



Children First!

News & Information from Metro Nashville Public Schools

June 27, 2008

In this edition: *Freshman Academies off to a Stellar Start*
Vanderbilt School for Science and Math Student Research Symposium
The 3rd NCLT Workshop for Science Teachers at Fisk University
Bus Monitors Needed
Enhanced Option Schools Prove a Great Addition
Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe
MNPS Employee Makes Grand Gesture for Bulgarian Children
MNPS Forensics Summer Camp – Last Chance to Enroll!

Freshman Academies off to a Stellar Start

During the 2007-2008 school year, several MNPS comprehensive high schools launched Freshman Academies, part of the high school redesign initiative based on small learning communities. A Freshman Academy is a comprehensive transitional program for all incoming freshmen. Freshmen are placed on teams, with a set of teachers and an advisor. Students meet with their Advisory groups on a regular basis to discuss classes and high school in general. The Advisory is designed to help every incoming freshman develop a trusting relationship with at least one adult at the school. Advisors serve as mentors, helping students academically, emotionally, ethically and socially.

The schools have seen a tremendous impact from the academies, from better student performance to a greater sense of school pride, loyalty and student leadership. Each week this summer, we will profile one school, showcasing the successes and achievements noted by Freshman Academy advisors, teachers and school administrators.

Whites Creek High School had approximately 270 students in the Freshman Academy. According to their teachers, the students were very well-rounded, exhibiting academic excellence as well as athletic and social excellence. A few highlights of the inaugural Freshman Academy include:

- having enough females to establish a Ladies Soccer Team for the first time in several years;
- creating the school's first chartered Beta Club which performed community service work throughout the year;
- a disciplinary unit on Greece which enabled the students to visit the Nashville Parthenon and experience the true Greek culture with a special program in the school library;
- establishing a first nine weeks recognition program to honor students who were named to the Honor Roll, Principal's List, and had perfect attendance;
- chosen to participate in ThinkFast of the Tennessee Governor's Highway Safety Office;
- a special dance for the freshman class for keeping the cafeteria the cleanest all year and best following Standard School Attire guidelines;
- a tour of TSU's College of Engineering, Science & Technology;

- a special guest presentation by O'Moore College of Design on fashion design;
- a freshman family cookout (this year's cookout will feature last year's freshmen discussing what they learned and sharing words of wisdom for incoming 9th graders);
- a greater sense of leadership and school pride (the freshman class won the most spirited award at every pep rally);
- the inclusion of special education students into regular classroom; and
- a voluntary after school tutoring program which averaged 40-50 students every day. Students who regularly attended the tutoring sessions were given a TI-84+ calculator, an electronic dictionary and thesaurus, and a Whites Creek backpack as a reward for their commitment. Approximately 40 of these rewards were given out.

Another significant result of the Freshman Academy is the sense of teamwork felt among teachers. According to the school's site coach, who oversees the redesign and implementation of academies, the school has a dedicated, committed team of teachers. The freshmen teachers learned to work together better and really trust each other through the Freshman Academy. The freshmen teachers were noticeably closer at the end of the year, even spending more time together outside of school.

This fall, Whites Creek will implement three Career & Thematic Centers: an Arts Academy, a Business and Information Technology Academy, and a Health Sciences Academy. Through these academies, students can study a variety of specific career or thematic pathways. The Arts Academy will offer pathways in performing arts, visual arts and fashion. The Business and Information Technology Academy will offer pathways in human resources, government and automobile technology. The Health Sciences Academy will offer pathways in diagnostic services, therapeutic services, family and community services, counseling and mental health services, and cosmetology. Students are able to choose which academy they will join and which pathway they will follow. For more information about Whites Creek's Freshman Academy or Career and Thematic Centers, contact the school at 876-5132.

Vanderbilt School for Science and Math Student Research Symposium

Ten MNPS seniors enrolled in the Vanderbilt School for Science and Math will present their summer research projects at a Student Research Symposium to be held Thursday, July 10. These students have been working in Vanderbilt research laboratories throughout the summer and are anxious to present their research projects. The symposium will begin with a poster session, followed by lunch with an address from keynote speaker Dr. Billy Hudson. Prizes will then be awarded for the best posters, followed by a reception honoring the students.

The symposium is sponsored by the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach and the Vanderbilt School for Science and Math. This past spring, 36 MNPS high school students were accepted to the School for Science and Math. They will attend their regular high school four days of the week and spend the fifth day studying at Vanderbilt.

The 3rd National Center for Learning and Teaching (NCLT) Workshop for Science Teachers at Fisk University

Sixteen science teachers from Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) attended the 3rd NCLT Nanoscience Workshop at Fisk University, which was held June 9 - June 20. The workshop began with warm welcomes from Professor Kofi Lomotey, the Fisk provost; Professor

Eugene Collins, Director of Division of Natural Sciences; and Ms. Sarah Baker, the science coordinator of MNPS. The NCLT program has become a bridge for nanoscience educational collaborations and partnerships between Fisk, MNPS, Northwestern, and Vanderbilt Universities.

This was the 3rd year that MNPS science teachers have participated in the NCLT workshops at Fisk. The activities of the two-week long workshop included: lectures of the NCLT nano-modules, hands-on experiments and activities, nanoscience introduction and curriculum development for 7-12 grades, nanoscience seminars, and teacher's experience in implementation of nanoscience and plans for next year. As a result of the NCLT program, six middle and high schools have implemented the NCLT nano-modules into various courses.

The NCLT workshop at Fisk University will continue in the summer of 2009. For more information on the program, contact the coordinator Professor Weijie Lu at wlu@fisk.edu or visit <http://www.nclt.us>.

Bus Monitors Needed

MNPS is currently taking applications for school bus monitors for special education buses. All applicants must have a high school diploma or GED, a stable employment history, a clear fingerprint background check and a DCS background check.

Typical hours are a split shift; roughly 6 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. and 2 p.m. – 5 p.m. The exact schedule depends on the assigned bus route. Bus monitors will be responsible for assisting the driver with pre-trip and post-trip bus inspections, including checking for students remaining on board; monitoring student behavior and conduct; assisting the driver with student load management; maintenance of accurate and up-to-date records and route descriptions; monitoring children's behavior and disciplines according to district rules and guidelines; meetings with principals, parents and children to resolve behavior problems; assisting driver with student disciplinary forms; and any other duties assigned.

The district offers excellent benefits and regular pay increases. If you or someone you know is interested in applying, please apply online at www.mnps.org.

Enhanced Option Schools Prove a Great Addition

This summer, Metro Nashville Enhanced Option Schools incorporated supplemental programs into the curriculum to engage students. Each program concealed learning behaviors, rules, and academics during 20 extra school days as a fun-filled day of activities and friends. Below are a few examples of what the students experienced in their extra time with teachers:

Napier Elementary Enhanced Option School took recreational activities and education to unique heights. Pre-K students at Napier showed off their green thumbs with a new gardening program. Older students and adults came and taught the young students how to grow tomatoes, cucumbers, squash and even watermelon. According to Principal Michael Ross, it was the students' inventive idea to form their garden into the shape of an "N," so airplanes could see and recognize Napier Elementary's unique garden. This garden allowed students to realize the "fruits of their labor" or the gratification that working hard can bring as well as a healthy delicious treat to eat.

Caldwell Elementary Enhanced Option School sailed through the summer with their new program, the Voyager Curriculum. Within the program each grade was assigned a different country to investigate and explore, not only in textbooks but also through field trips. One grade studied Greece and took a journey to the Parthenon in Nashville for a real life experience of the Greek culture. The Voyager Curriculum at Caldwell made being at school 20 extra days more like a vacation around the world. Each student now has a taste for all the beauty and excitement the world has to offer.

Students at **Buena Vista Enhanced Option School** enjoyed the benefits of their successful in-house field trip program and exploratory groups. Every Thursday they took an in-house trip to different stations, such as an antique car show, Metro Water lecture and demonstration, Trees Terrific discussion, and even a Music City Hall of Fame presentation about banjos. Exploratory groups were also held three times a week with activities such as CPR training, latch-hook rug and belt making, and Mad Science experiments. The excitement surrounding Buena Vista program was evident with their summer enrollment of 210 children, which is only 90 students less than their regular school year enrollment!

Fall-Hamilton Enhanced Option principal Sandra Moorman is very pleased with the success of the school's enhanced option summer program. This year, the Summer Brain Olympics was the theme and incorporated athletics as well as academics. Every Friday there was a theme such as Sports Day or Brain Day, and all the students came together and participated in various theme related activities. Along with the Brain Olympics concept, each day there were brain teasers or puzzles which the students had all day to answer, and if successful they won a prize. Kudos to Fall-Hamilton for finding a creative way to incorporate summer fun with critical thinking development.

Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe

This is the motto for Kirkpatrick Elementary's new program for school wide Positive Behavior Support. Posters around the school depict this motto and images showing what it means to be respectful, responsible, and safe within the community. The good or positive behavior of the students is celebrated and further encouraged through compliment charts. Compliment charts give students points for receiving a compliment on good behavior from school visitors. The charts do not compare students' behavior between one another, but rather compare behavioral improvements from the last grading periods' chart points. Kirkpatrick is the first and only school in MNPS to adopt the Positive Behavior Support and Compliment and has aided in producing 50 turn around students for the 2007-08 school year.

MNPS Employee Makes Grand Gesture for Bulgarian Children

Vincent A. Cummings, Chaplain, Major, USAFR and In-School Suspension monitor for MNPS, recently led charge to raise funds to purchase medical equipment for the Bulgarian Children's Hospital. The idea originated during a trip to a Bulgarian air base when Major Cummings noticed a history of altruism in the children of Bulgaria. Following the charitable work of predecessors in his unit, Major Cummings received the green light to make the donation. The reservists in his unit pulled together and raised \$2,800 in just two days. Congratulations to Major Cummings and those in his unit who stepped up to meet a great human need. Major Cummings will return to his permanent job, as ISS monitor at Apollo Middle School, this August.

MNPS Forensics Summer Camp – Last Chance to Enroll!

This summer, 7-12th grade Metro students are invited to attend the **2008 Forensics Camp** at Nashville School of the Arts, and there are still a few spots open. The camp will be held Monday, July 14 – Friday, July 18, from 8 a.m. – 2:45 p.m. daily. Students attending the camp will learn the fundamentals of debate, oral interpretation, speech arts, and radio, television and film arts. Guest presenters, artists and demonstrators will enhance the daily instruction. The cost of the camp is \$100. For more information or to download a registration form, visit www.mnps.org and click on the Summer Camps and Programs links at the bottom of the home page.