



Children First!

News & Information from Metro Nashville Public Schools

August 8, 2008

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Welcome Back! Important Reminders for the First Day...

As you probably realize, this is the last issue of Children First! you will receive prior to the start of the 2008-2009 school year. This year, MNPS has many new programs and opportunities for your children, from new curriculum to new learning opportunities tailored to student needs. Our staff, in conjunction with the State Department of Education, has spent the summer working to offer your child the best possible education. While we hope you all had a wonderful summer break, we are excited and optimistic about the year ahead. We know it will be a great year, and we appreciate the trust you have placed in Metro Schools.

As we head into the new school year, you should know there are many changes for the 2008-2009 school year. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.mnps.org or call the Customer Service Center at 259-INFO (4636).

School Start Times Changed

MNPS has announced new start times for almost all of the district's middle and high schools. The start times will take effect this Monday, Aug. 11, the first official day of the 2008-09 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 and high schools will have new start times, with accommodating bus routes. For the 2008-2009 school year, most middle schools will begin 10 minutes later than previous school years at 8:55 a.m., while most high schools will start 10 minutes earlier than previous school years at 7:05 a.m. Magnet schools, which do not receive bus transportation, are unaffected by the changes. The district believes these varied start times will assist drivers as they navigate through the heaviest parts of the morning rush hour and get students to school on time.

Standard School Attire

The dress code for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, commonly referred to as "Standard School Attire," will continue with a few minor changes for 2008-2009.

- MNPS will allow fleece fabric for sweaters and lightweight jackets to be worn indoors.
- Students in grades PreK through second will be exempt from the belt requirement.
- Schools that chose to select fewer than four additional shirt colors from the standard blue and white, will be allowed to add colors, up to the limit of four, for the 2008-09 school year. Families should check with their individual schools for the most current list of approved colors.
- Hoodies of any type are not allowed for indoor wear.

As a reminder, MNPS revised its dress code in 2007. Standard Attire includes navy blue, black or khaki slacks, shorts or skirts and white or navy blue shirts with short or long sleeves and a collar. As indicated above, each school may also select up to four additional colors for shirts.

New Schedule for Enhanced Option Schools

Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, MNPS Enhanced Option Schools will extend the regular school day by 45 minutes, from 8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. These extra 45 minutes will replace the 20 days previously added on to the end of the school year.

MNPS Enhanced Option Schools, which include Bordeaux, Buena Vista, Caldwell, Fall-Hamilton, Glenn, Kirkpatrick, Napier, Park Avenue, and Warner, will use the additional minutes in a variety of ways. Schools might use the time to delve deeper into specific subjects, for built in academic interventions, for development and enrichment activities, or to establish new learning programs. For specific information about a particular enhanced option school, please contact the school. For general information about enhanced option schools, including how to enroll your child, please call the MNPS Customer Service Center at 259-INFO (4636).

SLC High School Late Arrival Days

The new district calendar shows eight SLC high school late arrival days. On these days, the first of which is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 15, high schools that use district transportation will begin the day at approximately 9:40 a.m. The reason for the late start is to provide faculty and administrators time for common team planning and professional development, two factors crucial to the success of Smaller Learning Communities (SLC).

Smaller Learning Communities are just that -- smaller, more personalized learning communities. They aim to provide rigorous curriculum, relevant learning, and closer student teacher relationships. SLC's come in the form of Freshman Academies, a 10th Grade Academy at Pearl-Cohn, and Career and Thematic Academies. For more information about the redesign, how it will impact your child's learning, or new offerings at MNPS comprehensive high schools this fall, [click here](#).

Sports Physicals for 7th and 9th graders Not Required: A Proposed Rule Change Delayed.

A proposed rule change that would make sports physicals a requirement for 7th and 9th graders has been delayed. In the meantime, the State Board of Education still **recommends** that 7th and 9th grade athletes get the well-child checkup/EPSDT screen. Until the rule-making process is complete, however, either exam (the traditional sports physical or the comprehensive well-child checkup/EPSDT screen) will be accepted by the State Board of Education and by TSSAA.

For more information:

-- About service providers, EPSDT program:

Pam Baggett, Dept of Health: 615-532-3101

-- About medical questions related to physicals:

Dr. Michael Warren, GOCCC: 615-741-5192

-- About the proposed rule change or processes related to local schools or the State Board of Education (SBE): David Sevier, SBE: 615-741-2966

-- About athlete eligibility, which sports require clearance, or other sports questions:
TSSAA, 615-889-6740

MTA Bus Route Changes

Due to the extreme increases in gas prices over the past years, MTA board of directors voted to increase fares for riders and eliminate less used routes to avoid more severe cuts in transportation service. As of July 1, bus fares have increased by twenty-five cents, and AccessRide fares are now fifty cents. For more information about the MTA route changes, visit www.nashvillemta.com or call MTA Customer

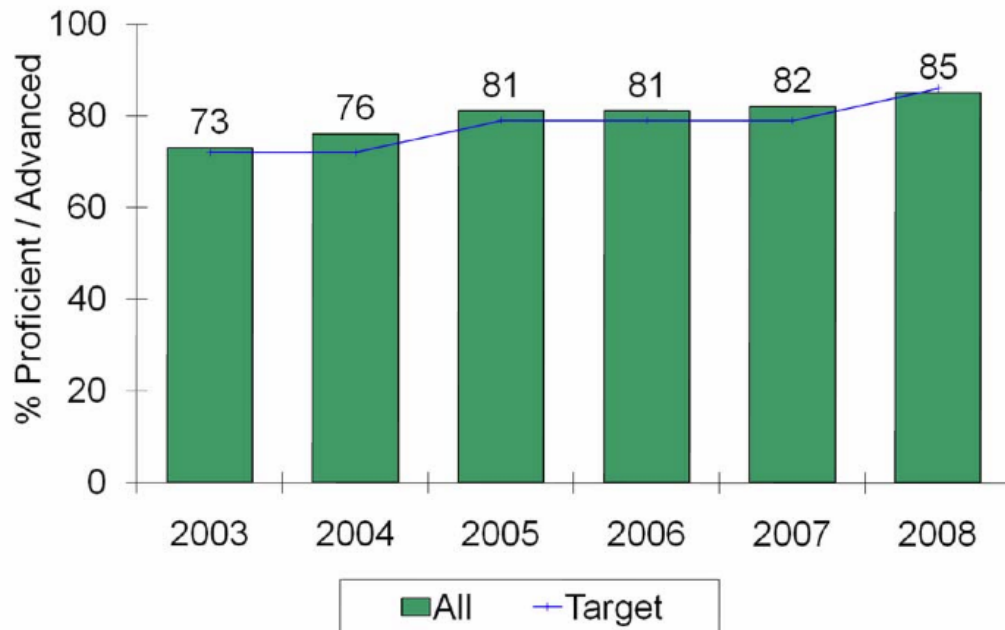
Care at (615) 562-5950 between 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, and 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sundays.

State Holds Special Work Session with Metro School Board

Dr. Connie Smith, Executive Director of Assessment and Accountability for the State Department of Education, met with the Metro Nashville Board of Public Education for a work session and update on MNPS progress Wednesday, Aug. 6. As part of that meeting, Dr. Smith pointed out several areas of need the district will be addressing to help many of its students meet state standards. Dr. Smith also reviewed several areas of improvement revealed as part of the district's NCLB test results announced last week.

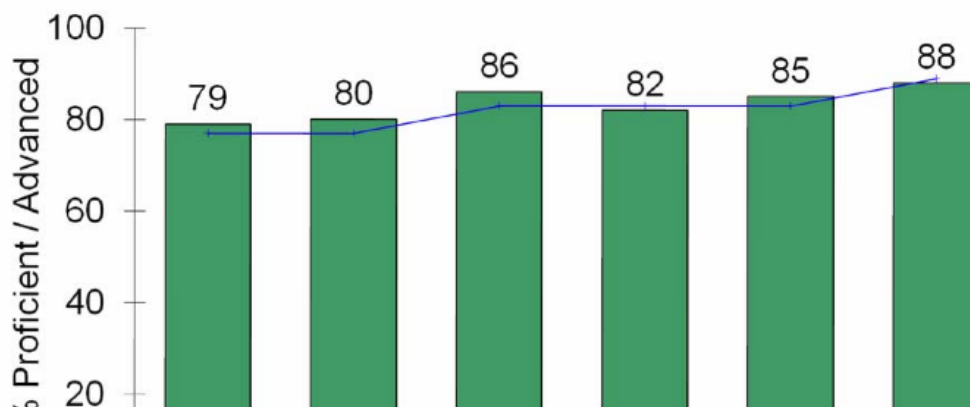
During the work session, Dr. Smith presented the six-year progression of MNPS scores for grades K-8 mathematics and reading/language arts, as well as for grades 9-12. In addition, she outlined the areas where the district has not met the required benchmarks to make Adequate Yearly Progress. The charts below are taken from Dr. Smith's presentation and show the district's scores over the past six years. The blue line indicates the required target.

MNPS Elementary/Middle Mathematics

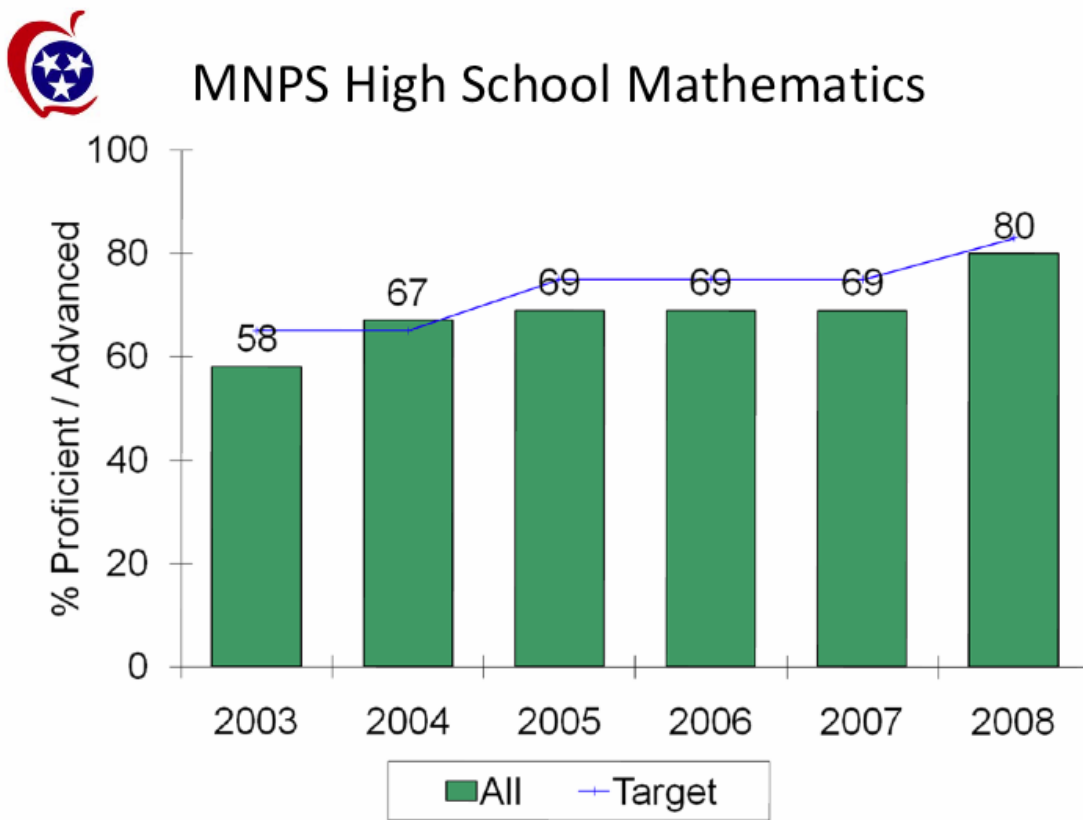


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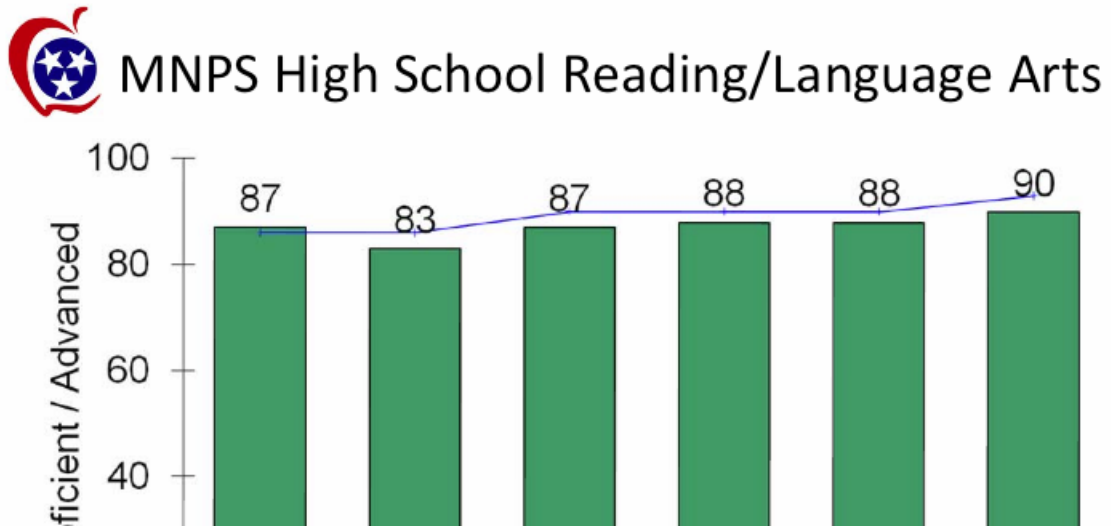
MNPS Elem./Middle Reading/Language Arts



Above: The six-year progression of MNPS reading/language arts scores for elementary/middle grades.



Above: The six-year progression of MNPS math scores for grades 9-12



Above: The six-year progression of MNPS math scores for grades 9-12.

In addition to the six-year progression of scores, the presentation included the key benchmarks missed by MNPS students that the district will be working to correct. The benchmarks missed for 2008 include:

K-8 Subgroups Not Met

Reading Percentage Proficient for Limited English Proficiency Students

9-12 Subgroups Not Met

- Reading Percentage Proficient for Hispanic students
- Reading Percentage Proficient for Economically Disadvantaged students
- Reading Percentage Proficient for Students with Disabilities
- Reading Percentage Proficient for Limited English Proficiency students
- Math Percentage Proficient for Economically Disadvantaged students
- Math Percentage Proficient for Students with Disabilities
- Math Percentage Proficient for Limited English Proficiency students

Dr. Smith emphasized to the Board that oversight of the district is still a Board of Education responsibility and that the district's current Restructuring 1 status did not equate to a state "takeover" as has been reported in numerous forums. The role of the state, she said, is to work with the district to put in place effective, data-driven practices that have been proven to assist students. Citing an outside audit of the district received in late February, Dr. Smith complimented Board members and district staff on the collaborative nature of the changes made over the past few weeks and months.

Finally, Dr. Smith celebrated the nine MNPS schools that moved from the High Priority List and into Good Standing Status this year – reminding Board members it will take some time for the district to reach this same status. It takes two consecutive years of meeting Adequate Yearly Progress to move into Good Standing Status. For a district, all benchmarks must be met in K-8 or in 9-12, as well as attendance and graduation rate, to make district AYP. In addition to those schools in Good Standing Status, the district is pleased that of the 29 High Priority Status Schools, 16 made AYP in 2008 and are in Improving Status. These 16 schools will move into Good Standing if they meet all benchmarks this next year. MNPS schools on the state's Celebration List following the release of the 2008 NCLB results are:



MNPS Celebration List

- 9 schools moved from the High Priority List to Good Standing
- 5 schools moved from the Target List to Good Standing
- 16 of the 29 High Priority Schools are in an Improving Status this year

School Name	NCLB STATUS 2007-2008	NCLB STATUS 2008-2009
Alex Green Elementary School	Corrective Action - Improving	Good Standing
Glenn Elementary Enhance Option School	School Improvement 2 - Improving	Good Standing
Goodlettsville Middle School	School Improvement 1 - Improving	Good Standing
John Overton Comprehensive High School	School Improvement 1 - Improving	Good Standing
Madison School	School Improvement 2 - Improving	Good Standing
McMurray Middle School	School Improvement 2 - Improving	Good Standing
Neely's Bend Middle School	Corrective Action - Improving	Good Standing
Pearl-Cohn Magnet High School	School Improvement 2 - Improving	Good Standing
W. A. Bass Middle School	School Improvement 2 - Improving	Good Standing
Dupont Hadley Middle School	Target	Good Standing
Dupont Tyler Middle School	Target	Good Standing
John F. Kennedy @ Marshall Middle School	Target	Good Standing
Mc Kissack Professional Development School	Target	Good Standing
Una Elementary	Target	Good Standing

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More information about the NCLB status of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools can be found on the MNPS website, at <http://www.mnps.org>.

Back to the Books and Back to the Lunchroom!

As your child heads back to school, take comfort in knowing he or she will receive the most nutritious meals and friendly service. The MNPS food services staff strives to serve attractive, well-balanced meals. Our team of food service professionals is committed to providing the best for your children, and we look forward to serving your children this year.

This year, we are increasing our whole grains and beans in our menus. Whole grains provide fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants -- all critical in our daily nutrition. Beans are high in fiber, protein, iron, potassium, magnesium and vitamin E -- again, critical components in our daily nutrition.

Cole Elementary Chorus Performs for the First Lady

Cole Elementary School Chorus, under the direction of Bill Laarz, performed during the opening ceremonies at the National Reading First Conference held at Opryland Hotel Convention Center July 28. The chorus received a standing ovation as they performed "America the Beautiful" and "My Country tis' of Thee." At the ceremony, First Lady Laura Bush addressed the crowd of 54,000

educators and administrators concerning the importance of reading. The chorus closed out the convention by singing “You’re a Grand Old Flag” and “This Land is Your Land.” Congratulations to all involved in the choral department at Cole Elementary.

MNPS Principal Receives Top Honor

Barbara Corso Ide, Ed.D, principal of Thurgood Marshall Middle School, has been named Tennessee’s 2008 National Distinguished Principal K-8. To celebrate the honor, this October, Dr. Ide will travel to Washington, D.C. and participate in two days of activities alongside the nation’s top elementary and middle school administrators.

The National Distinguished Principals program is in its 25th year. It recognizes an elementary and middle school principal from each state and the District of Columbia, as well as administrators from private and overseas schools. The program honors those who exhibit outstanding leadership skills, the ability to meet the academic needs of all students, and have established strong relationships with parents, the community and local businesses. Dr. Ide was nominated and selected by her fellow principals through a statewide search conducted by the Tennessee Principals Association (TPA).

Dr. Ide, a graduate of Ball State University and Trevecca Nazarene University, previously worked as a teacher and the gifted/talented coordinator for Delaware Community Schools in Muncie, IN. She also served as principal of Blue River Valley Elementary in Mt. Summit, IN, before moving to Nashville where she served as principal of Percy Priest Elementary, Lakeview Elementary Design Center and Kennedy Middle School.