



Children First!

News & Information from Metro Nashville Public Schools

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State Test Scores Released – Thought You’d Like to Know...

As most of you have probably heard, the Tennessee Department of Education released the state's NCLB test scores this week. Much of what's been reported is that MNPS is now in Restructuring I status for failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) this year in the area of K-8 reading/language arts proficiency of our Limited English Proficient, or ELL, students. While this is true, and the district by no means wants to minimize our areas of need, we are also proud of many wonderful improvements made by students and schools within our district.

This week, nine Metro Schools were moved off the High Priority list and into Good Standing status. The Metro Schools that moved into Good Standing include: Overton High School, Pearl-Cohn High School, Alex Green Elementary School, Glenn Enhanced Option Elementary School, Goodlettsville Middle School, Madison School, McMurray Middle School, Neely's Bend Middle School, and W.A. Bass Middle School. These Metro Schools represent one-third of all schools to be removed from the state's High Priority List, as only 28 schools statewide moved off the list.

Additionally, the district's overall achievement improved in every grade level and every subject from 2006-07. This year, K-8 Math improved from 82% to 85% of students scoring proficient or advanced; K-8 reading improved from 85% to 88% proficient or advanced; high school math improved from 69% to 80% proficient or advanced (an 11 percentage point increase); and high school reading improved from 88% to 90% proficient or advanced. Of particular excitement is the 11% jump in high school math scores. After scoring at 69% proficient for three straight years, the overall percent proficient jumped to 80% this year. Native American students remained consistent at 100% proficient, while all other subgroups improved. Double-digit gains were made by English Language Learners (+17%), African Americans (+13%), Economically Disadvantaged (+13%), and Students with Disabilities (+12%). White students improved by 9% and Hispanic students by 8%. The district is extremely proud of these students and their teachers for the obvious hard work and effort they put forth.

This week's report also shows MNPS high schools making tremendous progress. This year, Overton met AYP for the second consecutive year and is now in Good Standing status; Pearl-Cohn made AYP for the second consecutive year and is now in Good Standing status; Maplewood made AYP for the first time this year and is in Improving status; Antioch High made AYP in its graduation rate and reading/language arts and is in Improving status; Stratford made AYP in math and is in Improving status; Hunters Lane made AYP and is in Improving status; McGavock High made AYP in math and is in Improving status; and Hillwood made AYP for math and is in Improving status.

Some final highlights of this year's test results include the fact that MNPS met AYP in both high school graduation rate and middle school attendance rate. And finally, out of 136 schools, 29 are listed as High Priority, meaning they are at some stage of missing AYP. However, of those 29 schools, more than half (16) met crucial targets this year and are in the first year of Improving status.

All of these achievements are made more noteworthy since Tennessee school districts were asked to meet targets that were much more difficult than last year. The chart below explains the higher standards.

K-8 AYP Targets

9-12 AYP Targets

School Year	Reading/ Language	Math	Attendance Rate	School Year	Reading/ Language	Math	Graduation Rate
2002-2003 through 2003-2004	77%	72%	93%	2002-2003 through 2003-2004	86%	65%	90%
2004-2005 through 2006-2007	83%	79%	93%	2004-2005 through 2006-2007	90%	75%	90%
2007-2008 through 2009-20010	89%	86%	93%	2007-2008 through 2009-20010	93%	83%	90%
2010-2011 through 2013-2014	94%	93%	93%	2010-2011 through 2013-2014	97%	91%	90%
2013-2014	100%	100%	93%	2013-2014	100%	100%	100%

No Child Left Behind has a number of requirements that must be met for a school and/or district to make Adequate Yearly Progress. Districts must make AYP in grades K-8 or 9-12 for each subject, as well as for attendance and graduation, to meet overall district AYP requirements. Contrary to many news reports, Metro Schools did make Adequate Yearly Progress in 2005; however, the district missed making AYP in 2006 in two K-8 categories and missed in one K-8 category for 2007 and 2008. The district will need to make AYP for two consecutive years to move into Good Standing Status.

Throughout the 2007-2008 school year, MNPS was fortunate to have input and staff assistance from the State Department of Education to help the district meet these tougher standards. By thoroughly reviewing our data, our staffing, and our programs, MNPS has implemented a number of interventions, new programs and additional staff to help meet all students' educational needs. As we move into the new school year, MNPS will continue these new interventions and work diligently to address all areas of need. It is our goal to provide an excellent education for all of our students, and MNPS will do whatever it takes to make that happen. For more information about district scores or individual school test scores, visit www.mnps.org.

Pearl-Cohn Freshman Academy Brings Students Together

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. 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. Anecdotal information provided by faculty, students and principals also indicates significant academic improvements, and we are eagerly awaiting the state test scores.

At **Pearl-Cohn Magnet High School**, a few highlights of the inaugural Freshman Academy, as reported by faculty, students, administrators and parents include:

- a significant change in the educators' relationships with students -- faculty were much more in tune with students' needs, both in and out of school;
- a greater sense of safety and security for students;
- a true team atmosphere among teachers, which students picked up on and appreciated;
- a higher level of student involvement through various programs and recognitions;
- a greater sense of structure for students;
- a decrease in freshmen disciplinary issues -- particularly the last nine weeks of school;
- an increase in school interventions -- every few weeks faculty met to discuss every single child, made phone calls home to parents when needed, and offered parental training on a variety of topics;
- greater involvement by school counselors, helping students know if they were or were not on track to graduate;
- a greater sense of student trust in the teachers/faculty -- students were more willing to inform adults of other students' wrongdoings; and
- an increased level of community partnerships -- including Meharry Medical College, Vanderbilt University, TSU, Belmont, and several Nashville area businesses.

Some additional anecdotes that illustrate the power of Smaller Learning Communities include one administrator's account of having never seen students stick up for teachers and faculty the way this freshman class has. According to this administrator, Pearl-Cohn freshmen felt comfortable telling the truth to the adults at the school. This administrator also mentioned that students had to actually be sent home after school hours -- that is, they liked the environment at Pearl-Cohn so much, they didn't want to leave in the afternoons.

To close out a very successful year, Pearl-Cohn Freshman Academy hosted a Parade of Stars for all freshmen. Students donning full formal attire literally walked the red carpet. At the ceremony, every single student received an award -- some awards were teacher selected, others student selected. Additionally, freshmen parents were pinned for their child's successful completion of the 9th grade. After the event, many parents wrote the school in appreciation for being included in the night and in their child's success.

This fall, Pearl-Cohn will implement a Freshman Academy and a 10th Grade Academy, which is an extension of the Freshman Academy. Students will have Advisory Groups which they will report to on a weekly basis. For more information about Pearl-Cohn's Freshman Academy or 10th Grade Academy, contact the school at 329-8150.

Back to School Savings – State Sales Tax Holiday

Need to do some back to school shopping? Now's the time – you could save up to 10% this weekend thanks to the state's **Sales Tax Holiday**. The weekend tax exemption begins Friday, Aug. 1 at 12:01 a.m. and ends Sunday, Aug. 3 at 11:50 p.m. Tax exempt items are:

- School and school art supplies with a price of \$100 or less per item;
- Clothing with a price of \$100 or less per item; and
- Computers with a price of \$1,500 or less.

An important note for parents: standard school attire will be back during the 2008-2009 school year. This Sales Tax Holiday will be a great opportunity for parents to purchase clothes for next school year and save money.

For more information about the Sales Tax Holiday, visit www.tntaxholiday.com. This website lists exempt items, a retailer's guide and frequently asked questions.

MNPS Students Earn IB Diplomas

The world recognized International Baccalaureate Programme continues to grow at MNPS with 18 students receiving IB Diplomas at the close of the 2007-08 school year.

Out of 21 students enrolled at Hillsboro High School for the May 2008 session, 15 earned an IB diploma with an average of 29 out of 45 possible points on final assessment scores.

Congratulations to: Yousef Ahmad, Julie Bursch, Roger Diehl, Liz Fuller, Parker Hawkins, Lauren Kittrell, Katie Lee, Natalie Liff, Rue Oseas, Bette Parolini, Chloe Perry, Tori Pitterelli, Katie Poss, Hannah Rogers, and Chris Sloup. Perfect IB test scores were achieved by students such as Julie Bursch and Katie Lee in English, Roger Diehl in math, Parker Hawkins in Spanish, and Trevor Foster in visual arts.

Across town, Hunters Lane IB Program has a history of excellence which did not disappoint this year. As the first metro school to receive authorization for the IB Diploma Program in 2001, Hunters Lane also produced the first 11 students to earn IB diplomas in the state of Tennessee. The district would like to extend a special congratulations to Brittany Faircloth, Josh Fillis and James Jones, the three Hunters Lane students who earned an IB Diploma out of this year's 27 candidates. However, the district is also proud to announce that all 27 students did graduate and will be enrolled at four-year colleges this fall.

Located in 125 different countries, IB World Schools such as Hillsboro, Hillwood and Hunters Lane are established anywhere from China to Venezuela to Trinidad and right here in Nashville. The academically challenging program requires a core curriculum of at least 150 community service hours, a research essay of 4,000 words and an IB Theory of Knowledge course. Final grades are determined by assessment points and IB test scores. During the 2008-09 school year, three MNPS high schools -- Hillsboro, Hillwood and Hunters Lane -- will offer the IB Programme, while six MNPS middle schools -- Bellevue Middle, J.T. Moore Middle, Brick Church Middle, Goodlettsville Middle, Neely's Bend Middle, and Hunter's Lane ninth and 10th grades -- will offer the Middle Years Programme, a version of the program intended for younger students. More information about the International Baccalaureate Programme or Middle Years Programme can be found at www.ibo.org.

New School Start Times

Parents, as you prepare for your child's first day back to school, please note that MNPS has announced new start times for almost all of the district's middle and high schools. This was done in order to lengthen the span between bell times for elementary, middle and high schools. The start times will take effect August 11, 2008, the first official day of the new school year.

Elementary school start times will remain the same as last school year, with the school day beginning at 8 a.m. However, almost all middle schools will begin 10 minutes later than previous years at 8:55 a.m., while most high schools will begin 10 minutes earlier than previous school years at 7:05 a.m. Bus route schedules will be modified to accommodate these changes in bell times. It is important to note that due to the opening of Maplewood's Ninth Grade Academy at the former Dalewood Middle School building, Maplewood High will begin class at 7:15 a.m., while Maplewood's Ninth Grade Academy at Dalewood will begin at 7 a.m. This is to accommodate transportation between the two schools. Magnet schools, which do not receive bus transportation, are unaffected by the changes.

The district believes these varied start times will assist bus drivers as they navigate through the heaviest part of the morning rush hour and get children to school on time. A complete list of 2008-2009 district schools and bell times is attached. For more information regarding these changes and new school bus times, you may also check the MNPS website at www.mnps.org.

Orientation Changes

For the 2008-2009 school year, the orientation schedule will look slightly different. In previous years, the district has scheduled one district wide orientation day. However, this year, the principals voted for the flexibility to make their own orientation schedules to best accommodate their schools and their families. A list of scheduled orientations is posted at www.mnps.org. If your school does not have an orientation scheduled, please check back later or contact the school.

School orientations are a great opportunity for students and parents to get a sneak peak at the school year -- meet the teachers, learn classroom locations, tour the building, and learn of any school changes. This will help create a smoother transition for the new school year, which officially begins Aug. 11.

Mayor's First Day Festival

Mayor Karl Dean will help kick off the new school year with the annual Mayor's First Day Festival, this Sunday, August 3, from 2 – 5 p.m. This year's kickoff festival will be held at the Sommet Center (formerly the Nashville Arena), at 501 Broadway in downtown Nashville. For more information about this year's event, visit <http://www.nashville.gov/moccy/firstday/2008/index.htm>.

Are You Ready for Some Football?

If you've driven by any high school football field lately, you know what time it is! MNPS is excited to release the 2008 Football Jamboree Schedule. This year, August 14-16, MNPS high schools will kick off the football season with three nights of Jamboree action. Thursday, Aug. 14, beginning at 7 p.m., Maplewood will host the first night of action with Hunters Lane taking on Lipscomb followed by a match-up between Antioch and Maplewood. Friday, Aug. 15, beginning at 6 p.m., McGavock will host the excitement, first with McGavock vs. Hillsboro, Glenclyff vs. East Literature, and Cane Ridge vs. Whites Creek. Saturday, Aug. 16, beginning at

7 p.m., at Hillwood High, Hillwood will first take on Pearl-Cohn, followed by a game between Overton and Stratford.

MNPS Students Wins Statewide Contest

Riding a bicycle – it's something we've all done, especially children. This year, Tennessee's Traumatic Brain Injury Program sponsored a statewide Bike Safety Poster Contest to decrease the incidence of traumatic brain injuries by promoting the use of bicycle helmets. The contest was open to all Tennessee students in kindergarten through grade 12. All artwork had to be original and drawn by hand, and was judged on creativity, originality and how well the poster reflected the theme of bicycle safety. Winners were chosen from each grade, with each winner awarded a \$50 savings bond. MNPS is excited to announce that this year's 4th grader winner was Kuyuonta Cain of Ross Elementary. Congratulations!

Free Health Fair

Saturday, August 9, from 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m., in the K-Mart parking lot located at 2491 Murfreesboro Road, the Antioch and Southeast Nashville community will hold the first Southeast Health Fair. The theme of the event is Healthy Kids/Healthy Families, and it's goal is to promote the health and well being of our children and families. At the fair, all MNPS students will be able to get free physicals and health screenings. Corporate, Government and Non-profit partners will offer a variety of health services and information along with blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, vision and dental screenings. The event is chaired by Metro School Board member, Karen Johnson, sponsored by Metro Councilmen Duane Dominy & Robert Duvall, and co-sponsored by State Representatives Janis Sontany, Ben West Jr. & Sherry Jones.

Things Parents Might Want to Know

Tuesday, Aug. 5, at 6 p.m., Stratford High will host a special night for parents called "Things Parents Might Want to Know." The evening is in conjunction with First Baptist Church of South Inglewood. Sitting on a panel to answer parents questions will be Dr. Kim Finch, Executive Principal of Stratford; Rev. Neely Williams, Chair of the Nashville Community Coalition for Youth Safety; Mr. Lynn Stuart, United Neighborhood Health, and many others. The event will be one of many taking place as part of the Mayor's *Night Out Against Crime*.