

About the Director

Thursday, January 26 2012, 12:00 PM



Dr. Jesse Register, Director of Schools

Dr. Register, nationally recognized for his work in urban education reform, brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the district as the city and state work diligently to meet the needs of all 78,000 students. Some highlights of his career include overseeing the successful merging of Hamilton County Schools and Chattanooga City Schools, serving in numerous roles as a consultant for urban education reform, serving as a visiting Associate Professor for Urban Education at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, serving on the national support team that developed the Superintendent's Leadership Academy for the State of Arkansas, and serving as Senior advisor for district leadership for the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. Most recently, Dr. Register has been a key advocate of Tennessee's successful \$500 million Race to the Top application and is serving on the Governor's Teacher's Evaluation Advisory Committee.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Prior to his arrival in Nashville in 2009, Dr. Register served as a Senior Advisor for District Leadership for the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, consulting with school leaders and districts across the country on issues of district redesign, high school reform, improving urban education, and leading change in school districts. Dr. Register also served as a member of the district redesign team at the Annenberg Institute. Dr. Register also served as Visiting Associate Professor for Urban Education at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. In this capacity, Dr. Register taught in the Masters, EDS and EDD programs at UTC in the area of educational leadership. He joined the faculty at UTC in the fall of 2007.

Dr. Register is perhaps best known for serving as the first Superintendent of Hamilton County Schools after the 1997 merger of Hamilton County Schools and the Chattanooga Public Schools – two very different schools systems. Register successfully led the unification of these systems for 10 years until his retirement in July 2006. The merged district consists of 40,000 students and 79 schools.

As Superintendent of Hamilton County Schools, Dr. Register was instrumental in the successful merger of two unique school systems. Chattanooga Public Schools was an urban, high poverty, and predominately minority school district of

20,000 students. Hamilton County Schools was a suburban and rural middle class district of 21,000 mostly Caucasian students. At the time of merger, the local governance structure was changed by state law, making Register the first school board appointed superintendent of the county system.

Prior to his work in Hamilton County, Register was superintendent of two different districts in North Carolina. He was the first superintendent of the merged Iredell-Statesville Schools in North Carolina, assuming that position to implement the merger of the Iredell County and Statesville City Schools in July 1991. Iredell-Statesville was a unified district of 16,000 students and 29 schools.

Register also served as Superintendent of the Cabarrus County Schools in North Carolina, having previously worked as a principal, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and assistant superintendent for administration. Register began his career in education as an English teacher.

EDUCATION

Dr. Register earned a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in education from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte; an Advanced School Administrator's certificate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and a doctorate in Education Administration from Duke University. He also completed the Superintendent's Executive Program at the University of North Carolina, and completed three years of training in the Change Leadership Program at Harvard University.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since joining Metro Nashville Public Schools early in 2009, Dr. Register has initiated a comprehensive district-wide transformation plan, MNPS Achieves: First to the Top. Through MNPS Achieves, some 200 community leaders, public school parents, and district staff have worked in one of nine Transformational Leadership Group. These volunteers are working to improve the academic performance of students who are learning English, are economically disadvantaged, and have special needs. They are working to improve high schools and middle schools and to ensure the district's infrastructure supports the transformation process by changing informational technology and data management, central office effectiveness, communications and human capital systems.

In 2009, the district's graduation rate jumped dramatically, to 82.9 percent, which is above the national average and a dramatic result for an urban school district. The Board of Education rated Dr. Register's 2009-10 school year performance as "Very Competent" with a 4.56 rating on a 5.00 scale.

Early milestones Dr. Register helped Hamilton County Schools reach after merger included:

- the development of a comprehensive pupil assignment plan, which led to the voluntary resolution of a U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights complaint filed by the Chattanooga Board of Education against the Hamilton County Board of Education;
- the receipt of the first of three U.S. Department of Education magnet school grants that would eventually total in excess of \$20 million;
- the adoption of a comprehensive facilities development plan that resulted in the construction of more than \$100 million in new construction and renovations to district buildings; and
- the development of a nationally recognized team and strategy for low-performing urban schools, known as the Benwood Initiative.

COMMUNITY

Active in the community, Dr. Register currently serves on the boards of directors of the American Heart Association, the Nashville Symphony, the Adventure Science Center and the Middle Tennessee Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

August 2011