



Children First!

News & Information from Metro Nashville Public Schools

September 12, 2008

In this edition: *New School Choice Plan Presented to the Board*
State to Release Joint Fiscal Monitoring Report
Fox and Porter Elected to Lead New School Board
SLC First Late Arrival Day This Monday
Percy Priest Art Teacher Named Middle Region Art Educator of the Year
Mt. View Elementary Hosts a Rock Garden Party
Encore Off to a Great Start
Bringing Families Together at Paragon Mills
Atomic Learning at MNPS
Save the Date -- Walk to School Day!
143-Imirl...What Does That Mean?
Go Healthy Play Day
Nashville Chamber Awards Passing Schools
Hillsboro Students Learn Importance of Voting

New School Choice Plan Presented to Board

More than a year ago, MNPS administrators met with parents and reviewed existing magnet school application and school transfer policies. The district received a great deal of constructive feedback from parents about the clarity and fairness of our current policies. In the fall of 2007, a committee was formed to begin searching for ways to improve all aspects of student assignment. The main purpose of the project was to create more choices for parents regarding which school their child(ren) attends, an easier process for parents to make the desired transfers, and a stricter school calendar for better enrollment projections and better preparation for the next school year.

The committee presented their final proposal to the Metro School Board Tuesday, Sept. 9. This proposal calls for leaving the current magnet lottery process intact and expanding the open enrollment process to allow families to request placement in any school with available seats. This will also dramatically increase the number of schools families may select for their child. In addition, the enhanced open enrollment process will result in the elimination of the current special transfer process, except for hardship applications. To review the presentation made at the Sept. 9 school board meeting or the entire proposal as drafted by the Choice Committee, visit www.mnps.org.

State to Release Joint Fiscal Monitoring Report

The State Department of Education routinely conducts a joint fiscal monitoring of all Tennessee school districts' federal funds. This monitoring assesses the compliance of implementation and oversight of federally funded programs, including Special Education, Title 1, IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act), and Career and Technical Education (among others). Much of the compliance includes documenting how federal money was spent in support of programs.

This past spring, when the state began its monitoring of MNPS, it found several district procedures that did not fully meet the federal documentation requirements; that is, information provided to the state was not detailed enough to meet the federal requirements. These problems occurred due to poor communication and coordination among federal programs staff, whose numbers had been reduced over

the past several years. Therefore, the state halted the monitoring and helped the district reorganize the district's Federal Programs Department. At this time, the state also notified the district that we would be placed on High Risk Status.

Since this realization and reorganization, the district has been working closely with state consultants to correct any problems. MNPS has known since July the joint fiscal monitoring of federal education programs would resume in August 2008. The monitoring has been completed and results will be released next week. As a result of the monitoring, the state and district will create a compliance action plan to be addressed by the spring of 2009. Other monitoring will occur throughout the year to ensure procedures and practices are in place to address the compliance actions and will specifically review NCLB programs, CTE and IDEIA.

As mentioned, the Federal Programs Department was restructured in March 2008 in attempt to correct the documentation inefficiencies. The changes include:

- Implementation of processes to better support schools, regardless of their NCLB status (for example, the district shifted from "equal" distribution of funding to "equitable" distribution of funding; funding for specific school requests based on individual school improvement plans; and identification of key personnel to assist with NCLB requirements)
- Hiring of a grant coordinator to secure grants for schools not eligible for Title 1 funds
- Addition of positions back into the Federal Programs staff that will provide quality control for all areas receiving federal funds (including professional development, NCLB Choice, Pre-K, etc.)
- Centralized oversight of all these various components are under the direction of one person, the Assistant Superintendent of Federal Programs, who is a member of Cabinet and can elevate all needs and requirements to top-level discussion.

MNPS anticipates public release of results from the recent joint fiscal monitoring no earlier than Sept. 16. While we expect the monitoring report to reveal some inadequate procedures and documentation attributable in part to staffing deficiencies and poor communications of prior years, we are confident the restructuring that occurred last spring and our working with the state consultants has resulted in a Federal Programs Department whose staff is better equipped to meet the district's needs for state and federal compliance and, ultimately, the needs of our schools and students. We will review all recommendations received next week for areas where additional improvement is needed.

Fox and Porter Elected to Lead New School Board

David Fox and Gracie Porter were elected to serve as chairman and vice-chairman (respectively) of the Metro School Board at the regularly scheduled board meeting held Tuesday, Sept. 9. Fox, elected by a 5-4 vote, will conduct all school board meetings and with the assistance of Porter, the new vice-chair, set the meeting agendas.

David Fox represents District 8. He was elected in 2006 and his current term expires in 2010. Gracie Porter represents District 5. She was recently re-elected to serve her first full term after filling a vacant seat left by Reverend Lisa Hunt in 2006.

SLC First Late Arrival Day This Monday

This Monday, Sept. 15, the 12 MNPS high schools implementing Smaller Learning Communities will have SLC late arrival days. The 12 high schools affected are: Antioch, Cane Ridge, Glencliff, Hillsboro, Hillwood, Hunters Lane, Maplewood, McGavock, Overton, Pearl-Cohn, Stratford and

Whites Creek. Students enrolled in these 12 high schools will report to school 2 ½ hours late, with the school day beginning at 9:40 a.m. Buses will still run for all students; they will simply run the routes 2 ½ hours later than normal school days. Dismissal time will be the same on these late arrival days.

The district has built in eight SLC late arrival days for the 2008-2009 school year. They are Sept. 15, Sept. 29, Oct. 6, Nov. 10, Dec. 1, Feb. 2, Feb. 23, and April 13. On these late arrival days, faculty and staff will report to school at regular time and use the 2 ½ hours prior to students' arrival for professional development and in-depth team meetings. These extra hours are crucial to the success of Smaller Learning Communities as they will allow all school staffs time to plan, prepare, and coordinate lessons as well as develop the most effective instructional skills.

Percy Priest Art Teacher Named Middle Region Art Educator of the Year

Congratulations to Tina Atkinson, visual arts teacher at Percy Priest Elementary, for being awarded the Tennessee Art Education Association's Middle Region Art Educator of the Year for 2008! For more information about the award, visit <http://www.tnarted.com/awards/awards.htm>.

Mt. View Elementary Hosts a Rock Garden Party

Mt. View Elementary School will be throwing a Rock Garden Party with the Hickory Hollow Target Sept. 19. Fifth graders at Mt. View will paint a rock for, or with, their reading buddies. The painted rocks will then be placed in a special Reading Rock Garden in front of the school building. All materials for the Rock Garden Party will be provided by the Hickory Hollow Target. This event is in conjunction with the National Day of Giving.

Encore Off to a Great Start

MNPS's Encore Program got off to a great start with the first day of Encore classes in 26 elementary and middle school classrooms across the district. The department also hosted an orientation for parents the evening of Sept. 8 with special guests Chris Henson, Interim Director of Schools, and Dr. Connie Smith, State Department of Education Executive Director of Accountability. At the orientation, parents heard the importance of gifted education and were informed of new district improvements for K-12 gifted education. Parents also got a chance to meet with the various Encore teachers and get a close look at the school year's curriculum.

To wrap up the first week of Encore classes, Pre-K through fourth grade Encore families will gather at Centennial Park Friday, Sept. 12, from 5:30 – 7 p.m., for the annual Encore Family picnic. At the picnic, families will get a taste of Dewayne's Famous Snow Cones and the entertainment of magicians and balloon artists, Roderick and Shawn.

In addition to the elementary and middle school Encore kickoff, 76 preschoolers got their first taste of Encore the week of Sept. 2 with a special lesson on "Colossal Collaborations." Preschoolers participated in a kinesthetic exploration of the meaning if *colossal* – with a special reading of The Giant Jam Sandwich and getting to make giant jam sandwiches. The result: an absolutely colossal learning experience for dozens of Metro preschoolers!

Bringing Families Together at Paragon Mills

This past Friday, Sept. 5, Paragon Mills helped students and their families celebrate Grandparents Day. The school invited grandparents to come eat with their grandchildren during lunch. More than 50 grandparents attended the special lunchtime. In honor of the event, the cafeteria stage was decorated like a restaurant with tablecloths and vases/flowers. Paragon Mills students and their grandparents ate

together on the stage. At the end of the meal, grandparents were given a special cupcake and book, along with a souvenir photo of them and their grandchild.

Atomic Learning at MNPS

As part of the district's efforts to increase family involvement, and remain in compliance with federal guidelines, MNPS has made a valuable investment, *Atomic Learning*, to provide the entire MNPS community (students, personnel, parents and adult learners) with just-in-time learning resources needed to enhance technology literacy and build 21st century skills. These resources are available through the internet, whether at home, in schools, community centers and libraries, or anywhere else with access.

Atomic Learning, www.atomiclearning.com, offers thousands of short tutorials covering common software applications and computer tasks such as blogging; Internet Explorer; iTunes; Kidspiration; Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Publisher; netTrekker; Photoshop; podcasting, searching the Web; and much more. Each tutorial section is only a minute or two in length and focuses on how to perform a specific task. These applications are used daily in our schools. They will also be valuable resources in developing work-related skills for students and parents, as well as increasing district employees' technology skills. Parents can login in to the Atomic Learning website by using the username "mnpstparent" and the password "mnps." Students can login by using the username "mnpststudent" and the password "mnps."

Save the Date -- Walk to School Day!

Parents, if you're interested in participating in this year's *Walk to School Day* with your child, mark your calendars! The day has been set for Wednesday, Oct. 8. Our city hosts one of the largest *International Walk to School Days* in the country. Last year, 42 schools and approximately 7,000 people across Davidson County walked to school. This year, MNPS hopes to increase that number of participating schools to 50. *Walk to School Day* is one of the events during Walk Nashville Week. This week-long celebration seeks to spotlight walking as a component to healthy living.

143-lmirl...What Does That Mean?

143-lmirl. What does it mean? To many parents it's just gibberish, but to most 13 year olds it obviously means, "I love you, let's meet in real life."

To help parents monitor who and what their children are exposed to on the Internet, the MNPS Community Career Center will be hosting free Internet safety workshops designed specifically for parents. The workshops will focus on blocking/spy software, instant message literacy and signs that a child may be involved in an improper online relationship.

Thirty percent of teenage girls polled by the Girl Scout Research Institute said they had been sexually harassed in a chat-room. Only 7 percent, however, told their parents about the harassment because they were afraid their parents would ban them from going online. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:

- 8 percent of teens admit they've met in person with someone they met over the Internet.
- 69 percent of teens regularly receive personal messages online from people they don't know and most of them don't tell a trusted adult about it.
- A majority of teens (58 percent) don't think posting photographs or other personal information on social networking sites is unsafe. 64 percent post pictures or videos of themselves, and more than half (58 percent) post information about where they live.

Scheduled workshops for September include Sept. 16, 10-11:30 a.m. at Bethlehem Centers of Nashville, 1417 Charlotte Ave. (329-3386); Sept. 23; 5:30-7 p.m. at Joelton Elementary School, 7141 Whites Creek Pike (876-5110); and Sept. 25, 5:30-7 p.m. at Stratton Elementary School, 310 Old Hickory Blvd. (860-1486). Workshops are open to the public and no pre-registration is required. For more information, contact the MNPS Community Career Center at 298-6752 or visit www.mnps.org/Page41311.aspx.

Go Healthy Play Day

The American Heart Association is hosting a “Go Healthy Play Day” this Saturday, Sept. 13, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Opry Mills mall. The event is FREE and uses taste tests, games, music and more to teach mini-lessons about physical activity and nutrition. Each child will get a “passport” and the first 300 kids will receive a prize if they complete at least eight of the 15 scheduled activities.

Nashville Chamber Awards Passing Schools

The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce showed its pride in Metro Schools by awarding 88 schools a Red or Gold Apple for meeting NCLB benchmarks and improving academic achievement. Schools that obtained all “A’s” in the value-added category on the state’s 2007 report card were awarded a Gold Apple, while schools making Good Standing status under NCLB requirements for the 2007-2008 school year were awarded a Red Apple. If a school achieved both, they were awarded Gold and Red Apple Awards. Congratulations to these schools and thank you, Chamber members, for supporting MNPS.

Hillsboro Students Learn Importance of Voting

Hillsboro High students are learning the importance of voting and supporting their school. The school’s MIP (Moderate Intervention Program) students sponsored a voter registration drive during lunch Friday, Sept. 12. Those registering received a free ticket to the Sept. 12 football game between Hillsboro and MBA.



To request an accommodation, please contact your building principal or department head. (Interpreters for the deaf or hard of hearing must be requested forty-eight [48] hours prior to the event.) Questions or concerns may be referred to the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Customer Service Center, 615/259-4636.

Si usted necesita información adicional o si usted tiene alguna pregunta, por favor llame o contacte al director de su escuela.

Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, sex, color, national origin, or disability in its hiring or employment practices or in admission to, access to, or operation of its programs, services or activities.