



## HAMILTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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### Hamilton County Schools Welcomes Annenberg Institute Analysis of "Academically Focused, Service Oriented" Central Office

*School System, Annenberg Institute to Meet with School Leadership, Board  
To Review Detail of Report and Develop Next Steps*

**June 22, 2005** – After six months of research and analysis, including in-depth interviews and focus groups with more than 350 parents, teachers, students and community members, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University today released the findings and recommendations from its Central Office Review for Results and Equity (CORRE) study.

The study praises the Hamilton County Schools' central office for its focus on academic performance and service orientation while identifying three key areas for improvement -- communications, constituency building and community engagement, and building on the district's service orientation.

"There is a great deal of quality information that the community and the school system can use going forward to build an even better school system," said School Superintendent Dr. Jesse Register.

The Annenberg Institute developed CORRE as a five-step process to determine how the performance, capacity and effectiveness of a school district's central office can support higher academic performance and ensure results and equity for all of the children in its schools. The study was initiated by Hamilton County Claude Ramsey and Dr. Register in December 2004 after being recommended by the Finance and Statistical Resources Task Force during the Mayor's 2003 Education Summit.

"The School Board, administrators and principals look forward to reviewing the CORRE study and its recommendations in the coming weeks," said Dr. Register. "The CORRE study recognizes the strengths and progress made as central office administrators while making several recommendations that will improve our staff's ability to support teachers and students in our schools. As educators, we welcome the chance to learn how we can even better serve the school system."

The study provided several recommendations for the school system to implement that will help strengthen the school system and its central office operation. One such recommendation calls for making communications and marketing a district priority. This recommendation was made after many of participants involved in the CORRE meetings raised several concerns and issues with the lack of

communication from the Central Office. According to the report, communications is essential to being accountable and to building broader commitment to public education.

"Five years ago, we made a decision to put our resources into the classroom rather than build a communications department. We now realize that we need a stronger communications effort to ensure all constituents have better access to information while effectively marketing the achievements and needs of the school district," said Dr. Register. "Hamilton County Schools is currently in the process of restructuring several central office positions to concentrate existing resources on building a stronger communications department that will focus on addressing many of the issues raised in the CORRE study."

School officials plan additional meetings with the CORRE team and the Annenberg Institute in the coming months to develop action plans for implementing the recommendations from the study. In all, the study offers recommendations in six key areas that will help improve the performance and effectiveness of the school system's central office:

- Deepen, further develop and sustain the focus on increasing instructional quality instruction and results for all students in Hamilton County
- Build on and demonstrate Central Office accountability to schools and the community by increasing transparency and inclusiveness of decision making process
- Build on the district's data orientation with the goal of broaden access to information about student performance and about how resources are targeted to meet student needs and community goals
- Find and focus on the common ground which HCDE constituents can join forces in support of public schools
- Increase community accountability for public education by building more effective and engaged relationships with constituent groups
- Make communications about and marketing the achievements, priorities and needs of HCDE a district priority

Hamilton County Department of Education is the fifth school district nationwide to undergo this rigorous "self-analysis" process with the Annenberg Institute. CORRE processes are now underway or have been completed in urban school districts in California, New Jersey, Oregon and Rhode Island.