

REGION 5 UPDATE

Fall 2024

Our Region 5 schools are making significant strides in advancing leadership and capacity-building efforts to focus on school leadership that drives positive student outcomes. This fall, we've seen a shift towards actionable ownership of the **Region 5 Strategic Plan** at the school-site level, including strategic redesigns of our administrative teams to provide more targeted support in our schools. Additionally, individualized **Principal Success Plans** have been developed to enhance leadership capacity and support, ensuring that Region 5 Strategic Plan metrics are clarified and owned at the school-site level with their staff's daily work with teaching and learning.

In collaboration with the **KCS Project Management team**, we spent the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year revisiting the scope, sequence, and implementation structure of the first year of the Region 5 Strategic Plan, conducting a root cause analysis to clarify ownership and management responsibilities.

In the Spring of 2024, Region 5 released a **Leadership Toolkit** to recruit and retain elite educators, achieved a **95% staffing rate** for the 2024-25 school year, and launched the inaugural **Region 5 Educator Summit**. This teacher-driven professional learning day, requested by the **Region 5 Teacher Council**, featured over 120 teacher-led professional development sessions to empower educators at the start of the year.

We are excited to continue supporting our principals and the **Region 5 Instructional Leadership team** during the second year of the strategic plan implementation of their intentional efforts to meet the needs of both new and experienced elite educators across the region. This will ensure that we continue to increase student success as outlined in our Region 5 Strategic Plan.

Dr. Dexter Murphy
Region 5 Director



Sallee Reynolds
Region 5 Supervisor



HIGH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

During the 2023-2024 academic year, Region 5 elementary schools collaborated with Instruction Partners and Region 5 ELA facilitators to target early literacy work related to foundational literacy skills. Throughout this partnership, school leadership teams remained proximate to literacy instruction through routine instructional walkthroughs utilizing the content-specific elementary literacy IPG. These walkthroughs allowed leaders to identify positive trends and opportunities for growth, driving improvements in K-2 foundational literacy practices.

Aligned with an ongoing learning cycle, school teams focused on internalizing High-Quality Instructional Materials to ensure impactful literacy instruction. Leaders, instructional coaches, and educators collaborated to strengthen instructional delivery by practicing lessons with peers before implementing them in the classroom. This commitment to excellence yielded measurable progress, with universal screening data showing gains in literacy outcomes for students in kindergarten through 2nd grade.



STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

At Spring Hill Elementary, we value the foundational literacy work we have accomplished with our instructional support vendors, Instruction Partners, and our regional facilitators. Our teachers are equipped with the skills needed to effectively utilize and internalize high-quality instructional materials through weekly professional learning community meetings, instructional walkthroughs, and professional development sessions. These practices ensure that students receive solid literacy instruction, paving the way for their academic success.

Tiffany Watkins
Principal, Spring Hill Elementary



STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

The 82% retention rate reflects the collective effort in Region 5 to support teachers effectively. Region 5 ILT staff plays a crucial role by supporting PLCs, providing meaningful walkthrough feedback, and offering intentional professional development that teachers find valuable. These efforts have been instrumental in retaining educators.

A strong focus on relationship-building within grade levels fosters a positive and collaborative atmosphere. The "all hands on deck" mentality contributes significantly to creating a supportive environment for staff and students alike.

The use of a pre-interview spreadsheet featuring highly qualified candidates streamlined the hiring process, saving valuable time. Additionally, early collaboration with HR in the spring ensured that all positions were filled well before the school year began, allowing for a smooth start.

Cindy Sanford
Principal, Beaumont Magnet Academy



RECRUIT & RETAIN ELITE EDUCATORS

In February 2024, Region 5 administrators embarked on the annual process of collaborating closely with the Business and Talent team to lay the groundwork for a successful 2024-2025 school year. This intentional partnership centered on strategic recruitment and retention efforts, producing remarkable outcomes.

By August, Region 5 reported an impressive 82% staff retention rate, reflecting a significant investment in cultivating a positive work environment. During recruitment, over half of the open positions were filled in less than 21 days, demonstrating an efficient and targeted hiring approach. As a result, 12 of the region's 13 schools welcomed students with a teacher in every classroom, and all Region 5 schools began the year staffed at or above 95% capacity.

Teacher satisfaction also saw notable growth, with 77% of surveyed educators indicating that their school is a great place to work—a 15% increase from the previous year. These achievements highlight the region's dedication to creating a supportive and thriving educational community.

COLLEGE & CAREER PATHWAYS

Fulton High School juniors recently participated in transformative job shadowing experiences with organizations including the City of Knoxville Communications, Covenant Health, Hillcrest Healthcare, and the Knoxville Police Department, among others. These opportunities, part of the 865 Academies' guaranteed experiences, allow students to explore industries firsthand and connect classroom learning to real-world career opportunities.

Additionally, Junior Achievement is collaborating with Holston Middle, Vine Middle Magnet, and Whittle Springs Middle to prepare 8th graders for future job shadow opportunities, ensuring they gain early exposure to career possibilities.

In another exciting initiative, Austin-East Magnet High and Fulton High launched a dual-credit Video Production Technology (VPT) course in partnership with Pellissippi State Community College. Led by AV Production teachers Jeremiah Pearson and Russell Mayes, this program allows students to earn college credit while still in high school. With plans to expand to three VPT courses, students could graduate with up to nine college credits, equipping them for success in higher education and beyond. These opportunities showcase Knox County Schools' commitment to preparing students for thriving futures.



STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

Austin-East recently had a group of juniors complete the Pilot Light Program sponsored by the Pilot Corporation. These students spent 12 hours over four weeks participating in campus tours and field location visits, Pilot team member and leader chats, career development and professional trainings, and networking events.

Dr. Rob Speas
Principal, Austin-East Magnet High School



STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

At Vine, we are putting a lot of time and effort into restorative practices at our school. We've established a team that supports our efforts with restorative practices. Each grade level has a person who supports teachers and students with restorative meetings, in- and out-of-class behavior support, and more. As we strive to improve the culture of our school, we have monthly professional development around culture and restorative practices.

We also have an administrator who focuses on culture and restorative practices. With this structure, we can dive deep into the data and make changes that need to be made. We have already seen a difference this year!

Dr. Moniqueca Navarre
Assistant Principal, Vine Middle Magnet School



MEETING WHOLE-CHILD NEEDS

Over the past two years, Knox County Schools has made significant strides in supporting the whole child by building positive school cultures and robust behavioral support systems. Through a partnership with the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), five Region 5 schools—Austin-East Magnet High, Vine Middle Magnet, Green Magnet, Maynard Elementary, and Sarah Moore Greene Magnet—have implemented restorative practices to enhance student well-being and school climate.

The collaboration included comprehensive gap analyses, tailored implementation plans, and hands-on support from experienced consultants. Restorative Leadership teams (RLTs) were established in each school to promote community-building and fair decision-making processes, and teachers received in-class training to integrate restorative practices into their daily routines.

Region 5 schools also conducted Behavioral Support Systems Walkthroughs, a key element of the Region 5 Strategic Plan, to provide actionable insights into school-wide behavior systems, classroom management, and family engagement. Individualized support from the Department of School Culture ensures ongoing growth tailored to each school's needs.

These efforts have yielded measurable results, including a notable reduction in chronic absenteeism across the region. Eight of the 13 Region 5 schools reported declines, with standout decreases at Holston Middle (6%), Whittle Springs Middle (4.8%), and Fulton High (3.8%).