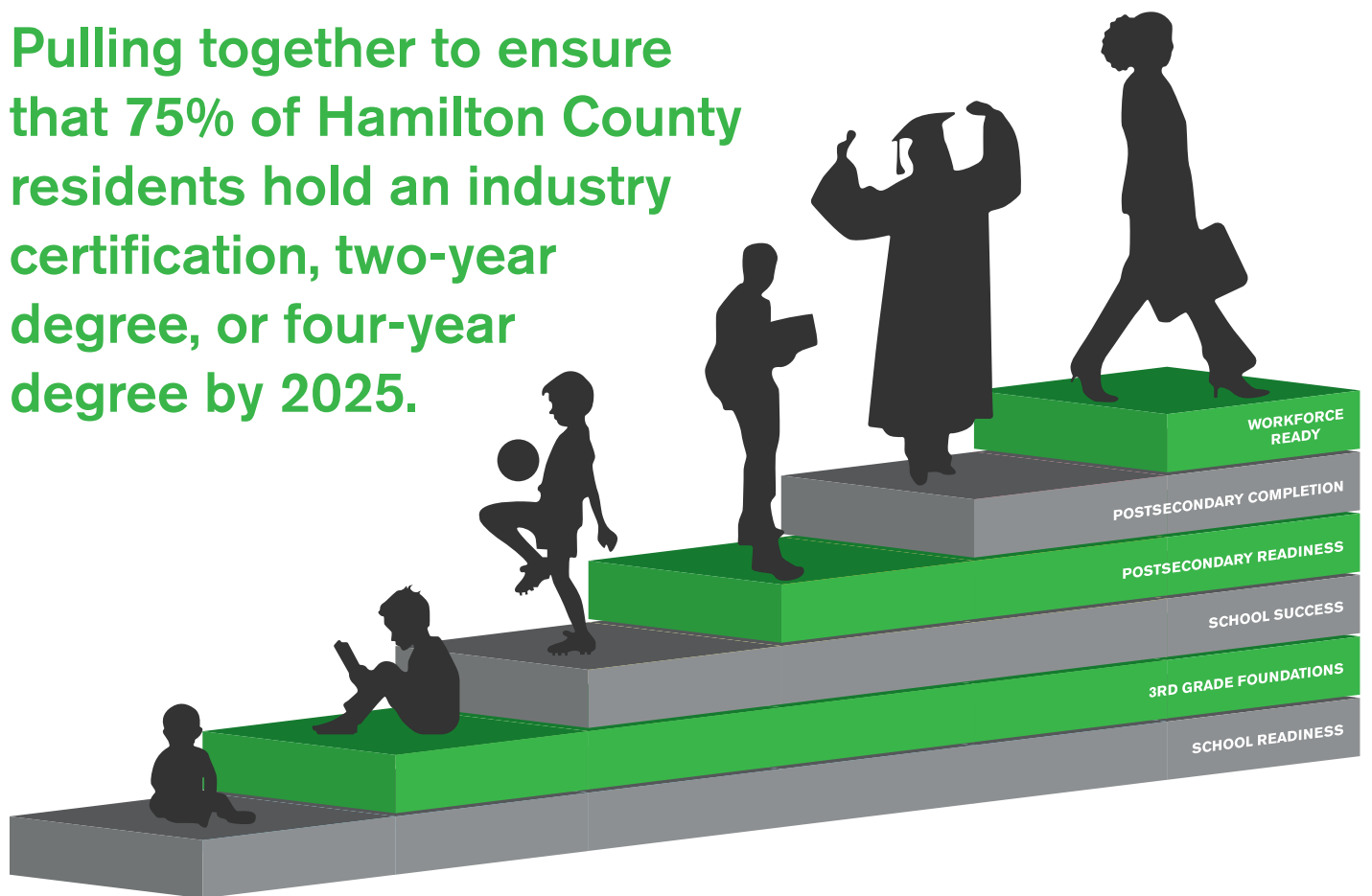
### BUT WE HAVE MUCH MORE WORK TO DO...

- 15,000 existing jobs in Hamilton County are not filled by Hamilton County residents due to lack of training, skills and education.
- A black child in Hamilton County is 33 times more likely than a white child to attend one of the lowest performing schools in the state.
- Only 24 percent of Chattanooga State students and 51 percent of UTC students graduate with a degree within six years.
- Hamilton County schools have fallen further behind the state in every single high school test since 2012.





Pulling together to ensure that 75% of Hamilton County residents hold an industry certification, two-year degree, or four-year degree by 2025.



# Building Opportunities: Sharing the Success of Our Growing Economy

HAMILTON COUNTY HAS HEAVILY INVESTED IN BRINGING NEW AND BETTER JOBS TO THE COMMUNITY, AND THAT INVESTMENT IS PAYING OFF.

Hamilton County, home of Chattanooga, has pushed its way to the forefront of innovative and economically promising places in the United States. With a history of revitalization and renewal, Chattanooga is no stranger to being the underdog. In the late 1960s, the federal government declared the city's air the dirtiest in the nation, perpetuating a narrative of Chattanooga as America's dirtiest city.

What followed was an aggressive cleanup effort and a successful bid to rebrand Chattanooga as "the Scenic City of the South." In recent decades, the public, private, and philanthropic sectors in the region have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to revitalize the city's riverfront and reorient its economy around tourism and clean, high-tech industry to improve the city's overall quality of life.

When it comes to reimagining its future and then going to work to get it done, no community in the South has been more successful than Chattanooga. From revitalizing our downtown—to introducing America to the power and potential that comes with ultra-high speed internet—Chattanooga has turned its downtown from a ghost town into a boom town—and the physical changes in the city have been constant and impressive.

These efforts and investments in rebuilding the city's infrastructure and amenities have paid off. Chattanooga is now one of the best places in America to live, work and start a business, and the jobs are arriving.

## OUR GOALS

### WORKFORCE READY

- 100,000 more residents with jobs that make over \$35,000
- 65% of jobs in Hamilton County jobs held by Hamilton County residents

### POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

- 90% of high school grads enrolling in a postsecondary institution
- 80% six-year graduation rate with postsecondary degrees or certificates

### POSTSECONDARY READINESS

- Hamilton County ACT average surpasses the state
- 1,000 summer jobs and internships for HS students

### SCHOOL SUCCESS

- 75% of students on grade level in math by 8th grade
- 100% of students with career exploration portfolios

### 3RD GRADE FOUNDATIONS

- 90% of students reading on grade level by 3rd grade

### SCHOOL READINESS

- 100% of students with access to Pre-K programming
- 1,000 new Pre-K seats



### WHAT DOES 'ADVANCED INDUSTRIES' MEAN?

Jobs in advanced industries vary, but some of the common jobs in this category are:

- Aerospace manufacturing
- Pharmaceutical and medicine production
- Semiconductor manufacturing
- Computer systems design
- Software publishing
- Automotive manufacturing
- Scientific research and development
- Wireless telecommunications

### A NEW KIND OF JOB GROWTH

Over the past 5 years, Hamilton County has added jobs at a higher rate than Tennessee as a whole, trailing only Nashville among the major metro areas in terms of job growth in the state.

These new jobs are the types of jobs that will change the trajectory of Hamilton County's economic future. Chattanooga is now one of the top 10 metro areas in the country for growing advanced industries, adding more than 12,000 advanced industries jobs since 2010. This growth in advanced industries accounts for almost all of the new jobs Hamilton County has gained over the past five years.

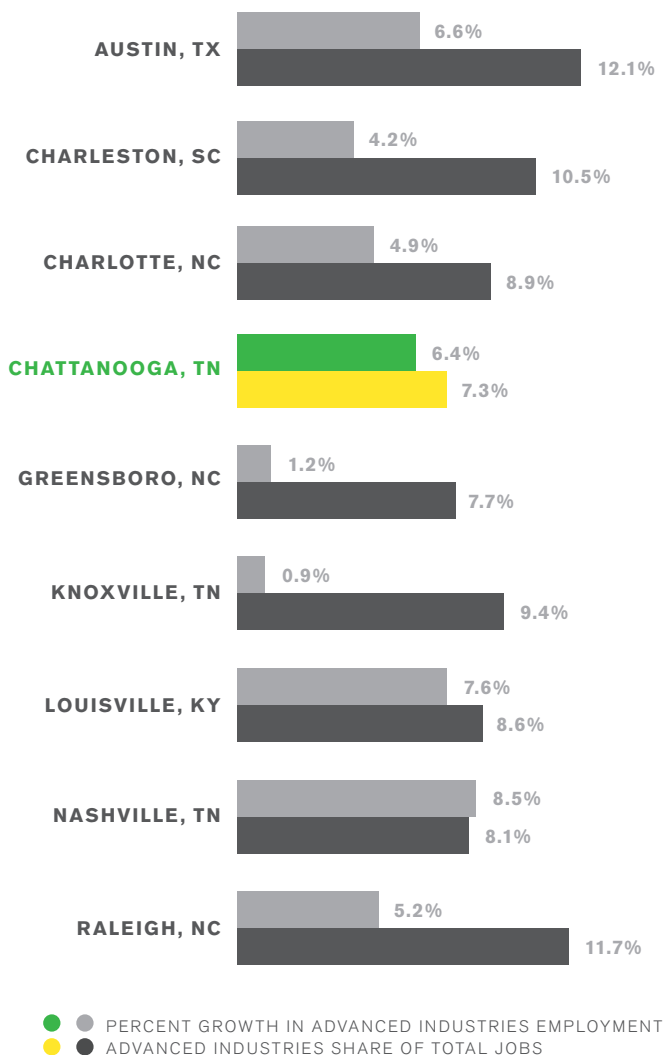
Advanced industries have grown in Hamilton County primarily due to auto manufacturing, but the growth seen up to this point is only the beginning. Automotive expansions already announced should add more than 2,000 new jobs, which should spur the creation of another nearly 8,000 related jobs, on top of the region's projected job growth unrelated to these expansions.

To put this in perspective, this job influx over the next five years should yield nearly four times the number of new jobs as were created in the county during the past five years.

### TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITY

In addition to job creation gains in automotive manufacturing, other advanced industries will also have opportunities to grow in Hamilton County. In other fast-growing cities, advanced industries represent a growing and larger share of total jobs, and Hamilton County is now catching up on this trend.

For Hamilton County residents, this potential growth in advanced industries represents an unparalleled economic opportunity. Workers in advanced industries earn, on average, over \$20,000 more per year than other workers in the metro area.



2 Based on the gap between education requirements of currently posted jobs and current education attainment of Hamilton Co. residents, applied to entire county economy

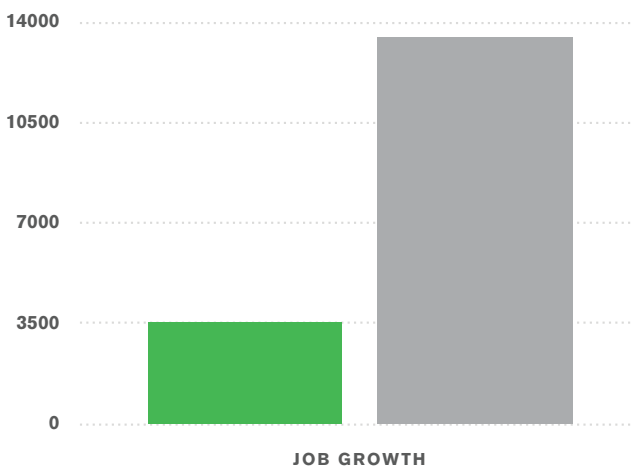
The potential of adding thousands of these high-paying jobs to Hamilton County could change the trajectory of the county and the lives of its residents. However, what remains to be

seen is whether Hamilton County will be able to sustain its position as a high-growth business destination.

## Workers in advanced industries earn, on average, over \$20,000 more per year than other workers in the metro area.

FIGURE 4

### PROJECTED HAMILTON COUNTY JOB GROWTH



One of the biggest determinations will be whether Chattanooga/Hamilton County can meet the workforce demands these advanced industries present.

But the majority of Hamilton County residents do not have the level of education required by the advanced industries now growing in the area.

Only 38 percent of Hamilton County residents have some type of postsecondary credential. While in the past, this level of educational attainment was adequate, the demands of Chattanooga's growing economy, especially in advanced industries, require many more skills and more education.

As noted previously, 15,000 existing jobs in Hamilton County are not filled by Hamilton County residents due to lack of training, skills and education. This also mirrors what local employers are reporting in that they are having a hard time recruiting employees.

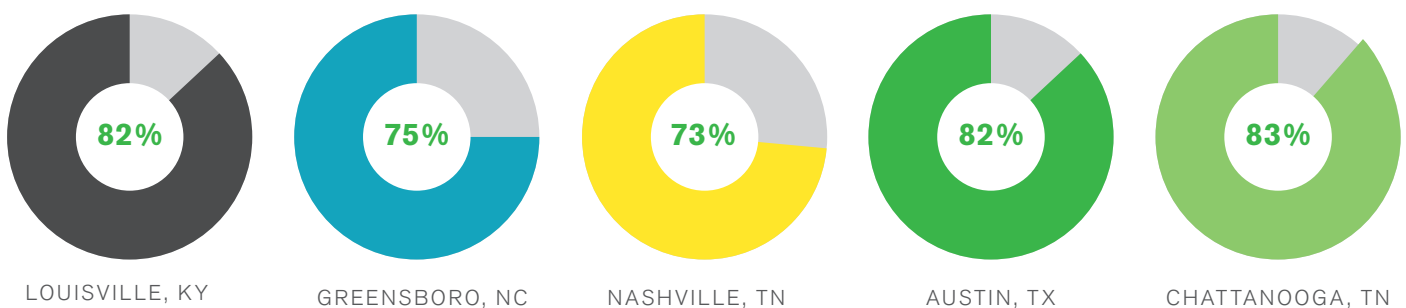
The result? Only 56 percent of Hamilton County jobs are held by Hamilton residents. In short, the jobs are here, but the workforce pool is not currently available to fill them.

Two-thirds of current job postings in the automotive manufacturing sector explicitly require some form of postsecondary credential. And since half of all advanced industry jobs require a bachelor's degree, and the rest often require industry certification or other training after high school, Chattanooga's aspiring workforce clearly needs more education and preparation.

Educational attainment is also important outside of the advanced industries. The top ten employers in Hamilton County include insurance companies, healthcare companies, and government, and, of these employers, 55 percent of currently posted jobs require some form of postsecondary education. (If job postings that do not include their education requirements are excluded, the number jumps to 74 percent.)

For residents who want employment that delivers not just earnings but prosperity, postsecondary education is even more important. Currently, 83 percent of posted jobs in Hamilton County that pay \$35,000 or more require a postsecondary credential, and the high rate of demand for postsecondary education is found in similar fast-growing cities throughout the country.

### PERCENT OF JOBS POSTED THAT PAY OVER \$35,000 AND REQUIRE A POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL<sup>3</sup>



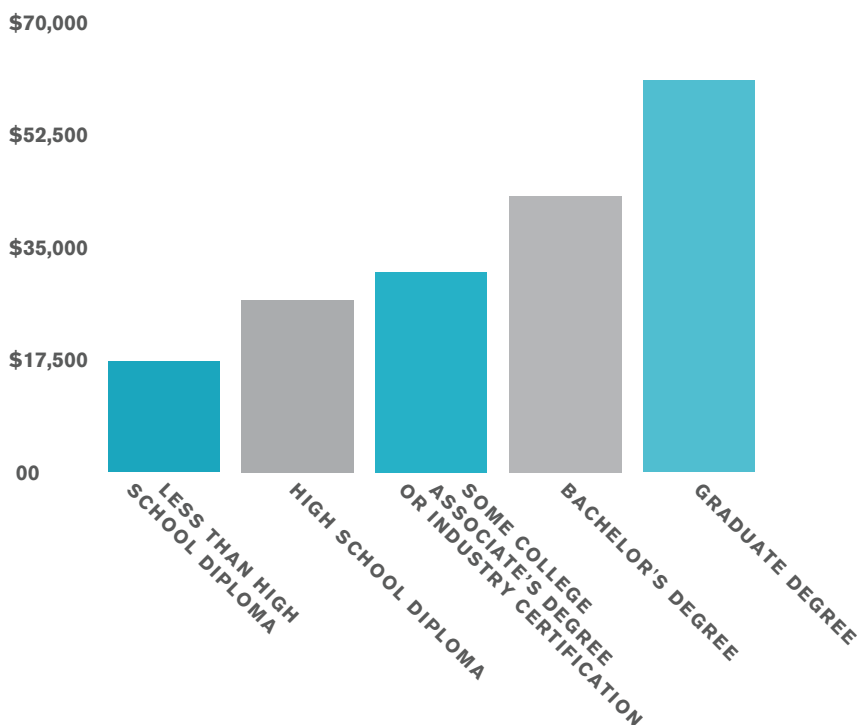
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2012).



# Better skills and higher levels of education means better jobs and higher incomes for local residents:

FIGURE 7

## MEDIAN PERSONAL INCOME IN HAMILTON COUNTY



### OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPTIMISM

- An estimated 17,000 Hamilton County residents aged 18-24, or 52 percent, have completed some college or technical training after high school. Helping this generation of postsecondary students to complete credentials will ensure they are better prepared for employment.
- Hamilton County appears to be facing the same talent gap as the rest of the United States, where 54 percent of employers report difficulty finding employees with the right skills. But solving this gap is what can set Hamilton County apart from its peers and deliver sustainable prosperity to its citizens.
- Fulfilling the need for more education is not just about helping residents pursue their individual prosperity. Increasing the number of college graduates has been shown to have a positive effect on wages for all workers. For every percent increase in workers who have a four-year degree in a community, wages increase for all workers by an average of one percent.

Higher levels of education lead to higher median incomes. And there is compelling evidence that tangible associate's degrees and industry certifications provide much greater value than just some college without a credential. In fact, going to college for a few semesters without attaining any credential has actually been shown to add close to zero value over a high school diploma, again demonstrating the value of not just entering a postsecondary institution, but actually completing a program.

Although lower paying jobs remain for those with limited education, these jobs are also the ones most at risk in the years ahead. In fact, the top 10 occupations projected to decline the fastest in Hamilton County over the next 10 years are those that require only a high school diploma or less.

Building a more skilled workforce is a complex effort that requires the cooperation of many. However, one thing is clear: as new, high-paying jobs arrive in Hamilton County, they can only be filled by people with industry certifications, associate's degrees, and bachelor's degrees.





# The Challenge: Strengthening the Pathways to Career Success

CHATTANOOGA/HAMILTON COUNTY IS FALLING BEHIND OTHER METRO AREAS IN THE STATE ON A NUMBER OF EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES.

While Chattanooga/Hamilton County has created new and unprecedented career opportunities for more of our citizens, our educational system is not keeping up.

- Hamilton County is falling behind the state in several educational benchmarks, including literacy, math and ACT scores.
- On the recent state report card, Hamilton County schools trailed the state's other major metro areas in academic growth.
- Just 35 percent of high school graduates are likely to complete any postsecondary credential.
- Based on student growth, less than half of teachers in Hamilton County were rated as "Above Expectations" last year, and the percentage of "Above Expectations" teachers in high-poverty schools was just 30 percent.

But, despite these troubling statistics, there are also reasons for optimism that indicate progress and the reversal of recent trends may be around the corner.

Schools like East Side Elementary, Rivermont Elementary and

East Ridge Middle, where, despite serving populations of over 85 percent economically-disadvantaged children, student learning is consistently outpacing the state. Other schools, like CSAS and CGLA, also exceeded student success and growth expectations for 2014-15.

These bright spots provide hope. They show that in Hamilton County, there are great teachers, committed families, and a supportive community, and when we all work in concert, there can be exceptional outcomes for our students. We have an opportunity to learn from the great examples in these and other schools and to build on their success throughout the system.

However, much more work needs to be done, and greater progress across the district must happen soon, or too many students will not be prepared to be the future workers we will need to meet the needs of our employers and to help propel the community forward.

It is clear that students face barriers to success throughout their education and that we must work to strengthen our educational pipeline from cradle to career, if we want to ensure opportunity for all students.

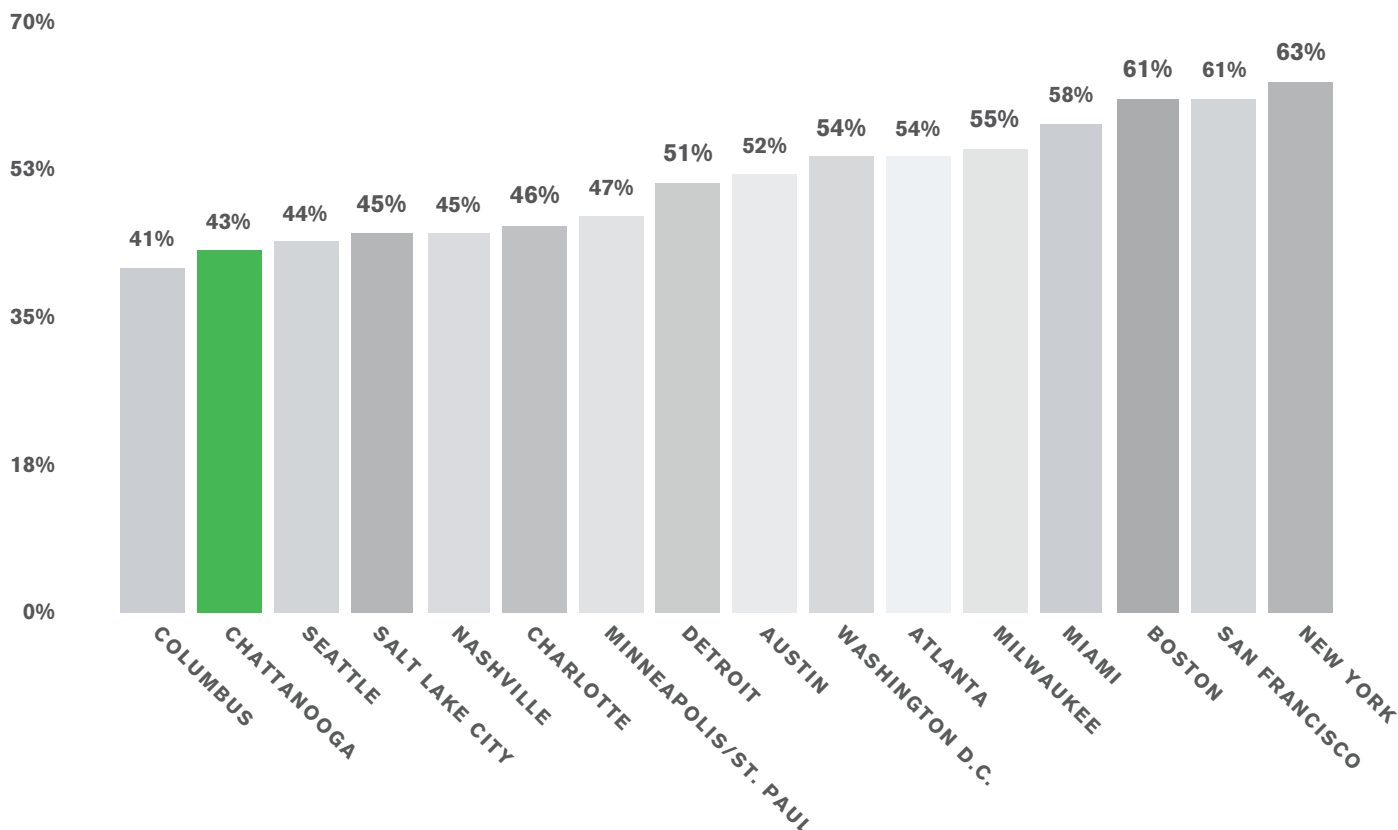
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## UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: ACHIEVEMENT VS. GROWTH

- Throughout this report, you will find a number of metrics related to school performance. There are two main ways to measure school performance based on testing data: student achievement and student growth.
- Student achievement measures a student's performance on a test at a single point in time and compares that performance to a set standard. Student growth measures a student's progress between two points in time and compares performance to his/her own prior performance.
- Student achievement and growth are not necessarily linked. A school can have high student achievement without seeing student growth. Conversely, a school can help students learn and progress and show high student growth, but still have relatively low student achievement if those students started out further behind.

FIGURE 8

## PERCENT OF 3-4 YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL



## KINDERGARTEN READINESS: STUDENTS ARRIVE WITH DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PREPARATION

Learning is critical for students even before their first day of school. Many of the struggles that present themselves later in a student's education experience can be traced back to challenges that began in the early childhood years.

**In Hamilton County, just 43 percent of 3 and 4 year-olds are enrolled in early childhood learning programs.**

This lack of early learning and enrollment is directly reflected in the following years, where preliminary data suggests that six out of ten students who arrive in Kindergarten in Hamilton County schools are at risk for not being ready to learn, and

nearly a third are severely behind and at risk for never being able to catch up without intensive intervention.

The different levels of Pre-Kindergarten preparation vary greatly by school and emphasize the negative impact that concentrated poverty has on schools. For example, 16 public schools in Hamilton County have fewer than 20 percent of students deemed at risk, while 12 schools have greater than 60 percent of students at risk. The elementary schools within the feeder pattern of The Howard School, in particular, face a challenge, with three elementary schools serving over 80 percent of students at risk for not being ready to learn in Kindergarten.



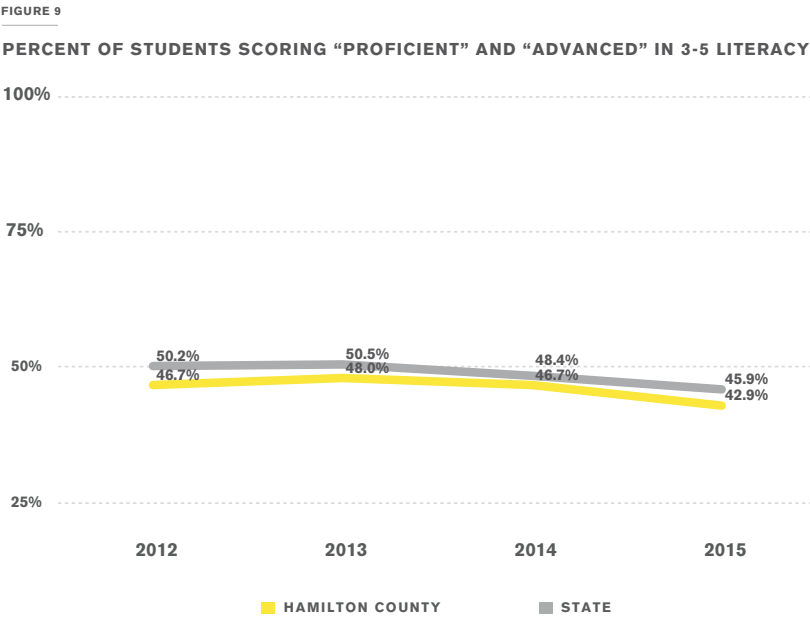


ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: STAGNANT FOUNDATIONS IN LITERACY

Success in elementary schools lays the foundation for middle and high schools and allows middle and high schools to focus on accelerating students toward opportunities after high school, rather than devoting precious resources to remediation and playing catch up. Yet, in the early grades, Hamilton County has remained largely

stagnant on literacy over the past several years, with only 43 percent of students in grades 3-5 performing on grade level in the most recent school year, slightly trailing the state. This includes four elementary schools where fewer than one in five students are reading on grade level.

Research has shown that students who are not reading on grade level by third grade will struggle for the rest of their academic careers.



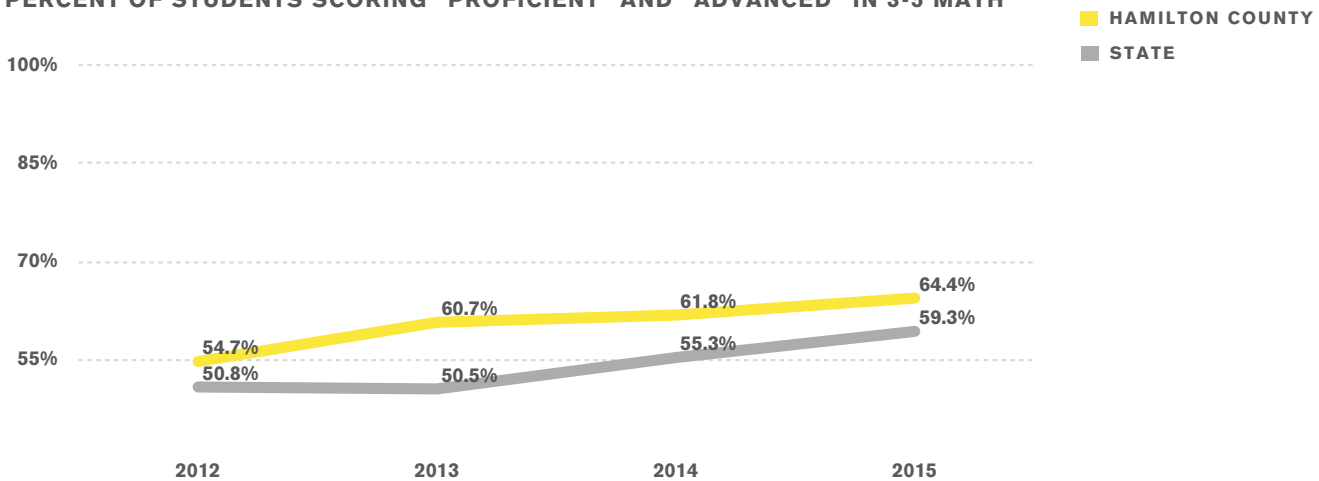
In fact, results of a longitudinal study of nearly 4,000 students found that those who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to leave school without a high school diploma, and for the worst readers, the drop out rate is nearly six times greater. These low literacy students represent more than three-fifths of those who eventually drop out or fail to graduate on time.

However, math is a strong point in our local elementary schools. Hamilton County outperforms the state in elementary math. If such performance in early grades' math can be sustained, we should see the secondary math deficit in the county begin to close.



FIGURE 10

## PERCENT OF STUDENTS SCORING “PROFICIENT” AND “ADVANCED” IN 3-5 MATH



East Side Elementary in particular shines, beating both the state and district averages in math. East Side has also shown students learning faster than expected in both of the past two years, and is considered to be in the top five percent in the state for

student growth. These are impressive feats for any school and an important proof point for a school that serves some of the most at-risk students in the district, with 98 percent economically disadvantaged and 70 percent English language learners.

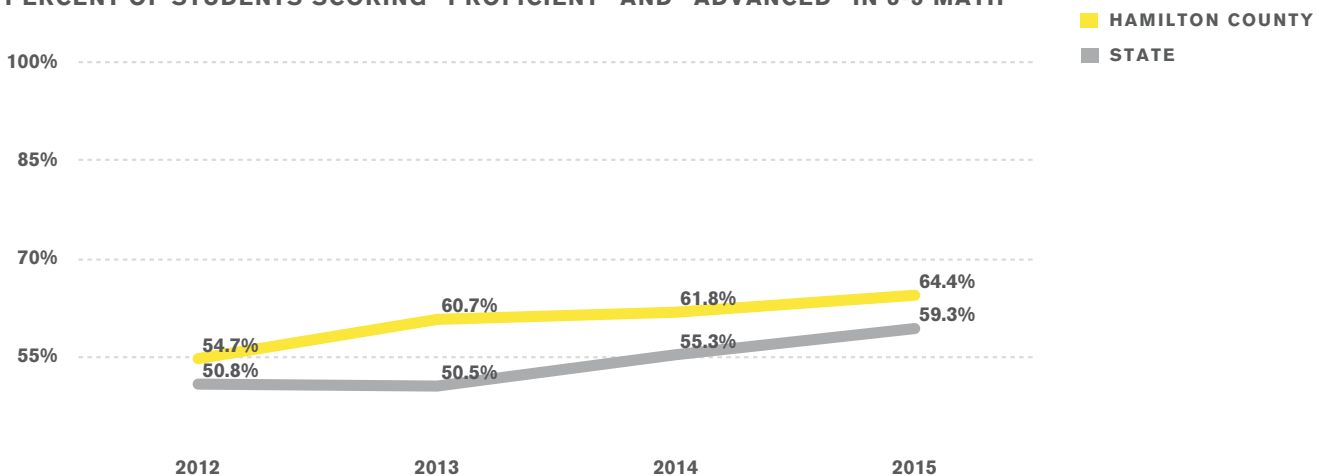
## MIDDLE SCHOOLS: LOSING MOMENTUM

Middle schools provide a vital link between the foundations built in elementary school and the readiness required in high school. While we know that Hamilton County schools typically experience a decline in enrollment of approximately three to

four percent as students move from 5th to 6th grade - largely due to students enrolling in area private schools – this cannot fully explain the drop in student achievement seen between elementary and middle school.

FIGURE 10

## PERCENT OF STUDENTS SCORING “PROFICIENT” AND “ADVANCED” IN 3-5 MATH











While Hamilton County is making strides in elementary math and numeracy, this upward trend takes a noticeable downturn during the middle school years.

In literacy tests, where students almost achieve parity with the state by 5th grade, they then begin to fall back in middle school. By the end of middle school, students have fallen slightly behind their peers across the state. And there is little evidence that they will catch up in high school.

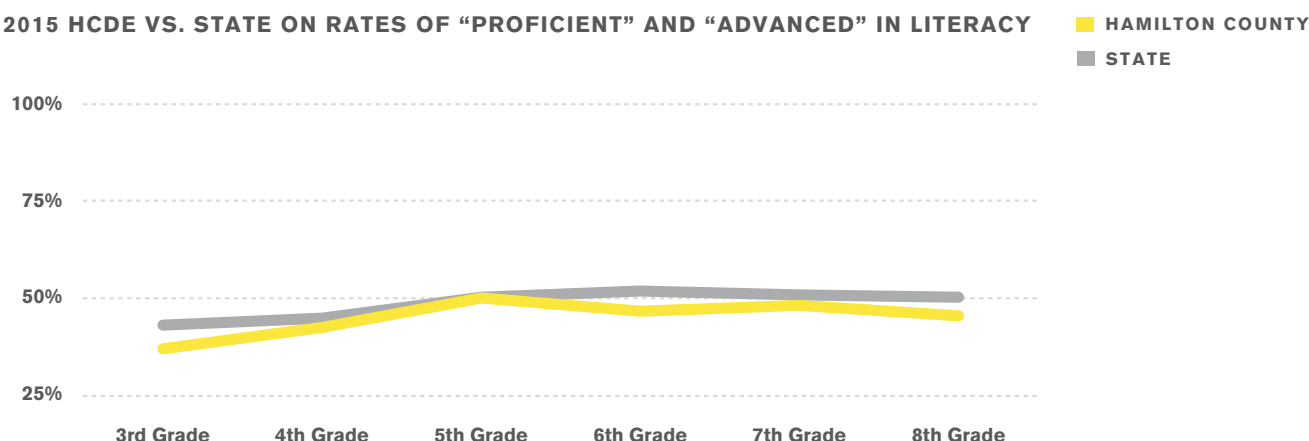
Looking at student growth, and not just proficiency, to see whether students are learning faster than expected does not paint a different picture. Two-thirds of middle schools in

Hamilton County did not meet expected rates for student growth. Of the six middle schools that grew their students at least as fast as expected, CSAS, East Ridge Middle School, and East Lake Academy of Fine Arts led the way with student growth that was significantly above expectations.

In the earlier 2012-13 school year, just over half of middle schools grew their students faster than expected. So although two years of decline have led to the current situation, past performance demonstrates that a return to systemically better results is not only possible, but has been done before.

FIGURE 12

## 2015 HCDE VS. STATE ON RATES OF “PROFICIENT” AND “ADVANCED” IN LITERACY



## HIGH SCHOOLS: LOSING GROUND

In order to ensure Hamilton County residents and our community are not left behind as we create new industries and new jobs, there needs to be an intense focus on high schools to accelerate the education of a broad swath of students who can serve as the talent driving Hamilton County's future.

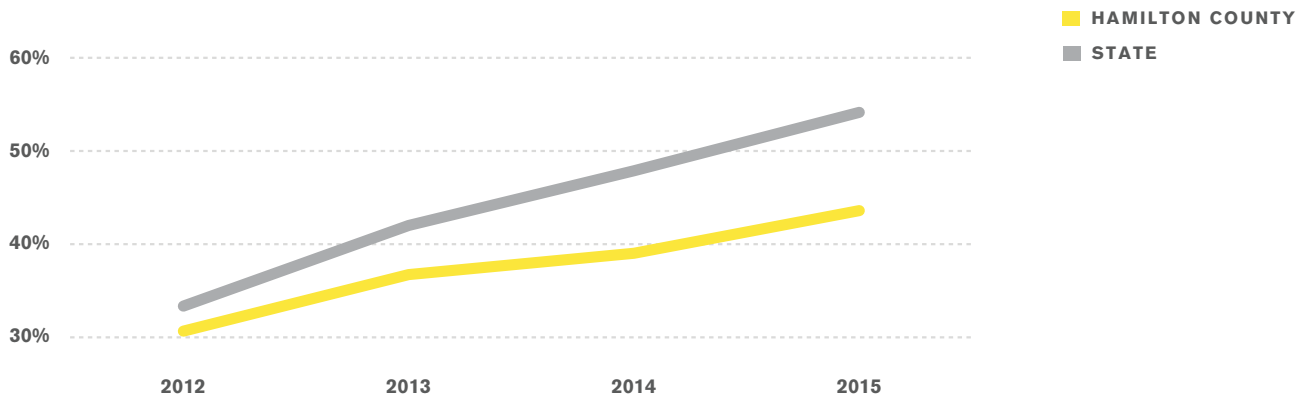
Over the past three years, the rest of Tennessee has advanced more quickly at the high school level than Hamilton County. As a result, Hamilton County high schools are falling behind,

leaving our students less prepared to take advantage of the region's growing economic opportunities.

For example, despite growth in recent years, Hamilton County has fallen further behind the state in Algebra II since 2012, leading to a gap of nearly eight points.

Similarly, focusing solely on Algebra I, a required course for all students in Tennessee and a crucial predictor of their success after high school, the data is even more troubling.

## ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN HCDE AND STATE ON ALGEBRA II



Hamilton County schools have dropped into the bottom 10 of all 141 districts in the state on Algebra I. Comparing Hamilton County schools' performance to the other three largest metropolitan districts in the state—Knox County, Davidson County and Shelby County—Hamilton County has fallen to the bottom of the pack and has been outperformed by Shelby County for two years running in Algebra I.

This is especially troubling, as much of the projected job growth in Chattanooga is in the advanced industries sector, which requires a strong foundation in math. And for our students, continued struggles in high school math, not only presents a challenge for high school graduation and college success, it is going to significantly limit the job opportunities that students can pursue.

Less than half of Hamilton County high school students are proficient or advanced in Algebra I, which is not the most difficult math course required for graduation. But it should be noted, 30 percent of 8th graders take Algebra I in an effort to increase the number of higher-level math courses they can take in high school.

This pattern of Hamilton County falling further behind the state average is now being seen in every high school subject measured by the state assessments. Although Hamilton County is demonstrating steady improvement in most of these subjects, the improvement is not keeping up with the growth being seen in other areas across the state.

### WHY IS MATH IMPORTANT?

- 72 percent of students who attend college and complete a four-year degree took a high school math course above Algebra II.
- Those with low levels of math are 50 percent more likely to be unemployed than those with higher levels of math.
- Those with low levels of math typically earn about \$1.30 less per hour.
- Many of the new jobs coming to Hamilton County include math skills in their job descriptions.

FIGURE 14

## ALGEBRA I ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN HCDE, THE STATE, AND SHELBY COUNTY

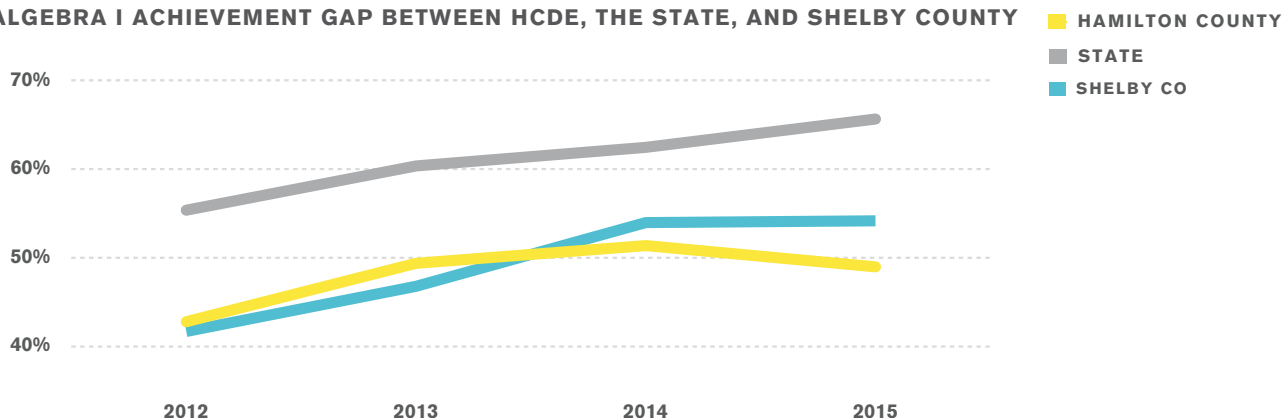
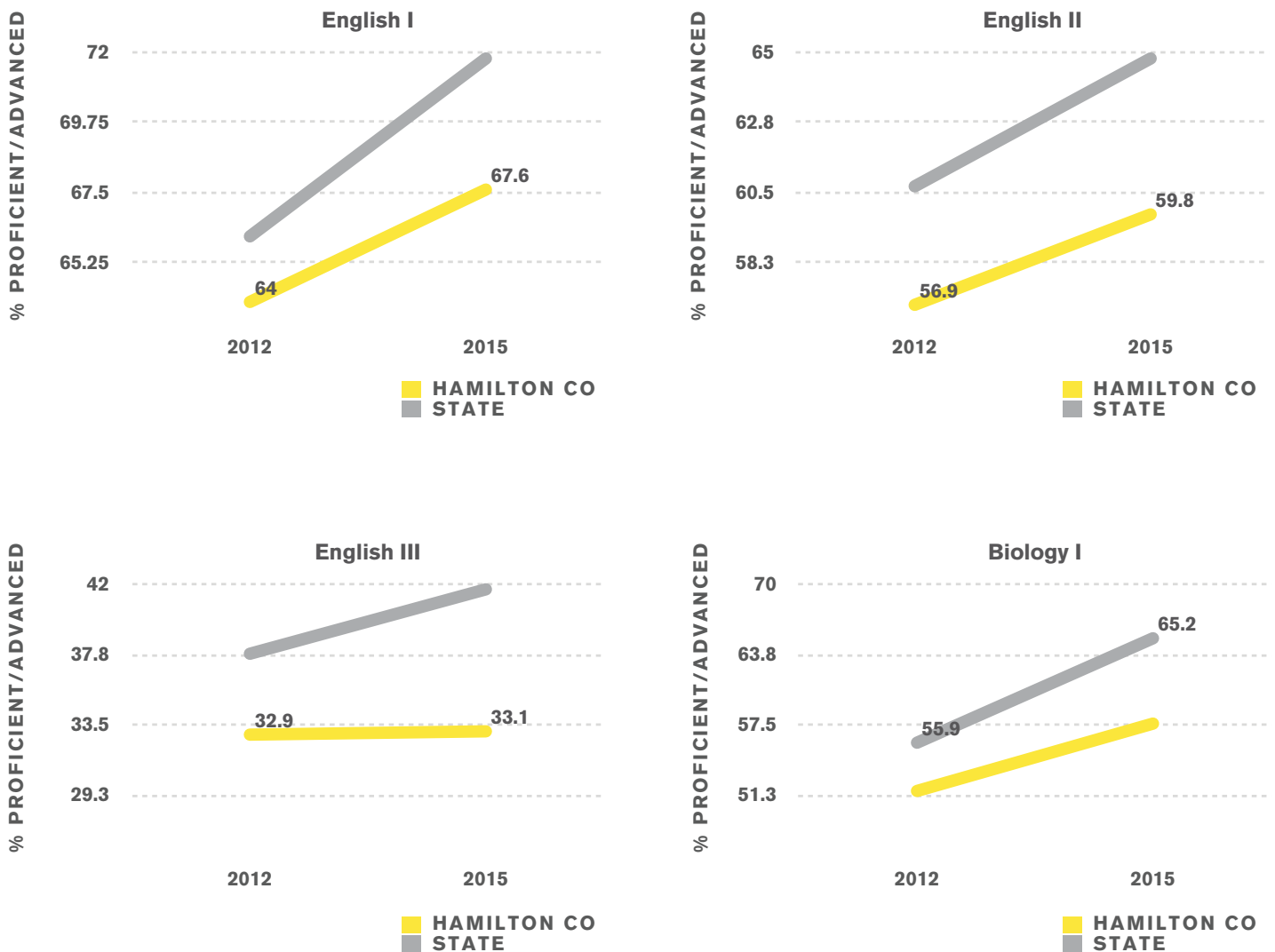






FIGURE 15

## ACHIEVEMENT GAP BETWEEN HCDE AND STATE ON ENGLISH I, II, AND III AND BIOLOGY I



Hamilton County is seeing similar results in ACT scores, another indicator of college readiness. In Hamilton County, 13 high schools have an average ACT score that is below the state average of 19.3. Four of our high schools have an average ACT score below 16, which is the minimum score required for most postsecondary opportunities.

These postsecondary opportunities include local technical schools where students can pursue industry certifications for better jobs and higher wages. Yet, the local technical school requires a minimum ACT score of 16 for all of its programs. So in the five high schools in Hamilton County with a three-year average ACT score under 16, the average student could not even get into a program where they could pursue such an industry certification.

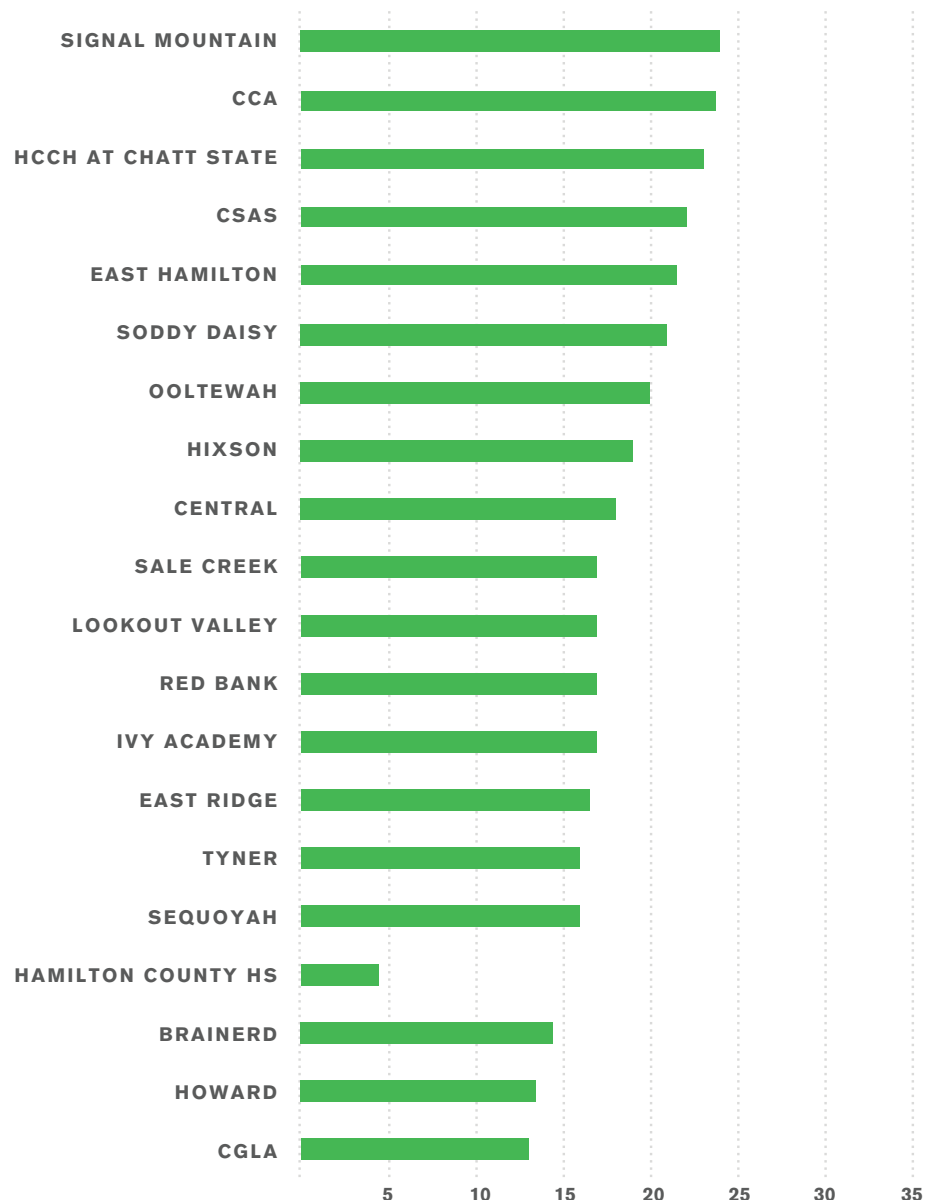
Further, for the industry certification programs in the booming industries of healthcare and advanced manufacturing, students are required to perform at a college level in both math and reading. This means continued low ACT scores will greatly limit access to postsecondary opportunities for a large swath of our student body.

# Not only are Hamilton County Schools falling behind, but too many students and families also lack equal access to good schools.

With a need for greater and much broader educational success in order to reap the benefits of our region's growing economic opportunities, one area that must be addressed is the challenge faced by too many students and families of not having access to a high-performing school.

FIGURE 16

AVERAGE 2013-14 ACT SCORE BY HIGH SCHOOL



## OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPTIMISM

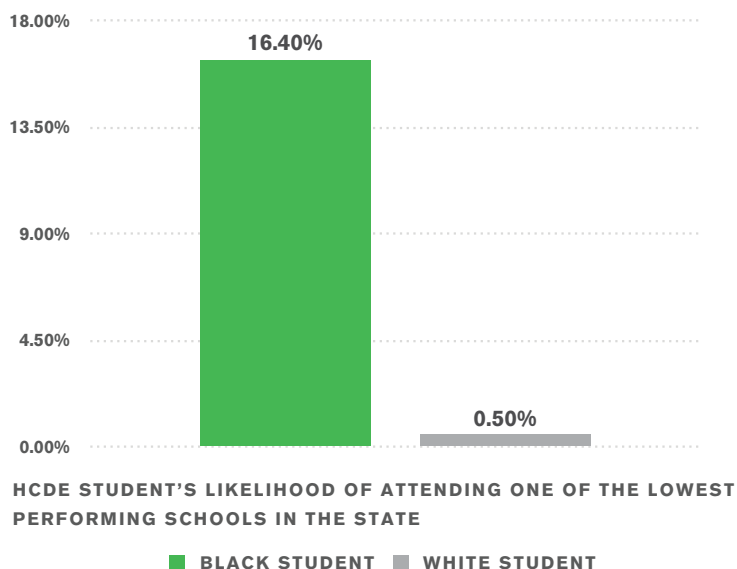
- Three schools stand out with higher than 95 percent graduation rates: Signal Mountain Middle School/High School, Chattanooga School for Arts and Sciences, and Chattanooga High Center for Creative Arts.
- Hamilton County Collegiate High at Chattanooga State, an innovative partnership school between the school district and Chattanooga State, has been identified as one of the top performing schools in the state two years running.
- Signal Mountain not only graduates students at a high rate and boasts some of the highest test scores in the district, but in 2015, it also was the only high school in the district to grow its students faster than expected in both math and literacy.

## Lowest-Performing Schools vs. Highest-Performing Schools

- For the purposes of this analysis, the 'lowest-performing schools' are those that are on the state's list of priority schools. Priority schools are the lowest-performing five percent of schools in Tennessee in terms of academic achievement.
- The 'highest-performing schools' are those that are on the state's reward school list. Reward schools are the top five percent of schools in the state for performance—as measured by overall student achievement levels—and the top five percent for year-over-year progress—as measured by school-wide value-added data.

FIGURE 17

### UNEQUAL ACCESS



**In fact, an African-American student in Hamilton County is 33 times more likely than a white student to attend a school in the bottom five percent of the state.**

Another way of looking at this is that while a white student in Hamilton County has less than a one percent chance of attending one of the lowest-performing schools in the state, a black student in Hamilton County has a greater than a 16 percent chance of doing so. When looking at access to the highest-quality schools in the state, the gap between black and white students is much smaller, but still remains. Black students in Hamilton County have a 2.2 percent chance of attending one of the highest-performing schools in the state, while white students have a 6.5 percent chance. These odds are troubling for all students: only about 1 in every 20 Hamilton County students goes to an exceptional or high-performing school.

This means that overall, black students are more than seven times as likely to go to one of the lowest-performing schools in the state as they are to go to one of the highest-performing schools in the state. Or to put it in more localized terms, for every one black student in Hamilton County who ends up in one of the highest-performing schools, seven end up in one of the lowest-performing. We cannot continue to let this sad reality go unaddressed.

Much of the inequality is based on where students live,

with students from different neighborhoods receiving vastly different educational experiences. In five of our high school zones, at least half of the schools in the zone are in the bottom quarter of the state in student achievement:

1. Brainerd
2. East Ridge
3. Hixson
4. Howard
5. Tyner

Being born in those zones virtually guarantees that the bulk of a student's educational experience will occur in schools where students are not learning to read or do math on grade level. Not surprisingly, these are also the areas of the city with the highest rates of poverty. What this means is that it is even more important for students in these areas to have access to schools that can help them overcome the challenges associated with poverty.

While there are certainly promising schools in each of these zones, such as Hardy Elementary, East Ridge Middle, and Calvin Donaldson, where students are learning enough to start to catch up, sustaining that learning over a full academic career remains a challenge that must be faced.



# Either we face this challenge, or Hamilton County runs the risk of permanently creating two Chattanooga—one for the prosperous and one for those being left significantly behind.

However, student achievement is not the only way, or even the best way, to look at inequality of access to good schools. Instead of looking at whether students are performing on grade level, it is often more useful to look at student growth and how much students have learned over the course of a school year in comparison to where they started. The situation in Hamilton County looks a little different when taking this perspective. For instance:

The Howard High School feeder pattern, despite struggling on a number of key metrics, is the only school with a feeder pattern of elementary and middle schools where students in the majority of schools learned more than expected over the course of the past year. This is largely courtesy of a group of elementary schools where student achievement is growing quickly.

But East Ridge, Ooltewah, and Signal Mountain High Schools see elementary and middle school feeder patterns where students in at least three quarters of schools learned less than expected.

Soddy Daisy and East Hamilton High Schools currently have the only elementary and middle school feeder patterns where none of the feeder schools sit in the bottom quarter in the state on student achievement, and half of those schools also meet state expectations for student growth.

The Bottom Line: When looking only at student growth, unequal access to good schools is spread more evenly across the geography of Hamilton County, and it shows up in many schools that are often viewed as successful, even as the students in those schools fall behind their high-achieving peers across the state.

FIGURE 18  
**CLASS OF 2014 POSTSECONDARY MATRICULATION BY HIGH SCHOOL**



# Unequal Access to Education Beyond High School

Despite the glimmers of hope throughout the district, students across the district also face significant inequality in postsecondary opportunities. We see that access varies tremendously by school. In order to close these gaps, and ensure all communities in Chattanooga are being positioned to reap the benefits of coming economic opportunities, it will take the entire community working together.

## THE IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHY

A tangible example of how these statistics might play out for a group of students can be found by looking at a school in Chattanooga's Innovation Zone, an area already committed to providing more support to the county's struggling schools.

Imagine that only one hundred students live in the Orchard Knob neighborhood. These students will go to Orchard Knob Elementary School, where only twelve of them will learn to read on grade level, making it far less likely for the rest to graduate from high school.

The students then go on to Orchard Knob Middle School, where one more of our 12 will fall behind in reading, leaving only 11 left reading on grade level. Making matters worse, only 16 of the 100 students will perform on grade level in math, meaning 84 of them are heading into Algebra I behind, an important predictor of future job opportunities and earnings.

By the time these hundred students get to Brainerd High School, almost all of them have fallen even farther behind. Fewer than 10 out of 100 will achieve proficiency in English III. Only seven will qualify for the HOPE Scholarship, none will hit the ACT College Ready Benchmarks, and 35 of the 100 will not even graduate.

Unfortunately, these schools don't just serve one hundred students. They serve around 1,600 students—every single year.

But the story does not end in high school. In the 2007-08 school year, there were 296 seniors at Brainerd High School. Of those 296, 188 students, or 63.5 percent, graduated with a diploma. Of these 188, only 84 went on to a postsecondary institution, probably because the average ACT score at the

high school was 15.6, lower than the minimum score of 16 required by most postsecondary institutions. Of the 31 who made it to a four-year school, only 28 students made it back for their second year, and only 16 of the original 84 will graduate from college within six years.

The remaining 53 Brainerd high school graduates, who ended up at a two-year institution, have even worse odds, as just 35 students will return for their second year of study, and only 10 will leave with a degree within six years. So in the end, only 26 of 296 Brainerd High graduates, or less than nine percent, will end up with a postsecondary degree of any kind within six years.

Much of this can be traced to feeder pattern for Brainerd, which is particularly punishing, with 87.5 percent of Brainerd's feeder schools among the bottom 25 percent of schools in the state. If you live in this community, there is an 80 percent chance that the elementary school you go to will be one of the lowest achieving in the state, and a 100 percent chance that the middle school and high school you attend will be one of the lowest achieving in the state. In that light, it should not be surprising that only nine percent of Brainerd graduates will end up with any kind of postsecondary degree.

This is tragic news if you live in Orchard Knob, and it should also be alarming news if you are a taxpayer in Hamilton County, because these students who fail to graduate from high school or do not get a postsecondary degree are less likely to be productively employed, more likely to experience health issues, and more likely to create an economic drag on the community as a whole, simply because of where they live and their continued lack of access to higher-performing schools.

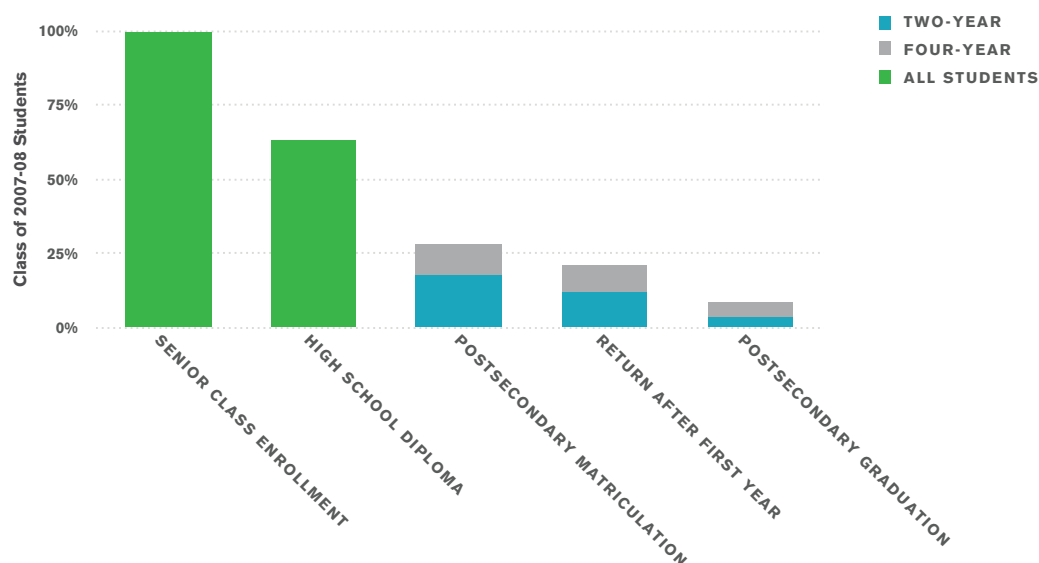






FIGURE 19

## BRainerd HIGH SCHOOL



**A combination of strong student outcomes and faster than expected learning is a hallmark of a highly successful school that benefits students of all backgrounds and all achievement levels.**

### A COMBINATION OF HIGH GROWTH AND HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

But again, there are local examples that show these patterns can be reversed. CSAS provides a good example of what is possible for students. CSAS is a majority non-white school, and nearly one in three students are economically disadvantaged, yet they boast not only a high school graduation rate that consistently hovers at or near 100 percent, but also an ACT average that comfortably exceeds the state average.

It would be easy to identify CSAS as a school that shows great results simply because it is a magnet school. However, CSAS also excels at making sure students are learning more than their peers across the state. For three years running, CSAS students have learned more than expected across all subject areas, including, notably, literacy courses. This is likely due to a teacher force where more than half of teachers lead students to faster than expected growth.

Without greater access to more high-quality schools, especially for students who are already facing early obstacles to graduating from high school and attaining additional education or training, it is unclear why we should expect different economic outcomes than in the past.

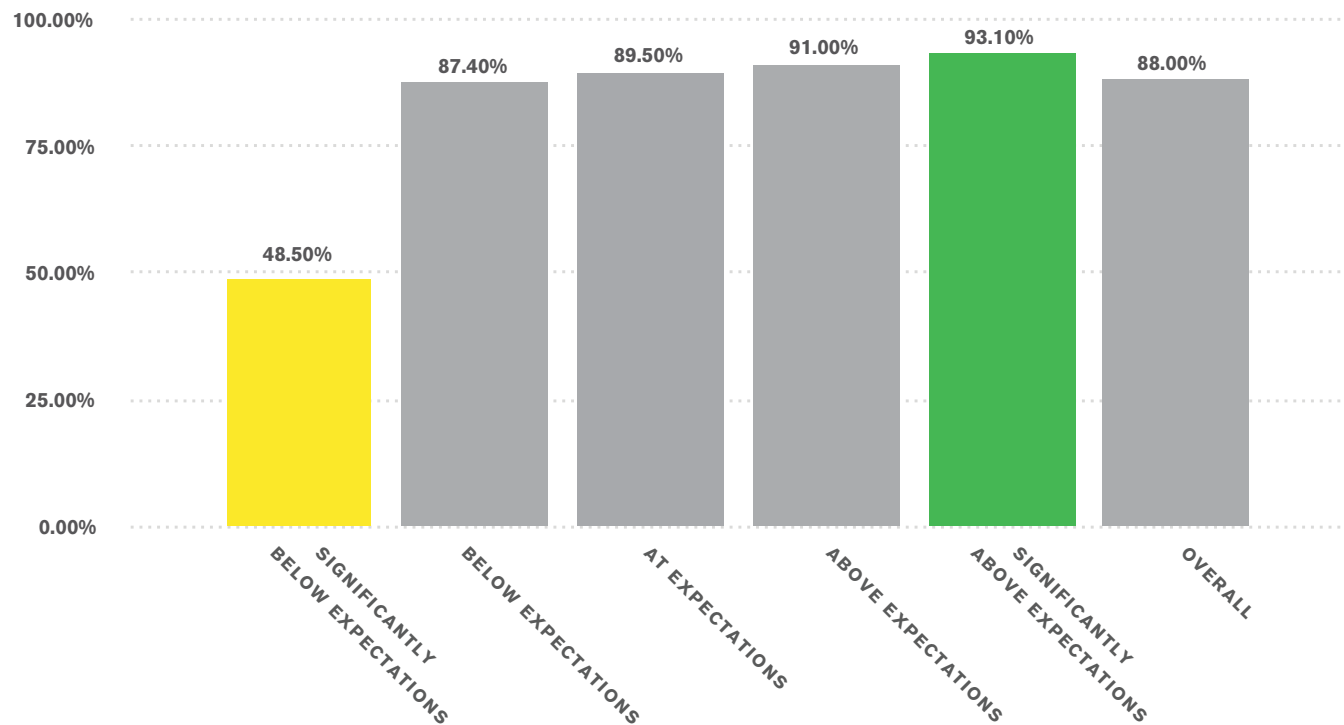
### OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPTIMISM

- CSAS and CGLA are the two high schools who graduate more than 90 percent of their students and have a larger minority population than the district average.
- At Rivermont Elementary School, students learned more than expected in both math and literacy in both 2014 and 2015. Rivermont is almost 90 percent economically disadvantaged and over 50 percent black.
- At three out of five elementary schools in the Brainerd feeder pattern, students learned at least as much as expected in the 2013-14 school year. This shows some potential for greater growth throughout the feeder pattern if such early gains can be sustained.
- At four out of five elementary schools in the Howard School feeder pattern, students learned at least as much as expected in the 2013-14 school year. This shows some potential for the feeder pattern to grow if early gains are sustained.

One of the primary reasons to be optimistic that Hamilton County schools may see rapid improvement in the coming years is the work being done by school leaders to ensure that our most talented teachers continue to inspire and instruct students.

FIGURE 20

TEACHER RETENTION BY OVERALL LEVEL OF EFFECTIVENESS



5 Hernandez, Donald J. "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation." (n.d.): n. pag. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1 Jan. 2012. Web. 13 Aug. 2015.



## **Retaining, supporting and empowering talented teachers to lead students to rapid growth in the coming years must be part of the strategy moving forward.**

School leaders are getting better at identifying and retaining their top performing teachers, meaning that those with a proven track record of success are staying at a higher rate than those with a proven track record of underperformance. Just as importantly, less than half of all teachers each that score “Significantly Below Expectations” are retained. As an example, during the 2013-14 school year, 52 out of 101 teachers that were rated at this lowest performance level were not rehired.

Hamilton County now has one of the most rigorous systems of evaluation and development in the state. Potential concerns about how rigorous evaluation could lead to teacher morale issues do not appear to be playing out as evidenced by both teacher retention rates and qualitative data.

In a recent survey, nearly three out of four Hamilton County teachers reported that the locally created Project Coach evaluation system improved their teaching, and more than three out of four reported that the system was fair. Both of these responses are more positive than what is seen elsewhere across the state and show a healthy majority of teachers responding positively to a rigorous evaluation system.

And successful teaching is occurring across the entire district. All but three schools have at least one teacher whose students learned more than expected in the 2014-15 school year. Even in schools traditionally viewed as struggling, there are great things happening, with teachers who are moving mountains to lead their children to faster than expected growth.





There is no result better for an individual teacher than having students learn more than expected, regardless of how much those students knew at the beginning of the year, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds, and regardless of other challenges they may be facing. The only thing that should be asked of teachers is that the students they teach learn as much as possible. And at almost every school in the district, there is someone answering that challenge and more.

Woodmore Elementary offers a great example of where great teaching is happening and hope can be found. Woodmore is a school that is over 90 percent black and over 90 percent economically disadvantaged. It was previously identified as one of the lowest performing schools in the state, and is now a part of the Hamilton County Innovation Zone.

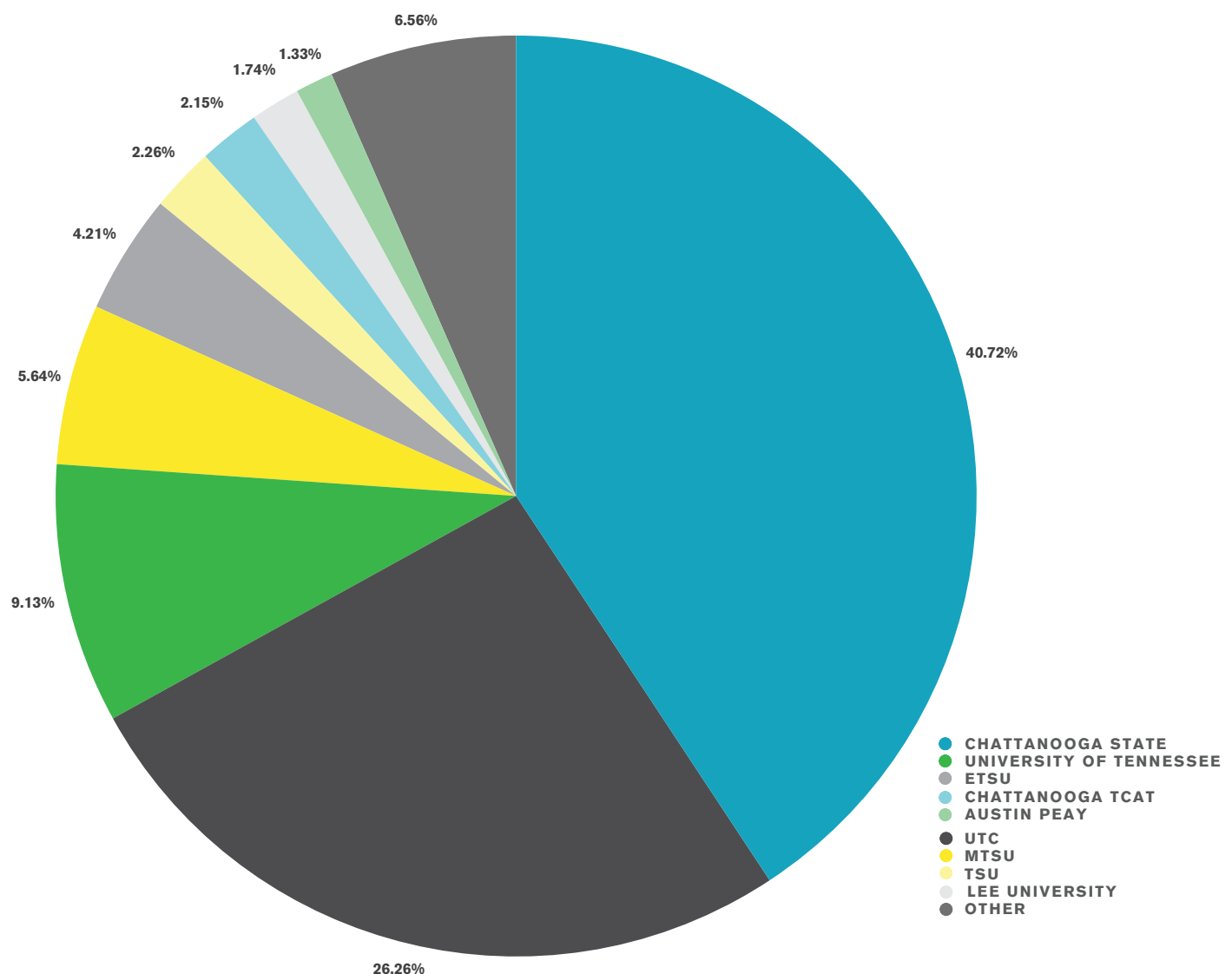
Yet, during the 2014-2015 school year, almost every teacher at Woodmore Elementary led their students to faster than expected growth. The teachers of Woodmore Elementary will not solve all of the deficits their students face in a single year, but they are succeeding at high student growth and accelerating learning—the only thing that will get students who start out far behind to catch their peers. If these students see similar growth year after year, their futures will begin to look much more positive.

## THE CHALLENGE: IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Despite enrolling in colleges and technical schools, Hamilton County's high school graduates are not attaining enough postsecondary credentials.

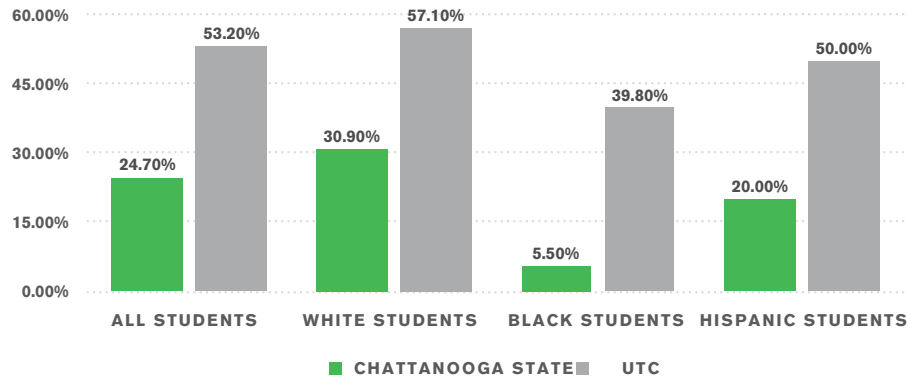
FIGURE 21

### HAMILTON COUNTY STUDENTS



Two-thirds of Hamilton County graduates enroll in a two- or four-year institution immediately following high school graduation, and of that group, over half of them will enroll in either Chattanooga State Community College or the University of Tennessee Chattanooga (UTC).

FIGURE 22

**SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATE**

## Postsecondary Graduation: Losing Talent

But despite such postsecondary enrollment trends, we see that many of these students will never make it to graduation, as Chattanooga State has a six-year graduation rate under 25 percent, and UTC has a six-year graduation rate just over 50 percent.

The situation is even more dire for students of color. Despite UTC and Chattanooga State having very similar demographics, there are vastly different trends in graduation rates among minorities. In 2013-14, the graduation rate for African American students and Hispanic students at Chattanooga State was the lowest of all 14 community colleges in the state.

This means that for the majority of students of color, getting in the door of postsecondary is only the first of a series of hurdles, and too many of those students then get left behind.

Furthermore, we see that over two-thirds of freshmen enrolled at Chattanooga State must enroll in remedial courses, and nearly a third of those remedial students will never successfully complete any credit-bearing college courses. Perhaps not surprisingly, the freshman retention rate at Chattanooga State is only 54.4 percent, putting them in 11th place out of the 14 community colleges in Tennessee.

FIGURE 23

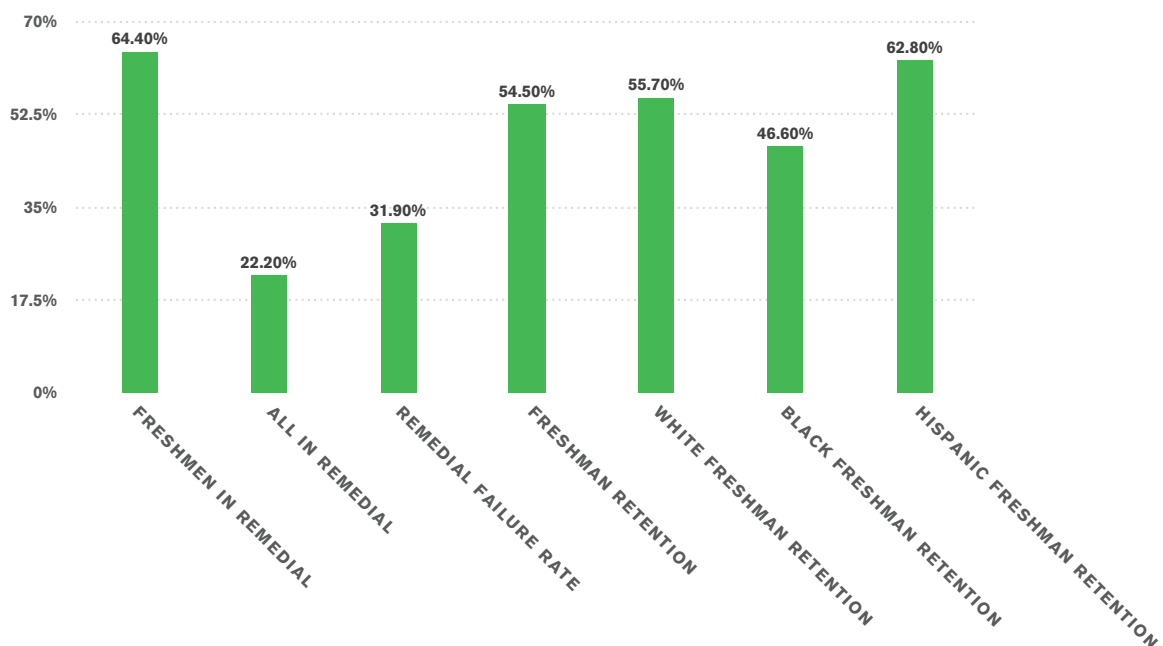
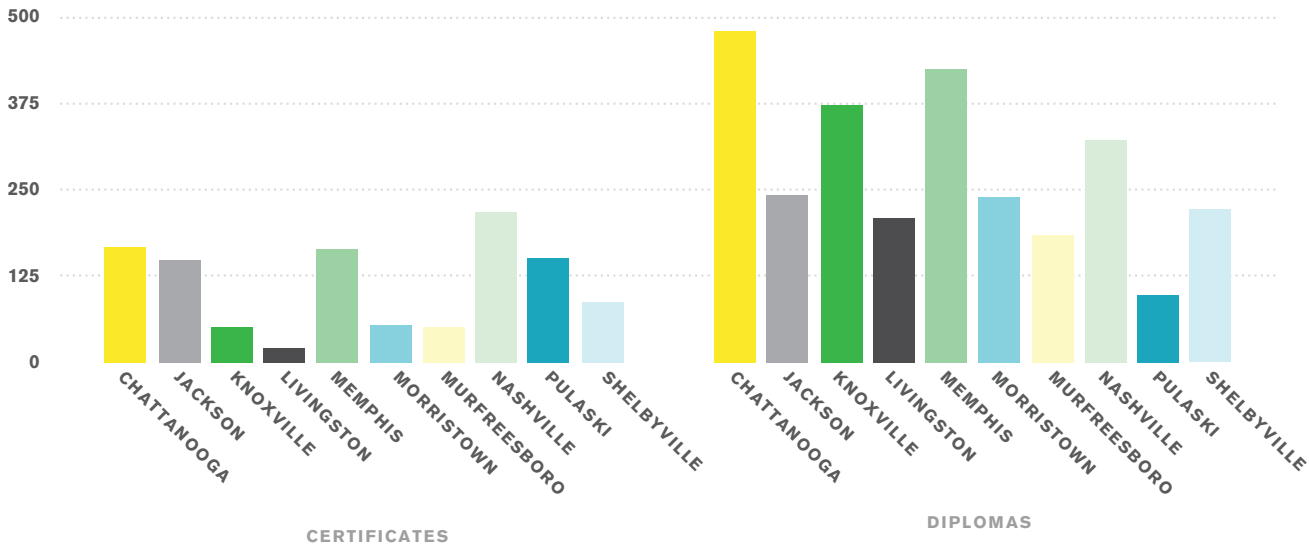
**CHATTANOOGA STATE STATISTICS**



FIGURE 24

### TCAT CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS AWARDED



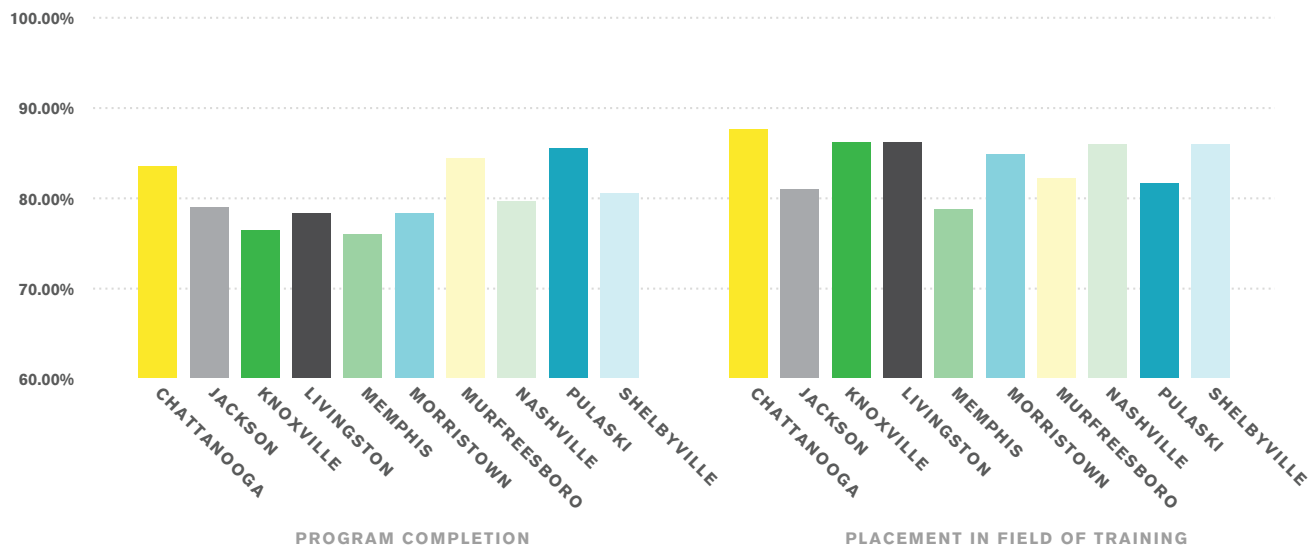
However, Chattanooga State has recently introduced new programs to address completion issues including Academic Completion Coaches for every incoming freshman, doing remediation classes concurrently with credit-earning classes, and providing opportunities to high school students, such as the SAILS remedial math program while still in high school, that allow students to bypass college remediation completely. Chattanooga State also presents a unique opportunity to increase educational attainment for the adult population, since over 40 percent of their students are over the age of 25. With

more than one in five Hamilton County residents over 25 having some college, but no credential, Chattanooga State represents a tremendous opportunity for the community.

Chattanooga is also the home of one of the state's Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCAT), which is housed at Chattanooga State. The Chattanooga TCAT is first in the state in the number of diplomas it awards, but slightly lags other TCATs in the number of technical certificates it awards.

FIGURE 25

### TCAT PROGRAM COMPLETION AND JOB PLACEMENT

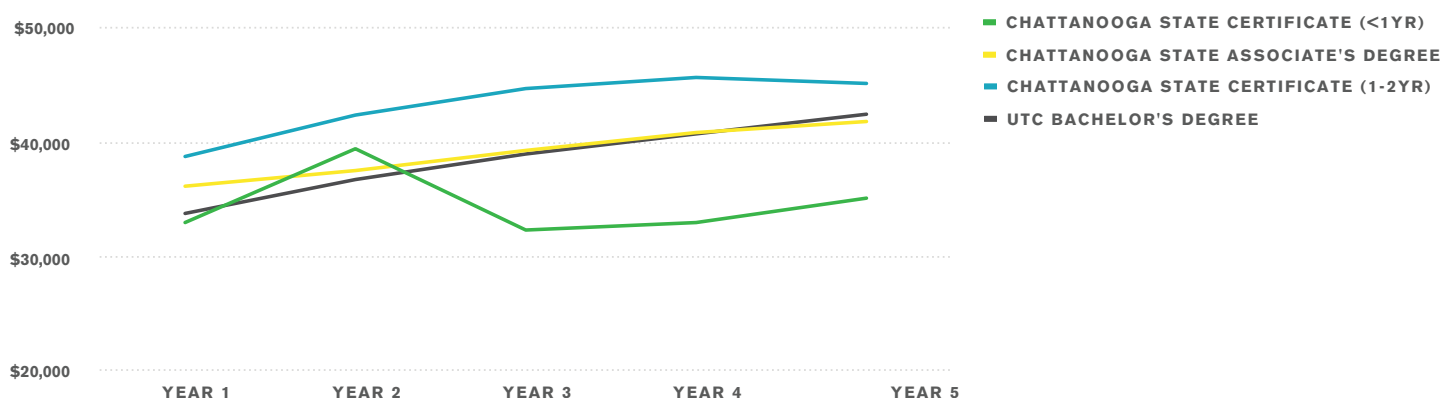


Perhaps most importantly, more than 80 percent of students enrolled in TCATs complete their programs of study, and of those students, nearly 90 percent of them are able to find a job in their field of study.

Students who enroll in the Chattanooga TCAT are well served. Once there, not only are they very likely to complete their program, but upon completion, almost all of them are able to find immediate employment in their field of study. Additionally, those students receiving their certificates are doing well once they are employed, with many of them, on average, earning more than students with even a bachelor's degree. However, only about 700 students in the Chattanooga area took advantage of our local TCAT and completed their programs last year, meaning there is much greater potential for student enrollment and growth in our region.

FIGURE 26

#### AVERAGE ANNUAL FULL-TIME WAGES BY YEAR

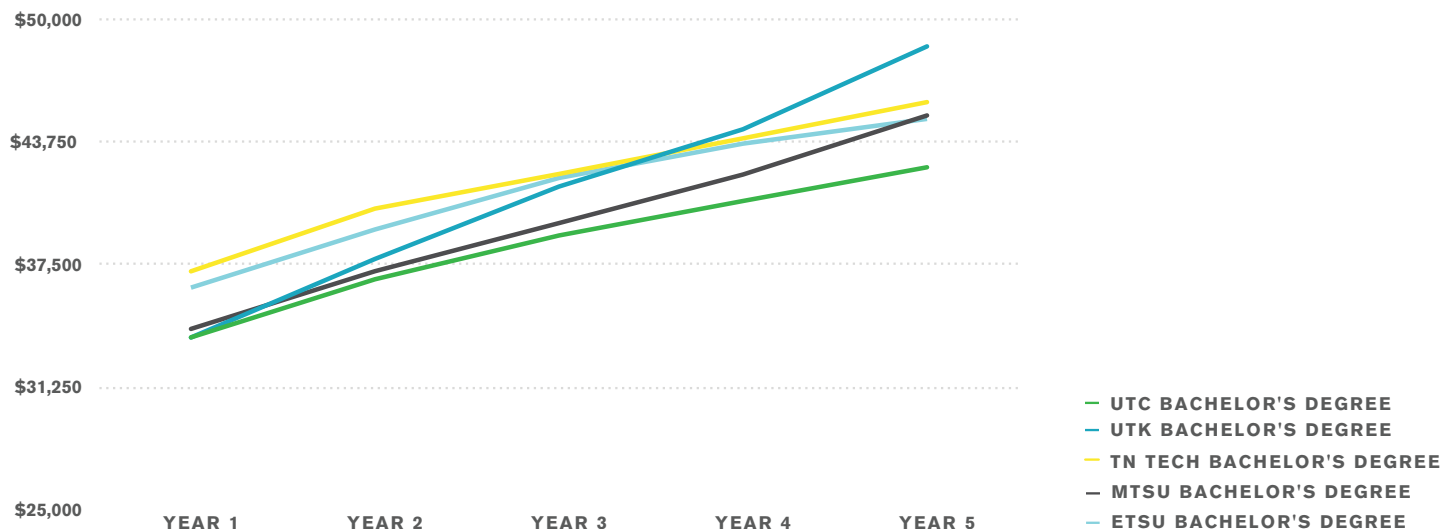


<sup>12</sup> Fox, William F., and Angela R. Thacker. "University of Tennessee Chattanooga Graduates and Their Employment Earnings in Tennessee." Center for Business and Economic Research and THEC Reports. Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Aug. 2012. Web. 15 Aug. 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Fox, William F., and Angela R. Thacker. "Chattanooga State Community College Graduates and Their Employment Earnings in Tennessee." Center for Business and Economic Research and THEC Reports. Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Aug. 2012. Web. 15 Aug. 2015.

FIGURE 27

## ANNUAL AVERAGE FULL-TIME WAGES BY YEAR



**UT Chattanooga is also vitally important to the success of our region. And in looking at UTC, we see that it lags slightly behind other notable four-year institutions in Tennessee—as well as local certificate programs—in the earnings of its graduates. This indicates we must work even harder to prepare and match local graduates with local career opportunities.**

Just as Hamilton County is falling behind the state in high school academics, our institutions of higher education also need support to make sure students pursuing valuable postsecondary credentials will actually complete their degrees.

In looking at Hamilton County students, 87 percent of the students who are enrolled in four-year schools will return after their first year. But only 59 percent of those enrolled in two-year schools return for their second year.

Although this return rate at local four-year schools is higher than the national average, and at two-year schools is about on

par with the national average, it is still not high enough for a community with big economic ambitions.

That is a lot of students leaving after their first year of postsecondary education in a community that needs many more postsecondary graduates to serve and compete for advanced industry jobs.

Clear indicators of who is most or least prepared to continue past their first year of postsecondary education can be found in high school, and then crystallizes during the first year of postsecondary instruction. It is imperative that this information be used so that once students are in a postsecondary institution, they are provided with the support they need to get through remedial classes, persist beyond the first year, and ultimately secure a degree or credential. Despite the fact that many of our students are often entering postsecondary institutions further behind than expected, our job must be to expect and support our institutions to meet students where they are and support them as much as possible to ensure their success.

<sup>14</sup> Fox, William F., and Angela R. Thacker. "University of Tennessee Knoxville Graduates and Their Employment Earnings in Tennessee." Center for Business and Economic Research and THEC Reports. Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Aug. 2012. Web. 15 Aug. 2015. <sup>13</sup> Fox, William F., and Angela R. Thacker. "Chattanooga State Community College Graduates and Their Employment Earnings in Tennessee." Center for Business and Economic Research and THEC Reports. Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Aug. 2012. Web. 15 Aug. 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Fox, William F., and Angela R. Thacker. "Middle Tennessee State University Graduates and Their Employment Earnings in Tennessee." Center for Business and Economic Research and THEC Reports. Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Aug. 2012. Web. 15 Aug. 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Fox, William F., and Angela R. Thacker. "East Tennessee State University Graduates and Their Employment Earnings in Tennessee." Center for Business and Economic Research and THEC Reports. Tennessee Higher Education Commission, Aug. 2012. Web. 15 Aug. 2015.

<sup>17</sup> [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_cva.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cva.asp)





# Despite the fact that many of our students are often entering postsecondary institutions further behind than expected, our job must be to expect and support our institutions to meet students where they are and support them as much as possible to ensure their success.

## FROM HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOLS TO POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS

Looking at student outcomes from high schools or postsecondary institutions in isolation is valuable in assessing where focus should be placed for investments in improvement. However, when contemplating the economic imperative, identifying the path of individual students on their way to a credential is ultimately the most important story.

In some schools, like Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences, almost every single student enrolls in college after high school. In the 2007-08 school year, there were 109 students enrolled in the senior class. Of those 109, 105 graduated with a high school diploma, and the average ACT score was 21.9, setting these students up for success.

Of those 109 graduates, 97 went on to college: 79 of these attended a four-year institution and the other 18 attended a two-year institution. At the four-year schools, 97 percent, or about 77 students, make it back for their second year of college, while only 83 percent at the two-year schools will make it back for their second year.

In six years, 67 percent, or 53 students, from the four-year schools will leave with a degree, while 50 percent, or nine students, from the two-year schools will graduate. So in the end, just 57 percent of students from one of the best public

schools in Chattanooga will have earned a postsecondary degree within six years of graduation.

A similar story can be found in Ooltewah. In the 2007-08 school year at Ooltewah High School, a suburban school further from downtown, there were 402 students enrolled in the senior class. Of those 402, 370 graduated with a high school diploma, and the average ACT score at their school was 21.1, again higher than the state average.

Of those 370 Ooltewah graduates, 285 went on to college: 202 attending a four-year institution and the other 83 attending a two-year institution. At the four-year schools, 95 percent, or about 192 students, will make it back for their second year of college, while only 69 percent of their friends at the two-year schools, or about 57 students, will make it back for their second year.

In six years, 69 percent, or 139 students, at the four-year schools will graduate with a degree, while 24 percent, or 20 students, from the two-year schools will complete. So in the end, just 40 percent of Ooltewah High School graduates will earn a postsecondary degree within six years of graduation. In other words, even the best can do better.

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## OPPORTUNITIES FOR OPTIMISM

- Over 40 percent of students, or 4,055 total students, at Chattanooga State are over the age of 25. More than 57,000 Hamilton County residents over 25 have some college but no credential, and if we are able to get those students to a degree, the entire city will benefit.
- The Chattanooga TCAT is first in the state in the number of diplomas it awards, awarding 531 diplomas from fall 2013 through summer 2014.
- More than 80 percent of TCAT students complete their programs of study, and of those students, nearly 90 percent of them are able to find a job in their field of study.
- Students receiving 1-2 year certificates are doing well once they are employed, with many of them making, on average, over \$38,000 a year after completion.



FIGURE 28

### CHATTANOOGA SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS AND SCIENCES



As previously discussed, the same story from Brainerd High School yields much lower rates of student success across the board, where fewer than nine percent of students will earn a postsecondary credential within six years of their senior year in high school.

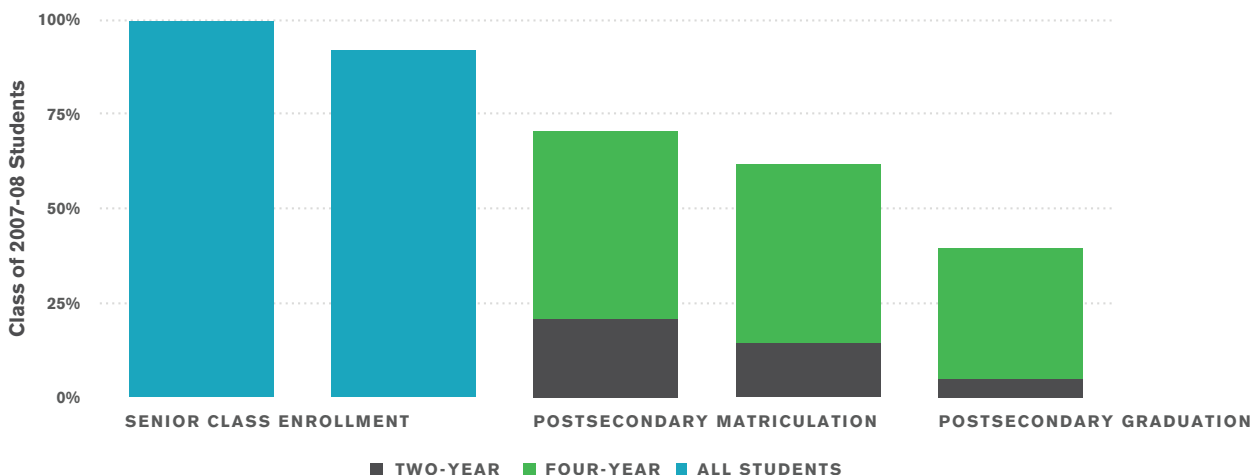
This means more than 1,500 kids currently enrolled in just these three local high schools would be left without a postsecondary credential six years after high school graduation, meaning a future of minimum wage opportunities for them, lost income for Hamilton County, and untapped talent and potential in our community being left behind.

There are many reasons students do not make it to a postsecondary degree, whether hailing from Brainerd High School or CSAS. It may be they are not adequately prepared even before they enter the school system. It may be they are not being adequately prepared in our schools. Or it may be that our community and our postsecondary institutions are not providing enough support once in college to help them succeed.

But what is clear is that if Hamilton County wants to take advantage of a growing economy, the community must find ways to help ALL students from every neighborhood, every school, and every postsecondary institution find the success that can lead them to greater opportunities and higher-wages that our community is now creating.

FIGURE 29

### OOLTEWAH HIGH SCHOOL





To ensure that the Chattanooga community does not miss the tremendous opportunity that is currently before us, we must be bold in setting and achieving new goals and new outcomes.



## The Path Forward:

# To take advantage of economic growth, the community must work to better prepare kids for school, improve K-12 outcomes, and increase educational attainment through postsecondary completion

The state of Tennessee has encouraged every county to consider a goal of 55 percent of residents attaining an industry certification, a two-year degree, or a four-year degree by 2025. Achieving this would greatly impact the local economy:

### **55% POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

- 67,000 more residents with access to jobs that pay over \$35,000
- \$3,100 raise for every adult worker in Hamilton County
- 3,000 adults out of poverty
- \$750 million in more wages every year
- Increase Hamilton Co. GDP by \$1.2 billion

Our aspirations should be to do more and be more. Our focus should not just be about seeing improvements, but about creating and seeing unheard of gains—and new and achievable goals at each step along the way from early childhood to postsecondary—to reach a goal of 75 percent postsecondary attainment by the year 2025—well beyond the rest of the state.

### **75% POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

- 100,000 more residents with access to jobs that pay over \$35,000
- \$4,500 raise for every adult worker in Hamilton County
- 8,000 adults out of poverty
- \$1.1 billion in more wages every year
- Increase Hamilton Co. GDP by \$2.8 billion

Is this a bold goal? Yes, but it is possible with the right plan forward.

Meeting this goal will not only help our community as a whole, but it will also have a tremendous impact on the lives and futures of individual citizens, changing the trajectory of our local economy and the earning potential and incomes for Hamilton County families for generations to come.

Empowering our community around this mission will be no easy task, and it will require all of us to come and work together, to cooperate through difficult decisions, and to forge ahead through both failures and successes.

But just as we did with cleaning up our air and our community—just as we did in reinventing and revitalizing our downtown and waterfront—and just as have succeeded in creating one of the most successful and rapidly growing high-tech economies in the nation—we can, we must and we will do the same for Chattanooga's students, schools and future.

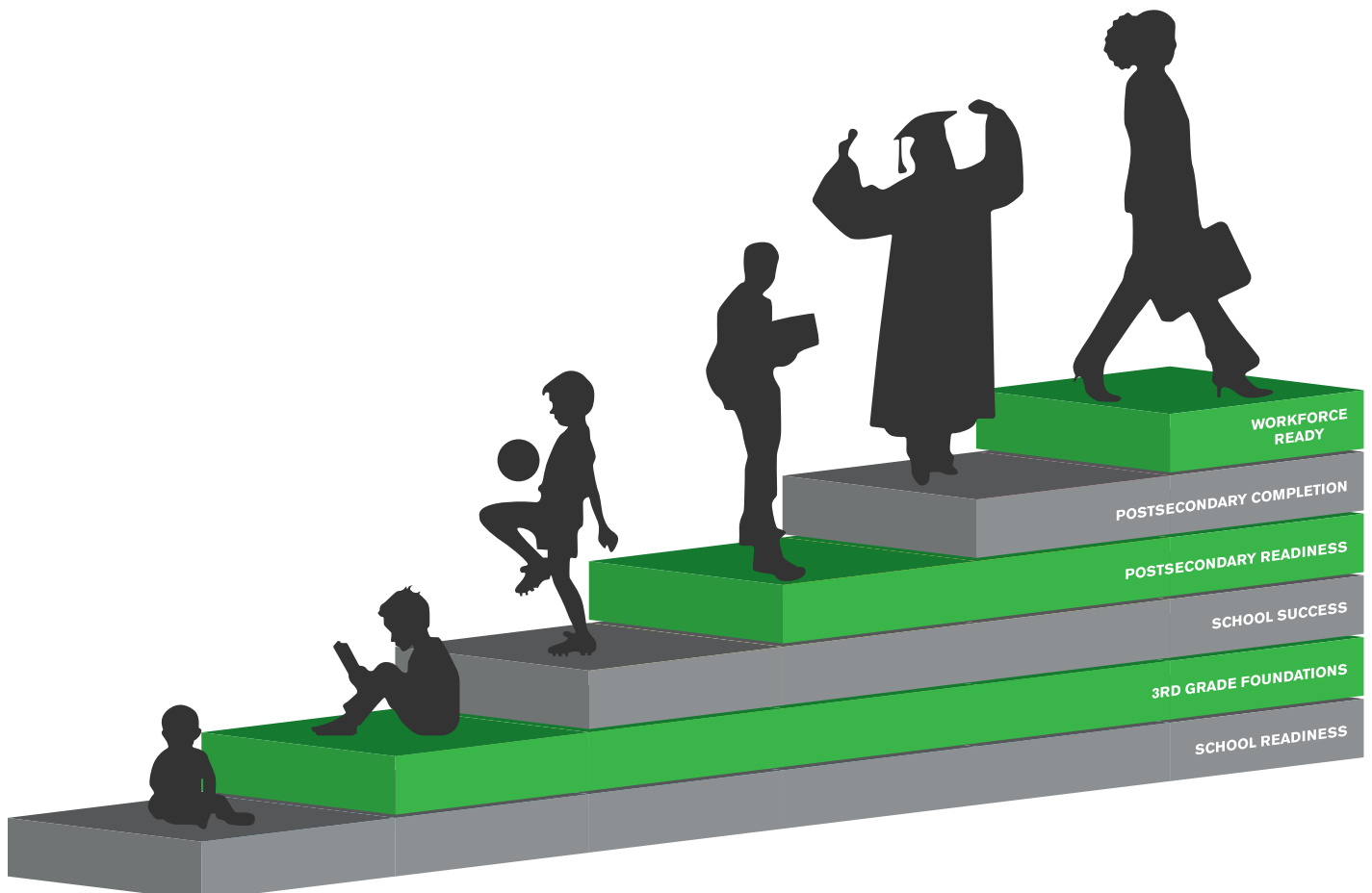
This report is intended to frame the issues, the opportunity, and imperative for action around education and workforce development in our community. The partners that commissioned it do not presume to know all the answers or the best way forward. It will take community leaders, residents and committed organizations coming together to develop solutions that fit Chattanooga. We simply want to set the table

for these conversations to begin and to seize this moment in time to harness the energy and focus of our community around talent, education, and the cradle to career pipeline.

#### **WE CAN START BY ANSWERING A HANDFUL OF KEY QUESTIONS:**

- Do we have the collective will and courage as a community to do whatever it takes to ensure that all residents are able to benefit from the growing economic opportunity?
- 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?
- How can businesses and our institutions of higher education partner with the district to help build stronger connections 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?
- What happens if we DON'T do something?

The answers to these and other important questions could help us begin to rethink, reimagine and possibly reengineer the way our community leverages economic opportunity for all.





# Pulling together to ensure that 75% of Hamilton County residents hold an industry certification, two-year degree, or four-year degree by 2025.

## WORKFORCE READY

- 100,000 more residents with jobs that make over \$35,000
- 65% of jobs in Hamilton County jobs held by Hamilton County residents

## POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

- 90% of high school grads enrolling in a postsecondary institution
- 80% six-year graduation rate with postsecondary degrees or certificates

## POSTSECONDARY READINESS

- Hamilton County ACT average surpasses the state
- 1,000 summer jobs and internships for HS students

## SCHOOL SUCCESS

- 75% of students on grade level in math by 8th grade
- 100% of students with career exploration portfolios

## 3RD GRADE FOUNDATIONS

- 90% of students reading on grade level by 3rd grade

## SCHOOL READINESS

- 100% of students with access to Pre-K programming
- 1,000 new Pre-K seats



For more information and  
to get involved visit [chatt2.org](http://chatt2.org)

