The Metro Nashville Public School System Welcomes Dr. Jesse Register as Its New Director

The Metro Nashville Board of Public Education and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools are excited to announce the hiring of Dr. Jesse Register as the district's new Director of Schools. Dr. Register will begin his new position Jan. 15.

"This school board thought long and hard about who would be the best person to lead the district through some critical challenges," said David Fox, Metro Nashville Board of Public Education Chairman. "We are delighted to install as our director a person with the proven leadership, expertise and integrity of Dr. Register. The Metro Nashville school district is on an urgent mission of reform. Dr. Register's success generating profound gains in academic achievement by Chattanooga students augurs well for the future of reform in the Nashville system. We are very optimistic about the possibilities he brings to our school district and our students."

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 75,000 students. Some highlights of his career include overseeing the successful merging of Hamilton County Schools and Chattanooga City Schools, securing the funding and implementing the nationally recognized Benwood Initiative to close the achievement gap in Hamilton County 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.

"I am excited and eager to begin working with Metro Nashville Public Schools," says Register. "While the district is faced with many challenges, it also has tremendous potential for success. My goal as director will be to help develop the potential that exists in the district and the community. I think with some time, hard work, a unified and common vision and an intense focus on improving student achievement for all students, we can turn this district into one of the best in the country. Our students and our community will be the beneficiaries."

Professional Experience

Currently serving as **Senior Advisor for District Leadership for the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University**, Dr. Register consults 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 serves as a member of the district redesign team at the Annenberg Institute; his role is to provide the viewpoint of a district leader. His experience and expertise in reform and urban education will be invaluable to the district and the families it serves in the coming months and years.

Dr. Register is also currently serving as **Visiting Associate Professor for Urban Education at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga**. In this capacity, Dr. Register teaches 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 stint 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 of Arts Degree in English and a Master of Education Degree 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 recently completed three years training in the Change Leadership Program at Harvard University.

Accomplishments

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

- the creation of district-wide academic standards for students; the development of a comprehensive pupil assignment plan;
- 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; and
- 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.

Under the leadership of Dr. Register, the district also gained national recognition for its reform efforts. Dr. Register secured funding and implemented the **Benwood Initiative**, a nationally recognized project designed to close the achievement gap in urban school districts. The Benwood Initiative utilizes incentive pay plans and offers extra training for teachers. Under the guidance of Dr. Register and the implementation of this new plan, some of the district's most effective teachers were moved to the district's lower-performing schools and offered pay incentives. As a result, many of Hamilton County's lowest-performing schools saw increases in test scores and the district was able to close the achievement gap. Register also gained kudos for his desire and ability to create a sense of unity among key community partners, including philanthropic and non-profit organizations as well as the business community.

Also under the direction of Dr. Register, Hamilton County Schools was one of only eight systems in the country to receive a **Carnegie Corporation "Schools for a New Society"** grant for systemic high school reform. This reform effort resulted in a single path diploma requiring rigorous academic core requirements, coupled with a system of academies and small learning communities focused on specific professional or career fields. This knowledge will be especially beneficial as MNPS continues the multi-year phase in of Smaller Learning Communities. Currently, all 12 of the district's comprehensive high schools are working to implement Freshman, Career, and/or Thematic Academies.

Additional Achievements

Dr. Register's leadership and educational expertise has been recognized at the state level, as evident in his selection as the Chairman of the Coalition for Tennessee's Future, the first ever coalition of 16 education membership organizations including the Tennessee Education Association, the Tennessee School Boards Association, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, the Tennessee PTA, and others. He also served as a member of the Governor's Task Force on Salary Equity and a member of the Governor's Basic Education Plan Review Committee. He received recognition as the 2001 Tennessee PTA Outstanding Superintendent of the Year and the Tennessee School Plant Management Association Superintendent of the Year.

In addition to leading schools, Dr. Register is a published author with works such as "Creating a Smart Education District in Hamilton County" which can be found in *City Schools: How Districts and Communities Can Create Smart Education Systems* and "Developing Effective Multiple Partnerships" which can be found in *Voices for Urban Education.*