

# Open Use Policy

John Bilderback, M.S.

Step ONE Program Manager

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health

Department

[www.hcstep1.org](http://www.hcstep1.org)

# The Original Approach

- Initially our idea was to target schools for **Joint Use Agreements**
  - In 2010 this was the best practice of choice
  - We targeted two schools in East Chattanooga
  - Ultimately this was too staff intensive to scale up
    - Lots of time spent explaining
    - Conversations usually ended with concerns over liability



# An Opportunity to Think Differently

- Every barrier has a reason
  - What is the **barrier** and is its reason **valid**?
  - Why is the change we want **necessary** and how does it address the reasons for the barrier/barriers?
  - Does the **capacity** exist to **support** this change and to **scale it up**?
  - Might there be a **simpler solution** to the problem?



# Open Use Policy

- How we defined success
  - Open Use Policy is a resolution passed by the school board resulting in the **system-wide** opening of all elementary school playgrounds to the public during daylight hours and outside of normal school operating times.

# Writing the Policy

- Our staff and partners wrote, reviewed multiple drafts, and consulted with **ChangeLab Solutions** for advice
- We wrote the policy with the school system administrators, board members, and residents
  - The school district's attorney reviewed the proposed policy and **reworked the language to simplify the policy further**
- On February 20, 2014 the amended policy was passed system-wide

# Open Use Policy: Adopted

## Hamilton County Board of Education

Monitoring:  <b>Review: Annually, in October</b>	Descriptor Term:  <b>Community Use of School Facilities</b>	Descriptor Code: <b>3.206</b>	Issued Date:  
		Rescinds:	Issued: <b>02/20/14</b>

1 Subject to rules and regulations that may be adopted by each principal, school facilities may be used  
2 by the public for charitable, civic, recreational, cultural and other purposes when not in use for school  
3 purposes.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> This policy sets forth the guidelines pursuant to which school facilities may be used by the  
4 public.

### 6 **Outdoor Facilities at Elementary Schools**

7  
8 During daylight hours on any day school is not in session, the public is permitted to access the play-  
9 grounds and outdoor basketball courts of any elementary school; provided, however, that any recognized  
10 school group shall have the right to reserve any such property for its exclusive use in accordance with  
11 procedures established by the school principal; and further provided that the principal of each elemen-  
12 tary school shall have the right to establish rules and regulations governing the conduct of the public on  
13 the school campus.

# What Open Use Policy Provided

- **20** of the 45 elementary school playgrounds are within  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile of CARTA bus stops
- Hamilton County increased its acres of green space/1,000 people from **5.96** to **6.58**
- There is a total of **202** acres of playground and green-space made available to all county residents
- There are over **65,390** people living within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of an elementary school and **8,284** are under 10 years of age.

# COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

THE PUBLIC IS PERMITTED TO ACCESS THE PLAYGROUND AND ITS OUTDOOR AMENITIES DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS ON ANY DAY SCHOOL IS NOT IN SESSION. THE PRINCIPAL MAY ESTABLISH ADDITIONAL RULES REGARDING CONDUCT OF THE PUBLIC DURING NON-SCHOOL HOURS.

FOR YOUR SAFE AND ENJOYABLE USE OF THIS FACILITY, THE FOLLOWING ARE PROHIBITED.

PETS  
GLASS CONTAINERS  
FIREARMS OR WEAPONS  
OPEN FIRES OF ANY KIND  
ENTERING CLOSED AREAS  
PLANT REMOVAL / DESTRUCTION  
SKATEBOARDS AND ROLLER-SKATES  
VENDING / SOLICITING WITHOUT A PERMIT  
MOTORIZED VEHICLES EXCEPT WHEELCHAIRS  
INTOXICANTS AND ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

GROUPS WISHING TO USE THIS PROPERTY FOR ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES SHOULD CONTACT THE SCHOOL OFFICE FOR A SCHOOL FACILITIES USE FORM.

FOR THE FULL COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES POLICY, REFER TO [WWW.HCDE.ORG](http://WWW.HCDE.ORG), HAMILTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, POLICY 3.206

- Signs were added in the fall and spring of 2015-16
- A media release during the last week of school was well covered by local press and social media
  - **Social media comments were overwhelmingly positive**



# Steps for Success

- Open Use Success
  - **Clearly define** how you will measure success
  - Have an **advocacy plan**
  - Understand the school board's procedures to amend or adopt new policies
  - **Engage stakeholders in writing the policy**
  - Develop **relationships** with key individuals from the community, the schools, central office, philanthropic organizations, and school board members

# Contact Information

Email: [jbilderback@hamiltontn.gov](mailto:jbilderback@hamiltontn.gov)

Phone: 423-209-8090

[www.hcstep1.org](http://www.hcstep1.org)