



For Immediate Release
Sept. 28, 2009

For more information contact:
Bonny Millard, Executive Director, Blount Education Initiative
(865) 273-1210, bonny@blounteducation.org, www.blounteducation.org

Other Media Contacts:
Amy Schwinge, (865) 982-6626 or amy@marybethwest.com
Tyra Haag, (865) 982-6626 or tyra@marybethwest.com

Blount Education Initiative (BEI) to Hold Gubernatorial Community Forum on Education; Public Invited to Attend

Confirmed Gubernatorial Candidates Include Haslam, McMillan, Ramsey and Wamp

Maryville, Tenn. – Blount Education Initiative (BEI) announced that it will hold a community forum for the gubernatorial candidates to explore and discuss the topic of “Making Education Tennessee’s Top Priority: The Roles of State Government, Local Governments, and all Tennessee Citizens.”

The event will take place on Monday, Oct. 26, at 6:50 p.m. in the auditorium of William Blount High School at 219 County Farm Road in Maryville, Tenn. The public is invited to attend the forum and will be encouraged to participate in an open dialogue with the candidates.

As of Sept. 28, the following gubernatorial candidates have committed to participate in the forum:

- Knoxville Mayor Bill Haslam (Republican)
- Former Tennessee House of Representatives Majority Leader Kim McMillan (Democrat)
- Tennessee Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey (Republican)
- U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp (Republican)

“The purpose of this community forum is to engage Tennessee gubernatorial candidates in a discussion about how and why to improve Tennessee’s nationwide standing in educational performance and achievement,” said Matt Murray, BEI president. “The discussion is not intended to dissect the state’s policy and funding issues, but rather to address education’s more strategic role in charting a path of future economic success for both the state and its individual citizens.”

“We especially want the public to know that this forum will not be speech-driven,” said Bonny Millard, executive director of BEI. “It will be dialogue-driven in a true community meeting format with the moderator guiding the discussion among the candidates based on educational topic points while engaging audience feedback and questions to further advance the conversations.”

For more information about the gubernatorial community forum or to submit suggested education-related issues for candidate discussion, the public can visit www.blounteducation.org.

-more-

ABOUT BLOUNT EDUCATION INITIATIVE

The Blount Education Initiative's (BEI) mission is to make education the Blount County community's top priority by developing a sustained public awareness campaign focusing on the critical issues related to education, supporting local schools in their efforts to provide a top-notch education for all students and serving as a bridge between the educational community and businesses to develop meaningful collaborations. Achieving consensus about education's vital importance, and what forms of support are required to achieve educational excellence, requires an organized, concerted campaign involving information exchange, dialogue, learning and persuasion. That's why BEI exists – to facilitate this process. **For more information, visit www.blounteducation.org**

#