

**FEASIBILITY STUDY REGARDING  
THE CREATION OF A  
MUNICIPAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE  
CITY OF BARTLETT, TENNESSEE**

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**BY**

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Introduction to the Study .....	3
Feasibility Study Methodology.....	5
A Brief Review of the Literature and Research Related to Enrollment Size in School Districts.....	10
Overview of Tennessee Educational Finance System .....	16
Basic Education Program (BEP).....	16
Shelby County Property Tax.....	18
Local Option Sales Tax.....	20
Required Municipality Financial Revenue Support and “Maintenance of Effort” Requirement .....	21
Legal and Regulatory Issues Regarding Municipal School Districts.....	22
History of Past Practice Regarding School Facility Transfer in Shelby County .....	63
Watkins Uiberall, PLLC Report .....	65
Municipal Public School Systems Currently Operating in Tennessee .....	70
Demographics and Governmental Characteristics of Bartlett, Tennessee.....	76
Projected Bartlett School District Average Daily Membership (ADM) Student Enrollment.....	77
Overview of Essential Academic Program and Operational Requirements .....	78
Central Office Organizational Structure.....	78
Employment of a Superintendent of Schools .....	80
Certificated Personnel Staffing .....	81
Classified Personnel Staffing.....	82
Support Services.....	83
School Nutrition .....	83
School Transportation.....	84
Instructional Technology.....	85
Maintenance and Operations .....	86
Custodial Services .....	86
Fiscal Requirements .....	87
Projected Revenues .....	87
Projected Expenditures.....	93

Summary and Considerations .....	124
Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Potential Creation of New Municipal School Districts in Shelby County, Tennessee .....	129
Appendix A: Bartlett School Map .....	133
Appendix B: Shelby County Schools Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan.....	135
Appendix C: FY2011 Sales Tax Collections .....	137
Appendix D: Bartlett Sales Tax Collections for FY2011.....	139
Appendix E: Duties of a Tennessee Superintendent of Schools .....	141
Appendix F: Bartlett BEP Allocations and Summary of BEP Funding Research .....	147
Appendix G: Estimated New School Construction Costs .....	153
Appendix H: Public Chapter 1 .....	156
Appendix I: Tennessee Department of Education State Mandated Minimum Salary Schedule for Superintendents/Directors .....	158
Appendix J: 2011 Report Card.....	160
Appendix K: State Mandated Minimum Licensed Instructional Personnel Salaries .....	162
Appendix L: 2011–2012 Shelby County Schools Salary Schedule .....	164
Appendix M: 2011–2012 Memphis City Schools Salary Schedule .....	166
Appendix N: Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-2-203 - Duties and Powers of the Board Education .....	168
Appendix O: Chancellor’s Opinion .....	176

## **A Report on the Feasibility to Form a School District for the Municipality of Bartlett, Tennessee**

Prepared for the Mayor and Board of Aldermen:

Mayor A. Keith McDonald

Vice Mayor/Alderman Jack Young

Alderman W.C. (Bubba) Pleasant

Alderman Emily Elliott

Alderman David Parsons

Alderman Bobby Simmons

Alderman Jay Rainey

## Executive Summary

In September 2011, Southern Educational Strategies, LLC (SES) was contracted as a consultant to develop a feasibility study for the City of Bartlett regarding the potential establishment of a municipal school district. SES agreed to perform the reasonably necessary analyses and research to furnish the municipality a report that included the following content:

- a. An analysis of current legal and regulatory requirements and issues reasonably expected to arise should the municipality choose to establish a municipal school district;
- b. An overview of the essential academic program and operational program requirements that the municipality could reasonably anticipate encountering should the municipality choose to establish a municipal school district, along with suggested courses of action to successfully meet those requirements, provided, however, that the feasibility study is limited to the creation of a municipal school district and not its ongoing operation;
- c. An analysis of the fiscal requirements and a 2011 estimate of the total annual general operational revenues and expenditures (priced at a current dollar value) that the municipality could expect to receive and incur should it choose to establish a municipal school district.

The analyses and research performed by SES and its associates led to the findings summarized as follows:

- a. With regard to legal and regulatory issues, it is opined that Bartlett has the authority to create a municipal school district as provided in Public Chapter 1 of the 2011 Acts of Tennessee that revived the power of municipalities to create municipal school districts. Because this legislation did not address transfer of facilities from the Shelby County Schools to a municipality, an informed legal opinion is offered based on pertinent case law, the essence of Chapter 1, and the history of past practices regarding school facility transfer in Shelby County. Based on this legal research, it is the opinion of SES and its attorneys that a Bartlett municipal school district has the legal authority to receive transfer of and control of school facilities now located within its boundaries and to have that transfer occur without the imposition of costs with respect to those facilities.
- b. With regard to operational issues concerning the feasibility of a new municipal school district's ability to offer educational opportunities comparable to existing Shelby County Schools programs, an intensive analysis and projection of Average Daily Membership (ADM) enrollment data was conducted followed by a fiscal analysis. This analysis led to the finding that sufficient enrollment would exist to provide a comparable educational program. The leaders of the City of Bartlett stated a strong desire to create a school district that places students as the top priority and permits students to attend their current schools so long as instructional space permits. Therefore, these projected enrollment data for schools within Bartlett include all current public school students who reside within the City of Bartlett municipal boundaries and annexation reserve areas of Bartlett as well as specific current students who reside in school attendance zones not presently linked to municipal boundaries. This includes students who now reside in the City of Lakeland and are zoned to Bon Lin Middle, plus students who now reside in future City of Memphis annexation reserve areas located north and west of Bartlett, and who are currently zoned to Bartlett Elementary, Rivercrest Elementary, and Shadowlawn Middle. These are students who currently reside