



# IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES 2016

Three-Year Bessemer City Schools  
Strategic Plan, 2013-2016



## **The City of Bessemer**

Honorable Kenneth E. Gulley, *Mayor*

### **Bessemer Board of Education**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Page 4</b>	Message from the Bessemer Board of Education
<b>Page 5</b>	Message from the Superintendent of Schools
<b>Page 6</b>	Bessemer City Schools (BCS) At-A-Glance
<b>Page 7</b>	Our Secret Sauce
<b>Page 8</b>	Our Vision, Mission, and Goals
<b>Page 9</b>	Goal 1: Informed, responsible, and productive students
<b>Page 10</b>	Goal 2: Dedicated staff
<b>Page 11</b>	Goal 3: Clean, safe, and caring environment
<b>Page 12</b>	Goal 4: Involved parents and community
<b>Page 13</b>	Next Steps
<b>Page 15</b>	Acknowledgements

## MESSAGE FROM THE BESSEMER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dear Bessemer Resident,

On behalf of the Bessemer City School Board, I am pleased to express our overwhelming support of the Bessemer City Schools' three-year strategic plan, *Imagine the Possibilities 2016*. We endorse the vision of empowering Bessemer students through excellence in education and fully support the key priorities: to prepare productive students, to support dedicated staff, to provide a positive learning environment, and to invite the cooperation of parents and the community. In fact, this plan is a collaboration of the ideas from students, parents, staff, business leaders, and community partners!

We would also like to commend Superintendent Fred D. Primm, Jr., his talented staff, our community partners, and consultant Dr. Traci Elizabeth Teasley for producing a plan that demonstrates what happens when we collectively work together to make a difference for our students. *Imagine the Possibilities 2016* is a commitment to building on our strengths and realizing the possibilities for our students to enhance their lives, families, and the City of Bessemer.

Sincerely,

Hattie Aikerson  
*School Board President*

## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Greetings Bessemer City Schools' Ambassador!

In July 2012, during the Summer Leadership Summit, approximately 60 school district leaders received an introduction to the SOAR (Strengths-Opportunities-Aspirations-Results) approach to strategic planning, which is a strengths-based, community input-focused way to determine the future of our children. The leaders overwhelmingly agreed to use this approach to strategic planning during the 2012-2013 school year; consequently, a core strategic planning team and four action teams comprised of students, parents, school staff, district staff, and business and community leaders contributed to the ideas in this plan.

In the spirit of the SOAR approach, the July 2012 Leadership Summit participants explored a Strengths-like question, "What is our secret sauce?" The responses to these questions were translated into the district's core beliefs highlighted in this strategic plan. To build on the work done during the Leadership Summit, the core strategic planning team hosted two "Imagine the Possibilities" community forums, the first in December 2012 and the second in January 2013, to gain initial insight on the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) for our students. Over 100 participants—including students, parents, staff, business leaders, and community partners--attended these forums to share their thoughts regarding the future of education for Bessemer scholars.










The action teams, a diverse group of individuals committed to the district's goals, built on these ideas and determined priority next steps for the next three years during action team meetings held during January and February 2013. The core strategic planning team had the awesome responsibility of selecting the best ideas from the community that would yield the most productive results for our students; consequently, this plan is a compilation of our collective community's ideas about how we should empower our children to excellence in education and beyond!

Bessemer City Schools is indeed the heartbeat of Bessemer, so it is my hope that you will contribute to the successful implementation of the plan you so graciously helped to create.

Best regards,

Dr. Fred D. Primm, Jr.  
*Superintendent*

## BESSEMER CITY SCHOOLS (BCS) AT-A-GLANCE

-  The original name of the city of Bessemer was Brooklyn; however, Henry Fairchild Debardeleben decided to rename the city Bessemer in honor of Sir Henry Bessemer, the British scientist who was famous for his contribution to the steelmaking process.
-  The City of Bessemer was a pivotal force in the forging the America Industrial Revolution. The Bessemer Process of making exquisite steel and iron for a minimal cost, known world-wide, was the catalyst in the economic growth and population explosion of our fair city. The philosophy of making a great and exquisite product for less is a precept we embrace as we prepare young scholars for a global market.
-  Bessemer City Schools is located approximately 13 miles southwest of Birmingham in Jefferson County, Alabama. There are five elementary schools, (grades K-6); one middle school, (grades 7-8); one high school (grades 9-12); a career technology center; and, an alternative school with a total school district enrollment of over 4800 young scholars.
-  The Bessemer Board of Education was founded in 1887 to prepare our citizens for the growing economy.
-  The Bessemer Board of Education promotes the pursuit of National Board Certification for practitioners with a support service cohort through district leadership teams.
-  Approximately one half of all Bessemer City School educators hold advanced degrees.
-  All new teachers in Bessemer receive monthly, job-embedded professional development and mentoring.
-  Bessemer City Schools' Westhills Elementary has been recognized with the *Torch Bearer Award of Excellence* for performing with superlative academic prowess in the state of Alabama.
-  The Bessemer Fighting Purple Tigers football program is one of the top three winningest high school programs in the state of Alabama. GO PURPLE TIGERS!!!

## THE BESSEMER CITY SCHOOLS' SECRET SAUCE

*Bessemer City Schools is more than a school system; we are a family!*

*Bessemer City Schools appreciates and needs the commitment of the entire community to educate our students.*

*Bessemer City Schools is committed to building relationships inside and outside of the organization to ensure we achieve our goals.*

*Bessemer City Schools invests in our students and the adults who serve the students.*

*Bessemer City Schools has the infrastructure and the culture to imagine and implement amazing things for our students.*

## VISION

Empowering students through excellence in education.

## MISSION

To produce informed, responsible, productive citizens who will be lifelong learners and successful contributors of society. We will accomplish this mission in cooperation with parents and the community, by providing a dedicated staff, a diverse and challenging curriculum, within a clean, safe and caring environment.

## GOALS

- 1: Informed, Responsible, and Productive Students
- 2: Dedicated Staff
- 3: Clean, Safe, and Caring Environment
- 4: Involved Parents and Community

*[Note: Objectives and strategies for each aforementioned goal are included on the subsequent pages.]*



## **GOAL 1: Informed, Responsible, and Productive Students**

**1.1: Students will participate in engaging daily lessons aligned with the Alabama College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) to improve the percentage of students meeting and exceeding content standards each year.**

- Ensure that all teachers understand the elements of an engaging lesson and provide the necessary support to ensure consistent implementation of daily engaging lessons.
- Supply academic and enrichment support programs during the school year and during the summer for students who need additional support or challenge.
- Provide opportunities for enhanced learning using personal electronic devices.
- Prepare students for College and Career Opportunities.

**1.2: Annually, all students will participate in a district-wide community service-learning project to positively contribute to the City of Bessemer, Jefferson County, and/or the State of Alabama.**

- Solicit input from students, staff, and Bessemer community on the selection of the community service project and creative ways to support the project throughout the school year.
- Encourage Bessemer City School employees, parents, and business and community partners to participate in the service-learning project as a means of strengthening the Bessemer community.
- Generate opportunities to increase student participation (K-12) in additional community service initiatives.
- Establish a system for regularly acknowledging students for their contributions to the community.

## **GOAL 2: Dedicated Staff**

**2.1: Offer additional job-embedded professional development for all faculty and staff through research-based professional development opportunities and provide all staff with regular, constructive feedback on work performance.**

- Engage all staff members in at least one subject-area specific, job-embedded professional development activity per semester.
- Generate opportunities for Bessemer City School employees' to lead school-wide and district-wide professional development sessions.
- Organize a peer evaluation/observation process whereby teachers will participate in or perform a least one peer evaluation/ observation per nine weeks and provide constructive feedback to the observed colleagues.
- Establish student focus groups to solicit feedback on various system-wide initiatives, programs, and teacher/school performance once per semester.
- Enhance the existing employee performance appraisal system to ensure that all employees receive regular, constructive feedback and have access to district-sponsored courses to further improve professional skills.

**2.2: Each year, retain at least 80% of high-performing, professionally responsible staff by building system-wide morale and providing opportunities to assist with maintain healthy lifestyle maintenance (mind, body, and spirit).**

- Create a system-wide morale team, responsible for designing activities and reward incentives for the faculty and staff at each Bessemer City School, and then develop morale teams at each school.
- Define and evaluate the Employee Assistance Program and communicate its benefits, such as employee scholarships and fringe benefit efficacy, to all staff.
- Create, procure, and promote grants, fellowships and scholarships in the areas of advanced degrees, academic certifications, and training credentials.
- Establish the Purple Tiger Fitness Challenge, a collaboration of the system's professional development team, physical education teachers, coaches, and the other community stakeholders.

## **GOAL 3: Clean, Safe, and Caring Environment**

### **3.1: Create an environment conducive to teaching and learning that is aesthetically pleasing and warms the soul.**

- Develop a five-year projection of facilities and grounds maintenance needs and a plan of action, including cost estimation and timeline for repair and/or replacement.
- Maintain a clean and safe learning environment for students, staff and visitors through the consistent implementation of district policies and procedures on cleanliness and safety.
- Ensure that facility maintenance and repair needs are addressed in a timely and efficient manner to support school district's vision.
- Implement the Virtual Alabama School Safety System to secure a safer working environment for students and Bessemer City School employees.
- Distribute "Bessemer Pride" awards to schools that encourage students and staff to sustain a clean, safe, and caring environment.

### **3.2: Foster a learning environment that ensures improved academic and behavior outcomes for students by implementing research-based initiatives and best practices.**

- Phase in implementation of Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) in all schools to determine, communicate, and implement consistent behavior standards.
- Develop positive behavior expectations and provide ongoing professional and personal growth opportunities for employees, parents and community members, who serve as models for our students every day.
- Implement Parent Project, a parenting skills program to support improved academic and behavior outcomes for students at school, home, and the community.
- Monitor and evaluate classrooms, schools, and departments by developing indicators for high-quality learning environments and establish a system for acknowledging exemplars.
- Develop and incorporate a weekly (K-12) etiquette curriculum.

## **GOAL 4: Involved Parents and Community**

### **4.1: Create a Parent Academy to empower parents and families to support the education of their children and the vision of Bessemer City Schools.**

- Create a district-wide planning team involving central office staff and parents from elementary, middle and high school to provide input on the design of the Parent Academy Program.
- Continue to offer diverse, school-based parent involvement sessions to support student learning.
- Implement a district-wide Parent Academy Program, which encourages parents to attend monthly classes with a cohort to acquire knowledge and skills to advocate for the education of children in the Bessemer City Schools.
- Partner with community organizations to support the Parent Academy curriculum, host satellite locations, and/or offer additional classes for parents.

### **4.2: Establish new and maintain existing tools to enhance communication, improve information flow, and encourage parent and community participation throughout the School District.**

- Increase the use of the district website, various forms of social media, district and school publications, and other effective forms of communication to facilitate ongoing, two-way dialogue with employees, students, parents, and the community.
- Offer technical assistance to schools and parent organizations (PTA/PTO) to support parent and community involvement.
- Provide a variety of district- and school-based opportunities for parents, Bessemer citizens, and community organizations to collaborate, volunteer, and participate in decision making.
- Distribute “Family Friendly” and “Community Caring” awards to schools and departments that regularly involve the parents and the community in targeted support of students.

## NEXT STEPS

This plan's implementation is just as important as its' creation, so we are still eager to involve as many people as possible because we sincerely believe that people support what they help create! During the summer of 2013, Bessemer City School employees and district partners will prioritize and determine which strategic plan objectives and strategies to implement during the 2013-2014 school year, and will align the district's budget to these initiatives; most importantly, we will determine the possibility progress measures, complete the detailed implementation plan, and establish systems for monitoring progress from 2013 to 2016 to ensure that the possibilities we have imagined for Bessemer scholars are successfully achieved.

For more details, please visit our website: [www.bessk12.org](http://www.bessk12.org)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Bessemer City Schools (BCS) appreciates the brilliant thinking and thoughtful contributions of those who provided ideas on the possibilities for our young scholars, during the December 2012 and January 2013 *Imagine the Possibilities Community Forums*. The individuals noted here are those who sowed additional time to ensure the plan included innovative and realistic details. We are especially proud of the Purple Tigers from Bessemer City High School who offered honest feedback on the four strategic plan goals!

## BCS SUPPORTERS

### *Core Strategic Planning Team*

*Facilitator: Dr. Traci Elizabeth Teasley, Consultant, Chester, Virginia*

### Bessemer City Schools

Dr. Fred D. Primm, Jr., *Superintendent*

Angela Bedgood, *Parent Involvement Coordinator*, Office of Federal Programs

Remeka Little, *School Improvement Specialist*, Department of Instruction

Olivia Johnson, *Director*, Department of Attendance & Security

Reginald Mitchell, *Director*, Department of Facilities

Dr. Fanchon Muhammad, *Director*, Department of Instruction

Linda Richardson, *Assistant Principal*, Jonesboro Elementary

Shannon Sudbury, *Director*, Department of Human Resources

### Community Partners

Priscilla Dunn, *Senator*, State of Alabama & *Homeless Education Coordinator*, Bessemer City Schools

Fred Littlepage, *Lieutenant*, Bessemer Police Department

Evans Reed, *Sergeant*, Bessemer Police Department

Nathanial Rutledge, *Chief of Police*, Bessemer Police Department

Brenda Thompson, *Univserv Director*, Alabama Education Association

## ***Action Teams***

### **Goal 1: Informed, responsible, and productive students**

*Team Leader: Dr. Fanchon Muhammad*

Broderick Canada	Exeter Cochran	Quinneri Mitchell
Catherine Johnson	Tonna Jones	Remeka Little
Carolyn Miller	Tynea Swain	Dr. Carol Tull

### **Goal 2: Dedicated Staff**

*Team Leader: Shannon Sudbury*

Honorable Earleen Cochran	Senator Priscilla Dunn	
Sonjanika Henderson	Chris House	Carlton Jackson
Andrea Kirk-Cook	Crystal Lassiter	Barbara McCoy
Karl Moore	Lesley Oakes	Shawnta Owens
Sarah Person	Mildred L. Posey	Duana Robinson
Kem Steward	Jameka Thomas	Lavada Varner

### **Goal 3: Clean, safe, and caring environment**

*Team Leaders: Olivia Johnson and Reginald Mitchell*

LaRhonda Aikerson	Monique Bibbs	Debbie Colbum
Iverson Dudley	Dr. Patricia Garlikov	Lt. Roy Harris
Brenda Hunter-Jones	Capt. Carlton Jackson	Vickie Manzella
Jasponica Florence Moore	Lesley Oakes	Etta Williams
	Nikkia White	

### **Goal 4: Involved parents and community**

*Team Leader: Angela Bedgood*

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Pam Little	Vicki Kirk May	Meaoshia Mayes
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*Bessemer City High School Strategic Leadership Planning Team*

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*Empowering students through excellence in education.*