



Children First!

News & Information from Metro Nashville Public Schools

January 11, 2008

District's using BEP 2.0 funds appropriately and with State approval

Early-week questions raised in the media regarding the use of BEP 2.0 funds by MNPS led many to question whether the school district is using these funds appropriately. The answer is yes. BEP funding was determined months after the MNPS operating budget was submitted for 2007-2008. We, along with other districts, met with State Department of Education officials in June to learn how these dollars should be used in the most effective way to help students. We were provided a worksheet that we used to budget our use of the \$11.4 million in BEP funds provided to MNPS to meet our Strategic Plan goals. This worksheet was submitted and approved by the State.

This week, MNPS officials have again reviewed this worksheet, met with staff regarding expenditures and were assured by State officials that all money was being used correctly and appropriately. The BEP money is being used to provide more math specialists, more special education teachers, more English Language Learner teachers, additional text books, additional attendance officers, more assistance with Credit Recovery (a program designed to keep students from falling behind and dropping out or failing high school), additional Pre-Kindergarten classes, more behavior specialists and other efforts designed to help students be more successful.

Gra-Mar teacher featured on PBS's *Everyday Edisons*

Grading papers, a necessary but time-consuming task for teachers, may get a lot easier with the **Edugrader**, a new invention by **Gra-Mar** 6th grade Special Education teacher Rebecca Byler. Byler and her invention are currently featured on the PBS series *Everyday Edisons*. The new PBS series sheds light on the complex product design and development process by featuring the stories of 14 ordinary people as their raw concepts are transformed into actual products. Selected from thousands of entries, cameras follow these "Everyday Edisons" as they undergo each phase of the process, from design and engineering to branding, commercialization and marketing. Byler's invention, the **Edugrader**, is an electronic pen that can calculate grades at the push of button. Her idea was born from experience gained during her 27 years as an educator, along with those of her husband, also a teacher at MNPS, and other family members who are teachers. The show airs locally on NPT, Channel 8, Saturdays at 11:30 p.m. For more information, check out the following websites: www.edugrader.com and www.everydayedisons.com.

Community Education announces spring class offerings

A catalog of courses for spring classes through Community Education is now available in locations throughout Davidson County, as well as online at the district website at www.mnps.org. Community Education classes offered by MNPS and the Community Education Alliance of Metro Government serve thousands of children and adults annually at locations throughout Davidson County.

MNPS student selected for Youth Senate Program in Washington

Richard Exton of Hume-Fogg Academic Magnet High School has been selected to represent both the state and Metro Nashville Public Schools at the 46th Annual United States Senate Youth Program in Washington, D.C. Exton will spend a week at the nation's capital with the nation's top high school students in the country. He will attend meetings of all three branches of government, learning how each division operates and how the divisions interact with one another. In addition, Exton will be awarded a \$5000 college scholarship. Exton was handpicked out of hundreds of students statewide along with one other student from the Chattanooga area.

MNPS outreach efforts assist those in need during holidays

Several Metro Nashville Public Schools, as well as the Central Office, conducted food drives and other holiday activities to assist families in need during the holiday season. A food drive at the Central Administration Building resulted in the collection of 567 lbs. of food and cash donations of more than \$250 for the Second Harvest Food Bank. At **Tom Joy Elementary**, more than 80 families from the school were helped with food, clothing and toys for the holidays. The entire school worked, along with the school's Pencil Partner and area merchants, to make the holidays brighter for these families. At **Madison School**, the Key Club sponsored a can drive, also collecting food for those in need. The Madison Kiwanis Club sponsors the Key Club. Many other schools and groups participated in holiday outreach efforts, and we are proud to mention these few as representative of the many ways MNPS and our schools are active in the communities we serve.