

*Vision 2026:*  
*ReImagine Bessemer City Schools 2021-2026*

**A Strategic Plan for**



**BESSEMER CITY  
SCHOOLS**

*Teaching Effectively, Leading Successfully*

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*Vision 2026:*  
*ReImagine Bessemer City Schools 2021-2026*

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## **Bessemer City Board of Education**

**Mr. Amos Rembert  
District 1**

**Mr. Jerome Cook  
District 5**

**Mrs. Vera Eades – Board Vice-President  
District 2**

**Mrs. Remeka Thompson – Board President  
District 6**

**Mrs. Renna Soles-Scott  
District 3**

**Mr. Lee Jones  
District 7**

**Mr. Sam Morris  
District 4**

## **Superintendent of Education**

**Dr. Autumm M. Jeter**

**(Include picture of Board members and Superintendent, with caption listing names of each.)**



# Bessemer Board Of Education



1621 Fifth Avenue North

Post Office Box 1230

Bessemer, Alabama 35021

Phone: (205) 432-3000 Fax: (205) 432-3085

**SUPERINTENDENT**  
Autumm M. Jeter, Ed.D.

**BOARD MEMBERS**  
Remeka Thompson, President  
Vera Eades, Vice-President  
Jerome Cook  
Lee Jones  
Samuel Morris  
Amos Rembert  
Renna Scott

Dear Bessemer City School Employees:

The district is proud to present to you our five-year strategic plan. Our excitement as the Superintendent and Board Members of this school system are embedded within this five-year plan. The strategic plan was designed to ensure that our students' academic needs are represented, a transparent overview of our goals for the next five years is outlined, and a plan to increase the overall efficacy of Bessemer City Schools was developed.

We are pleased to present our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, "***Vision 2026: Relmagaine Bessemer City Schools 2021-2026***". We have worked purposefully to collect the essence of work completed in the past to guide our goals for the next five years. This has included focus group work of over 125 teachers, community members, administrators, steering committee and board members over a period of eight months. Participants were challenged to identify strengths and weaknesses of our school system and opportunities and threats from external factors. In consideration of items identified, they were asked to formulate areas for improvement, which are the core of ***Vision 2026***.

Our mission is to provide a safe, secure, and nurturing learning environment that includes and supports personalized learning models that meet the unique needs of the whole child through high-quality programs and resources. We welcome the opportunity to carry out this mission and distinguish ourselves as a high-performing school system.

We ask that each of you carefully review ***Vision 2026*** and consider where your contributions of time, talent, and treasure can help us realize the goals outlined in this plan. With faith, mutual support and collaboration, and understanding of our priorities related to our mission, we will deliver continued success in Bessemer City Schools.

Sincerely,

Autumm M. Jeter, Ed.D.

Superintendent

Mrs. Remeka Thompson

Board President

## A Snapshot of the Bessemer City Schools

(\*Other information may be included. Use pictures on this page – students, activities, buildings.)

District Student Enrollment: 3361

Total Faculty and Staff: 440

Teacher: 246

Administrators: 25

Support Staff: 169

National Board Certified Teachers: 7

### **Our Schools**

J.S. Abrams Elementary

Grades: K-5

Enrollment: 235

Westhills Elementary

Grades: K-5

Enrollment: 311

Charles F. Hard Elementary

Grades: PK-5

Enrollment: 388

Bessemer City Middle School

Grades: 6-8

Enrollment: 784

Greenwood Elementary

Grades: PK-5

Enrollment: 257

Bessemer City High School

Grades: 9-12

Enrollment: 837

Jonesboro Elementary

Grades: PK-5

Enrollment: 549

Other schools:

Bessemer Center for Technology

New Horizons Alternative School

## Our Strategic Plan Development Process

In February 2021, the Bessemer City Board of Education contracted with E<sup>3</sup> Strategic Solutions LLC (E<sup>3</sup>) to facilitate the development of a new strategic plan for the school system. The planning process spanned a period of six months, March 2021 to September 2021. The end-result and final strategic plan is ***Vision 2026: ReImagine Bessemer City Schools 2021-2026*** (*Vision 2026*). *Vision 2026* will serve as a guide for growth and improvement in Bessemer City Schools through the year 2026.

*Vision 2026* is a product of a multitude of stakeholder input opportunities. One of the most valuable sources of input was the collaborative work of 125+ individuals who participated through ten different stakeholder committees – Teaching Staff; Support Staff; Students; Parents; Principals and Assistant Principals; Directors; Board Members; Faith-Based Leaders; Business and Community Leaders; and Steering Committee. These committees were engaged individually on multiple occasions, which resulted in 30+ total sessions. In addition to the input received from stakeholder committees, more valuable input was garnered from data, comments, and suggestions received through several different means, including an organizational audit, parent surveys, a public forum, and general public input surveys.

Considering all the input from the various sources, E<sup>3</sup> and the Steering Committee completed a total of five strategic plan drafts. Upon the completion of each draft, groups were reengaged for additional input. The core items developed for the strategic plan were: 1) Guiding Principles (Purpose, Vision, Mission, Core Beliefs, Motto, and Theme), 2) Strategic Goals, and 3) Action Items.

The final draft was presented to the Board at a work session conducted on September 7, 2021. The Board approved *Vision 2026* on September 9, 2021.

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## Timeline for Strategic Planning Process

January 19, 2021	Board Hears Proposal for Strategic Planning Process
February 18, 2021	Board Approves Strategic Planning Process and Facilitator
March 12, 2021	Initial Planning with BCS Leadership
March 12, 2021	Organizational Audit Started
March 30, 2021	Organization Audit Report Published
April 2, 2021	Initial Tenet Phase Session with Steering Committee
April 8, 2021	Board Input Work Session #1
April 16, 2021	Stakeholder Sessions for Tenet Phase
April 29, 2021	Analysis Phase Stakeholder Sessions Day #1
April 30, 2021	Analysis Phase Stakeholder Sessions Day #2
May 13, 2021	Generation Phase Stakeholder Sessions Day #1
May 14, 2021	Generation Phase Stakeholder Sessions Day #2
May 27, 2021	Preliminary Working Draft Completed by E <sup>3</sup>
June 1, 2021	Steering Committee Session to Complete First Draft
June 9, 2021	Draft Phase Stakeholder Sessions Day #1
June 10, 2021	Draft Phase Stakeholder Sessions Day #2
June 21, 2021	Second Draft Completed by E <sup>3</sup>
June 30, 2021	Board Input Work Session #2
July 8, 2021	Public Forum
June 4 – June 18, 2021	Parent/Public Input Period
August 9, 2021	Third Draft Completed by E <sup>3</sup>
August 18, 2021	Steering Committee Session Completed Final Draft
September 7, 2021	Board Work Session for Presentation of Final Draft
September 9, 2021	Board Approval and Adoption
July – September 2021	Design and Execution of Communication, Implementation, and Review Phases

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## Standards-Based Strategic Plan

The strategic plan for the Bessemer City School System was developed using the *AdvancED/Cognia Performance Standards* as a framework. Every five years, in an effort to promote excellence and continuous growth throughout our organization, the school system completes the *AdvancED/Cognia* accreditation process. This process entails a comprehensive program of evaluation and external review, which is supported by the three Domains under which the research-based *AdvancED/Cognia Performance Standards* are organized. The Domains are:

Domain 1: Leadership Capacity

Domain 2: Learning Capacity

Domain 3: Resource Capacity

Our Strategic Goals address the three *AdvancED/Cognia Domain* areas. Furthermore, we created two additional goals to more specifically address the areas of organizational purpose and direction (Strategic Goal 1), and continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication (Strategic Goal 5).

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# OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## **Purpose – WHY** we exist as an organization

The purpose of Bessemer City Schools is to educate and empower our students to successfully compete in a global society.

## **Vision – WHAT** we want to achieve as an organization

The vision of Bessemer City Schools is to serve as a model of excellence by preparing all students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in their unique endeavors.

## **Mission – HOW** we want to achieve our vision

The mission of Bessemer City Schools is to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment that meets the needs of the whole child through quality instruction, programs, and resources.

## **Core Beliefs – WHAT** we stand for & **HOW** we behave as an organization

- Student-Centered Focus
- High Expectations
- Collaborative Relationships
- Integrity
- Respect for All
- Accountability for All
- Diversity and Inclusivity

## **Motto – Short comprehensive expression of guiding principles or organizational spirit**

Teaching Effectively, Leading Successfully

## **Theme: #Reimagine Bessemer City Schools**

(Include graphics, pics, etc. to make attractive.)

## STRATEGIC GOALS

Bessemer City Schools will:

1. Establish and communicate organizational guiding principles, strategic goals, and strategies, and consistently ensure our work aligns accordingly.
2. Provide effective governance and leadership to positively support and enhance learning, teaching, and the overall functioning of the school system.
3. Establish and maintain a highly effective learning culture and environment through high expectations, quality teaching, and excellent programs.
4. Provide quality resources and effectively allocate those resources to ensure effective teaching and programs, high levels of learning, and fiscal efficiency.
5. Implement a comprehensive framework for continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 1**

Bessemer City Schools will establish and communicate organizational guiding principles, strategic goals, and action items, and consistently ensure our work aligns accordingly.

### **ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:**

- 1.1 Regularly communicate guiding principles in schools and throughout the community using signage, publications, documents, websites, social media, and other available avenues;
- 1.2 Engage staff regularly at all levels to communicate expectations regarding the alignment of their behaviors and work to the guiding principles;
- 1.3 Develop explicit implementation plans for each action item, to include oversight responsibilities, timelines for completion, and detailed metrics;
- 1.4 Regularly engage all leadership in reviewing progress toward executing the strategic plan, developing next-step strategies, making needed revisions, and annually evaluating progress toward meeting our strategic plan goals; and
- 1.5 Annually communicate progress toward meeting strategic plan goals and provide for stakeholder opportunities to evaluate progress and make amendments, as needed.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 2**

Bessemer City Schools will provide effective governance and leadership to positively support and enhance learning, teaching, and the overall functioning of the school system. (Leadership Capacity)

### **ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:**

#### **Governance**

- 2.1.1 Provide Board members with high quality orientations and continuing education which promote effective Board operations and the improvement of teaching and learning in the school district;
- 2.1.2 Support Board members' commitment to meeting all continuing education requirements;
- 2.1.3 Consistently establish policies, procedures, and practices that ensure effective administration of the school system;
- 2.1.4 Ensure an annual review and revision of policies and procedures to reflect current educational laws, regulations, requirements, and best practices;
- 2.1.5 Ensure proper understanding and execution of roles and responsibilities for the Board and administrators, so that school leadership has the autonomy to establish and meet teaching and learning goals and to manage day-to-day operations effectively;
- 2.1.6 Properly address expressed concerns according to established roles and through established protocols;
- 2.1.7 Establish and regularly conduct Board evaluations;
- 2.1.8 Work to establish and maintain internal and external relationships which promote positive community support and relationships for the school system;

2.1.9 Seek and maintain supportive relationships with other governmental entities;

### **Leadership**

- 2.2.1 Communicate to all stakeholders the high expectations for student learning and positive continuous improvement results;
- 2.2.2 Recruit, develop, and retain highly effective and innovative school leaders;
- 2.2.3 Establish a leadership development program for both aspiring and newly-appointed administrators;
- 2.2.4 Establish and communicate effective operational school procedures and processes;
- 2.2.5 Create and implement evaluation protocols and procedures for all employees;
- 2.2.6 Establish and maintain adequate job descriptions of all positions;
- 2.2.7 Develop and maintain an organizational chart that effectively conveys the internal structure of the school system;
- 2.2.8 Hold staff accountable for their annual review of Board policies and established procedures for both school and system levels;
- 2.2.9 Refine student attendance policies to be clear and consistent, and create a uniform approach to combat tardies and absences, including an early-warning policy, automated calls, teacher and administrator expectations, and other appropriate measures;
- 2.2.10 Establish and maintain a positive work environment that improves the school culture and student learning; and
- 2.2.11 Ensure roles, responsibilities, and duties of all faculty and staff are well defined and communicated and established on a fair and equitable basis.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 3**

Bessemer City Schools will establish and maintain a highly effective learning culture and environment through high expectations, quality teaching, effective use of assessment, and excellent programs. (Learning Capacity)

### **ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:**

#### **Teaching/Learning**

- 3.1.1 Establish and maintain a learning environment characterized by non-threatening student and teacher interactions centered around relevant, standards-based instruction that respects intellectual freedom and ensures equitable learning opportunities.
- 3.1.2 Develop and maintain a viable, well-articulated, and uniform curriculum that is delivered to fidelity;
- 3.1.3 Ensure vertical curriculum alignment and teacher opportunities for vertical planning;
- 3.1.4 Continue to streamline curriculum resources to those which promote effective teaching and student learning;
- 3.1.5 Evaluate grading practices and establish authentic, uniform grading policies for elementary and secondary levels;

- 3.1.6 Establish plans and practices that ensure equitable distribution of support programs for all students, including the English Learner (EL) student populations;
- 3.1.7 Establish a plan for all schools to increase courses, programs, and/or activities to address the needs and interests of the advanced learner;
- 3.1.8 Develop a plan that organizes the course selection and scheduling process for teachers and students;
- 3.1.9 Provide staff with training and guidelines to promote effective collaboration between regular and special education staff, making sure to address issues involving misidentification of students;
- 3.1.10 Create a plan to ensure diversity within the Career and Technical Education program (student and teacher diversity);
- 3.1.11 Ensure appropriate monitoring of instruction and create plans to adjust processes as necessary to positively impact performance;
- 3.1.12 Provide staff training and expectations in the integration of technology into instructional and learning activities which engages students in the use of technology;
- 3.1.13 Establish tutoring programs involving peers and teachers;
- 3.1.14 Use data at all levels in order to plan instruction to address identified gaps and/or weaknesses;
- 3.1.15 Develop a focus on career awareness and related information at all grade levels;

### **Assessment**

- 3.2.1 Develop and maintain a PK-12 Comprehensive Assessment Plan to include both summative and formative assessments (e.g., benchmark) used;
- 3.2.2 Ensure effective use of formative assessments at the classroom level so that results are used to adjust instruction and meet the needs of learners;
- 3.2.3 Establish a data collection system to be used in the collection, analysis, and use of all assessment data to improve instruction and academic achievement;
- 3.2.4 Regularly engage staff in assessment data meetings to evaluate effectiveness of instructional practices and programs;

### **Programs**

- 3.3.1 Develop programs designed to engage students in the community through community service, leadership opportunities, and other means;
- 3.3.2 Develop college and career-ready pathways that guide students into successful opportunities in the workforce and/or higher education using programs designed to prepare students for success in the workforce such as Career and Technical Education, Ready-to-Work, pre-apprenticeship programs, dual enrollment, co-op, career fairs/expos, STEM/STEAM, STREAM etc.;
- 3.3.3 Provide a comprehensive K-12 fine arts program;
- 3.3.4 Develop a plan for establishing STEM/STEAM/STREAM programs in elementary and middle schools;
- 3.3.5 Explore the development of career academies for middle and high school students;
- 3.3.6 Continue to expand, revise, and improve extracurricular programs and activities at all levels which meet the needs and interests of students, function on a

- premier level, and enrich students in manner that develops a sense of school belonging and ownership; and
- 3.3.7 Develop strategies to refine and enhance the athletics programs to ensure student-athletes remain within the district.

## **STRATEGIC GOAL 4**

Bessemer City Schools will provide quality resources and effectively allocate those resources to ensure effective teaching and programs, high levels of learning, and fiscal efficiency. (Resource Capacity)

### **ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:**

#### **Human Resources**

- 4.1.1 Establish a teacher recruitment and retention plan for the district;
- 4.1.2 Develop a comprehensive teacher induction, mentoring, and coaching program to promote employee success and retention, instructional improvement, and student learning;
- 4.1.3 Develop a progressive action plan that includes practices and procedures to address personnel matters;
- 4.1.4 Annually complete a professional development needs assessment, and use the results to assist in developing a yearly professional development focus and related plan for specific professional development activities and a timeline for implementation;
- 4.1.5 Consider the establishment of programs providing opportunities for students to embrace education as a profession;
- 4.1.6 Provide a comprehensive program for substitute teachers, which shall include training, guidance, expectations, classroom standards, and other appropriate items to ensure learning continues during the absence of a teacher;
- 4.1.7 Research salary and supplement schedules to determine disparities and consider appropriate changes in salaries to ensure fair and equitable compensation;
- 4.1.8 Develop programs, procedures, practices, incentives, and activities designed to recognize the value of all teachers and support staff, promote a sense of team, and enhance their work performance;
- 4.1.9 Develop a plan that communicates professional expectations for employee behavior and ensures professional etiquette amongst staff and others during daily interactions;
- 4.1.10 Create an authentic professional learning environment that allows employees to exchange best practices with others within the district and outside the district;
- 4.1.11 Examine and revise district policies governing staff attendance, making sure to enforce current board policies and to consider incentives for good attendance;

## **Facilities/Physical Resources**

- 4.2.1 Maintain facilities, services, and equipment to provide a clean, healthy, attractive, and safe physical environment;
- 4.2.2 Engage appropriate professionals to conduct a comprehensive facilities assessment;
- 4.2.3 Using results from the facilities assessment, develop a long-range plan to address facility needs with the district;
- 4.2.4 Complete a technology equipment and infrastructure assessment and use the results to develop a comprehensive plan to provide and maintain adequate technology resources;

## **Safety and Security**

- 4.3.1 Study and revise safety and security plans and practices with goals of increasing the presence of law enforcement, securing other needed resources, and implementing effective practices and procedures;
- 4.3.2 Review bullying and harassment protocols and ensure all schools comply with local, state and federal policies and guidelines;

## **Financial/Fiscal Resources**

- 4.4.1 Develop a plan for examining all district funding to establish the best, most useful spending options;

## **Support Systems**

- 4.5.1 Enhance/create a career guidance plan that guides students toward their profession of choice;
- 4.5.2 Ensure the alternative school program is well organized and resourced in the following areas: transitions; age appropriate settings; communications; staff/teacher responsibilities; academic needs/outcomes; delivery of instruction; status checks; behavioral needs; counseling services; mentoring programs, and positive; well-structured environment;
- 4.5.3 Create a comprehensive college or career pathway that guides a student from ninth through twelfth grade;
- 4.5.4 Establish and implement a positive behavior support system;
- 4.5.5 Develop comprehensive transition plans for students at all levels, being sure to address student/parent expectations, developmental abilities, and social, emotional, and academic requirements;
- 4.5.6 Examine discipline practices and consider training and plans to ensure coordinated discipline options that positively impact students; and
- 4.5.7 Use School Incident Report (SIR) data to identify students who exhibit problematic behaviors and direct appropriate services.



## **STRATEGIC GOAL 5**

Bessemer City Schools will implement a comprehensive framework for continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication.

### **ACTION ITEMS - In fulfillment of this Strategic Goal, our school system shall:**

#### **Continuous Improvement**

- 5.1.1 Ensure the development of effective continuous improvement plans at all schools to improve student achievement, by providing guidelines, monitoring execution, completing evaluations, and requiring year-end reporting;
- 5.1.2 Establish plans and routines to collaboratively analyze data on a district-wide basis to positively affect student achievement;
- 5.1.3 Ensure appropriate personnel have access to assessment data to inform instruction and promote continuous school improvement;
- 5.1.4 Annually conduct stakeholder surveys regarding their perceptions of school effectiveness and use the resulting data in the continuous improvement process;
- 5.1.5 Establish annual academic and performance goals for all schools, school levels, and the district;
- 5.1.6 Monitor the yearly progress toward meeting academic and performance goals, engage staff in reviewing the data, and formulate improvement strategies to address areas of weakness;
- 5.1.7 Acquire and effectively use a data disaggregation system that allows for the development of a comprehensive profile of individual and group student achievement data;
- 5.1.8 Track and analyze both individual and group achievement data, and plan instruction to address identified gaps or weaknesses;
- 5.1.9 Ensure all discipline infractions and attendance are properly documented in the district's data system;

#### **Stakeholder Engagement**

- 5.2.1 Create partnerships with local industry and colleges in an effort to prepare students for college and career opportunities, while simultaneously addressing local business and industry needs;
- 5.2.2 Develop a comprehensive parent engagement plan that provides programs and strategies designed to bridge the gap between parents and school staff; provide a welcoming environment for parents; offer academic-related involvement; offer regular interaction opportunities; establish effective relationships; provide opportunities for consistent parent-teacher communications; provide staff with sensitivity/customer service training; and establish protocols for parent/teacher conferences;
- 5.2.3 Develop a plan for promoting/increasing engagement of stakeholders within the community;
- 5.2.4 Engage business and industry to create career awareness;
- 5.2.5 Develop a collaborative plan (involving business/industry, faith-based, city and other government officials, law-enforcement, etc.) dedicated to resolving community issues that damage the district's perception;

## **Communication**

- 5.3.1 Communicate to all stakeholders the high expectations for staff, students, and the school district;
- 5.3.2 Create and publish a staff directory that effectively and efficiently communicates to stakeholders the job duties and responsibilities of staff; (Descriptions, Organizational Chart, Staff Directory)
- 5.3.3 Create an internal communication framework within the district to insure effective and consistent communications to all levels, groups, and individuals;
- 5.3.4 Develop a comprehensive communication plan to ensure consistent availability of relevant district information to external stakeholders (calendars, social media, websites, publications, school marquees, announcements, media protocols and contacts, etc.);
- 5.3.5 Develop staff protocols and expectations for both internal and external communications; and
- 5.3.6 Publish an annual report of the school system, which communicates accomplishments and other important information for the schools and system.

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