



Children First!

News & Information from Metro Nashville Public Schools

March 28, 2008

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TCAP Test Dates Announced

TCAP Test Dates have been finalized. This year, in hopes of battling test-taking fatigue, the district has opted to use a split testing window, with a three day break built into the testing window. It is felt this method will be most beneficial to MNPS students. The TCAP testing window for Spring 2008 is as follows:

Tuesday, April 8
Wednesday, April 9
Thursday, April 10
Monday, April 14
Tuesday, April 15

Nationally Recognized Story-Teller at J.T. Moore

The community is invited to hear Donald Davis, a nationally known storyteller and author, Tuesday evening, April 1, in the **J. T. Moore library**. The event is called "An Evening Hour with Donald Davis" and will begin at 7 p.m. There is no admission charge for the event.

Mr. Davis, will also share his stories with John Trotwood Moore Middle School students March 31 and April 1. He will tell his original stories to all grade levels during the school day March 31 and will teach narrative writing April 1.

Robert E. Lillard Elementary Design Center Gets Ready for TCAPs

Robert E. Lillard Elementary Design Center is getting ready for the TCAP. Students are working on ThinkLink Practice Probes designed by their teachers to focus on TCAP skills, and parents prepared TCAP Practice Booklets for students to work on at home during the spring

break. All Lillard families were also invited to Family Math Night, March 27, to learn math strategies families can use at home.

Lillard will officially kick-off TCAP Testing on April 4, with a TCAP Pep Rally in the school gym at 1:30. Classes, with the help of our special skills teachers, will design banners, cheers, and songs that promote a great testing environment and successful test taking skills.

Paragon Mills Makes Learning “A Family Affair”

Thursday nights prove to be special at **Paragon Mills Elementary School**. From 5 – 6:30 p.m., it is “come as you are able” for all parents and students to prepare for the TCAPs. Some teachers have volunteered to watch the smaller children as older siblings and parents are busy at the lab area. Other teachers have volunteered to register students. Others are at the refreshment area, ready to offer students who finish a word of praise and a snack for the extra effort. Other teachers are posted in the lab areas, all over the building, ready to help parents and students with their TCAP lab night.

Meanwhile, parents and students are in front of a computer practicing specific skills individualized to meet the areas where the student has demonstrated weaknesses or have not reached proficiency.

Antioch Student Receives Princeton Book Award

Congratulations to Wachiraya Lentgrai, a student at **Antioch High**, for her selection by the Princeton Alumni Association of Nashville and Middle Tennessee to receive the Princeton Book Award. According to the Alumni Association, “there were many worthy candidates and Wachiraya stood out as an example of commitment to living up to Princeton’s unofficial motto, ‘In the Nation’s service, and the service of all nations’.”

MNPS Keeps Kids Safe

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools has been recognized for ranking in the Top 50 in the first-ever *netTrekker d.i. Safe Search Awards Program*, a nationwide program recognizing school districts that are keeping kids safest when searching on the Internet. For the 2006-2007 school year, MNPS ranked 31st. Congratulations to all employees of MNPS. To view the list of other districts joining MNPS in the Top 50, please visit <http://ntdi.nettrekker.com/index.php?page=top50>.

Special Guests a Special Treat for Una and Lakeview

A special thank you is in order for Vivian Wilhoite, District 29 Council Member, and "Ozzie," Nashville Sounds Mascot, for making special appearances at Una and Lakeview Elementary Schools for Dr Seuss week.

A Taste of Nashville

Sunday, April 20, the public is invited to “A Taste of Nashville,” a benefit for **Pearl-Cohn Business Magnet High School National Academy of Finance**. The event will be held at 3 p.m. at the West Stadium Club at LP Field. Cost is \$40 for singles; \$60 for couples. Tickets can be purchased through Barbara Moss at 329-8420 or Melissa Bryant at 259-8421. This year’s participating restaurants include: Amerigo, Chappy’s on Church, Fleming’s Prime Steakhouse, Maggiano’s Little Italy, Nick and Rudy’s, Palm Restaurant, Sambuca and many more.

Court Interns Needed

A reminder to all teachers and students: David Torrence, Davidson County Criminal Court clerk, is accepting applications from Davidson County High School students in their junior year for nonpaying **summer internship positions**. Ten internship positions will last six weeks beginning the second week of June.

The Criminal Court Clerk summer intern program provides a behind-the-scenes view of how the Davidson County Criminal Courts work on a daily basis, an opportunity few students have when considering the legal profession. Work hours for all interns are flexible. Students accepted into the program will be required to attend a one-hour orientation before the start of the program.

For complete details on how to apply, visit

<http://ccc.nashville.gov/portal/page/portal/ccc/studentInternProgram/>.

Applications are due no later than April 18. If you have any questions, please contact Tommy Bradley, chief administrative officer for the Criminal Court Clerk's Office, at 862-5663 or via email at tommy.bradley@nashville.gov.

Paragon Mills Raises Thousands in Pennies for Patients

Congratulations to the students of **Paragon Mills** for raising \$2,001.01 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society through the "Pennies for Patients" campaign. This is the largest amount raised since Paragon Mills began supporting this campaign several years ago. Paragon Mills classes competed, with the top class in each grade level winning an ice cream party and the top class in the school winning a coke/pizza party.

Dalewood Elementary Gets a Special Visitor

Brenda Combs, a well-respected Phoenix educator with an amazing story of overcoming hardships, visited **Dalewood Elementary** Friday, March 28 to present her inspirational story to the Dalewood students. Ms. Combs was featured in the November 2007 edition of Reader's Digest.

MNPS Represented in March Madness

Several MNPS alumni represented the district well during the **NCAA Basketball Tournaments**. Alex Renfroe, Belmont University star and Player of the Game versus top ranked Duke University, graduated from Hume Fogg. Henry Harris, also of Belmont University, graduated from Stratford. Jamie Graham, who has joined the Vanderbilt Commodores, graduated from Whites Creek. Brandon Harriford, now playing for Austin Peay, graduated from Hume Fogg. Jamont Gordon, now a Bulldog at Mississippi State, attended Glencliff High. Congratulations to all of these MNPS alumni.

Hume-Fogg Mock Trial Team Places Third

Congratulations to the **Hume-Fogg Mock Trial Team** for placing third overall in the Tennessee State Championship Tournament, held March 14 and 15. Hume-Fogg outscored traditional private school rivals Montgomery Bell Academy and Memphis University School in the process. Team members included seniors Nicholas Allen, Gillian Brassil, Becca Farnsworth, Nora Kern, Madhu Nair, and Daniel Roberts, and junior Hannah Fixel. Gillian Brassil won honors as Team MVP for the tournament.

MNPS Steps Up to the Plate to Meet Math Needs

MNPS has had a few calls from parents concerned with changes in middle school math courses offered. We would like to share the following information to help clear any confusion.

MNPS is “stepping up to the plate” when it comes to meeting the needs of advanced middle school math students. No longer will these students be asked to skip two full years of content knowledge and processing in order to be advanced. We are now offering advanced middle school math classes that allow students to delve deeper into grade level content and make more connections between and among the five content standards at each grade level. It is true that MNPS will not be offering Pre-Algebra to 6th grade students and Algebra 1 to 7th grade students beginning next school year. However, there are valid reasons for this decision, which is based on more than three years of research and study by MNPS.

In past years, MNPS has allowed students who were considered advanced the option to enroll in Pre-Algebra in the sixth grade and Algebra I in the seventh grade – thus skipping two full years of content instruction in math. As MNPS looks to improve mathematics scores across the district, our staff has reviewed the scores of these students, as well as those of other students who did not skip this content, and has analyzed national research. We have years of data that shows our current process is not accomplishing what we need. In fact, all of our studies have shown the content missed by these students in the sixth and seventh grades is having a negative impact on them in later grades.

Here are some of the reasons:

- Many of our Algebra II and Geometry students who have taken Pre-Algebra and Algebra I in the sixth and seventh grades often struggle with the concepts needed in these upper-level courses. Classmates who did not skip the sixth and seventh grade mathematics content are doing much better. Frequently, these students are completing that third required mathematics course and are not taking math in the 10th, 11th and 12th grades—creating a three-year gap in math instruction before graduation and negatively affecting their scores on required tests such as the ACT and SAT. This finding has proven true for our academic magnet students, as well as for students in the zoned middle and high schools.
- Students who do well in Algebra I at the seventh grade level do not fare as well with Geometry in the eighth grade. National research reveals children’s brains are not as well developed in the areas needed for comprehension and application of the geometric concepts when taught at the eighth grade. Comprehension is much higher when presented at an older age.
- Finally, a new state requirement that goes into effect next school year will require rising seventh graders to take a math class every year of high school. This means that a student who receives high school credit for Algebra I and Geometry in middle school, will have no choice but to successfully complete Algebra II as a freshman, Honors Pre-Calculus as a sophomore, Advanced Placement Calculus or Advanced Placement Statistics as a junior, and one of the following as a senior: either Advanced Placement course not

completed in the eleventh grade, or one of two new courses being added at the senior level pending state approval.

So, what are we offering to students who are advanced?

We will offer advanced 6th and 7th grade mathematics courses that will provide a more in-depth and connected understanding of the required mathematics concepts.

- Algebra I will be an 8th grade offering, meaning advanced students may still take the course before entering high school. By 8th grade, research indicates students are better prepared for the concepts presented.
- There will always be a way for extremely gifted students to advance if they demonstrate knowledge in the subject area.

Meigs Chess Team Excels

Meigs Chess Team fielded teams in all three divisions of the recent regional championship meet: elementary, junior high and high school. The elementary team finished as Regional Champions, as did our junior high team. The high school team placed fourth. All three teams also competed at the Tennessee State Chess Championships at Tennessee Tech, March 29.