

# The Hamblen County Foundation for Educational Excellence and Achievement (HC\*EXCELL)

was founded in 1991 to promote educational excellence and achievement in Hamblen County. The Foundation has evolved from the funding of scholarships and small teacher grants to assisting in systemic educational change directed at developing high school graduates that have skills to succeed in post-secondary education, work and life.

*HC\*EXCELL's* previous campaign “Cradle through Career” goal was to align academic achievement with workforce needs and skills. Hamblen County has made tremendous progress but challenges still remain.

As a foundation we have learned that too many of our children enter school unprepared for success; lack critical thinking/problem solving skills to transition K-12 successfully; are unprepared for workforce and post-secondary opportunities, and that our teachers and educators feel overworked and under-appreciated.

*HC\*EXCELL's* new five year program of work **SUCCESS**, is formulated to address these challenges and to continue our efforts in promoting educational excellence and achievement as a means of sustaining and growing economic prosperity to improve the quality of life in Hamblen County.

The **SUCCESS** initiative consists of five elements:

- 🍎 **Ready by 6:** the creation and implementation of a strategic plan model to increase the number of children entering school prepared to learn;
- 🍎 **Arts Build Skills** initiative model to broaden rural students' critical thinking and problem solving skills;
- 🍎 **Workforce and Leadership** opportunities to better align academic with real life skills;
- 🍎 **Student Higher Education** programming to ensure improved access and completion; and
- 🍎 **Senator Herbert S. Walters Educator Fund** endeavors to build greater teacher recognition and appreciation.