



# Children First!

News & Information from Metro Nashville Public Schools

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## October 17, 2008

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### **Attendance a Top Priority**

Regular, daily attendance of students will always be a priority for Metro Schools. Most people understand that students who are not in class cannot learn, but did you know attendance is one area measured for No Child Left Behind compliance or that students who skip school have a higher risk of becoming involved with criminal activity?

MNPS depends on parents to ensure their children arrive at school on time and ready to learn, but we also recognize that in today's society, where many families leave at different times, it is not always possible for parents to know if their child goes to school. That's one reason we began sending daily attendance calls to the families of students who are absent. These automated calls help ensure student safety and provide a reminder that an excuse note is needed when students return to school. Last year, more than 21,000 attendance calls were made.

Also last year, the district emphasized the importance of student attendance in regular Attendance Spotlight pieces published in newsletters mailed to all student and employee homes. These brief articles were designed to raise families' awareness of the importance of daily attendance.

In addition to the automated call and parent information, MNPS employs many other strategies to address attendance. Our employees contact families of students who are not coming to school and work to find solutions to any problems they may have. We are active partners with the Metro Police Department and Juvenile Court in conducting regular truancy sweeps of neighborhoods and in the operation of the new Metro Student Attendance Center (M-SAC), which opened this fall.

Because attendance is such a priority, the district's administrative team has for many months been tracking attendance data and working to resolve any issues where schools or teachers may not be submitting accurate data. We are working to resolve any technology issues that may be impacting the accurate reporting of attendance, and we are emphasizing to principals and teachers the district requirement for checking enrollment at the start of every period.

MNPS is fortunate to have a strong base of community interest and support. We appreciate all who are dedicated to our students and schools and who want to assist in creating an academic structure second to none. Attendance is a crucial piece in achieving that goal and the accurate collection and reporting of attendance data is a priority.

### **Report Cards Issued Monday**

With the first grading period over, report cards will be distributed Monday, Oct. 20.

### **Teach for America Coming to Nashville**

Mayor Karl Dean and Elissa Clapp of *Teach for America* recently announced that *Teach for America* has chosen Nashville as a new site. In the fall of 2009, a core group of 50 recruits will enter Nashville public classrooms to assist in the instruction of our students.

*Teach for America* is a national corps of recent college graduates who commit to teach for two years in under-resourced schools and become lifelong leaders in the pursuit of educational equity. The program touts some of the nation's most promising young leaders. This year's recruits include graduates from Yale University, Harvard, and Vanderbilt. The Nashville project will be led by Brad Leon, who is also Executive Director of *Teach for America* in Memphis city schools.

The Mayor also announced *The New Teacher Project* will also be working with MNPS, also starting in the fall of 2009. Both programs are being privately funded through various community organizations and donors. MNPS would like to extend a special thanks to some key supporters, including Mayor Dean, Senator Lamar Alexander, Tommy Frist, Billy Frist, Orrin Ingram, Ben Rechter, and Steve Turner. These individuals have provided tremendous support, both financially and structurally, in bringing these programs to Nashville.

### **Glencliff High Opens New Student Wellness Center**

Friday, Oct. 17, Glencliff High unveiled its new Student Wellness Center, the phase of its healthy initiatives program. The first room, a cardio room, features treadmills, elliptical machines, stationary bicycles, exercise balls, tension bands, aerobics steps, and more. The next room is packed with free weight machines and benches, ideal for strength training.

The driving force behind the wellness center was a pair of teachers at Glencliff – Jamie Arendall, physical education teacher, and Jennifer Evetts, lifetime wellness teacher. These women had an idea and took it to Principal Tony Majors and MNPS Coordinator of Health, Wellness, Physical Education, and JROTC Dr. Tina Bozeman. With the help of Mr. Majors, Dr. Bozeman, Coordinated School Health Specialists Dr. Susan Lyle and Mrs. Latissa Hall, Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, and a grant through purity dairies, the center came to life.

The center is now open to students, staff, and the community. It is part of a healthy initiatives project at Glencliff that aims to get students and the community more aware of health and nutrition. Other phases of the project include a newly opened health clinic at Glencliff, an aquatics program and the Live It! Program – a nutrition and physical activity program designed to encourage kids to eat five fruits and vegetables per day and walk at least 10,000 steps per day.



### **Women's Health Day at Vine Hill Community Clinic**

Attention Moms! In an effort to reach out to women, the Vine Hill Community Clinic is offering a Women's Health Day, Saturday, Nov. 1. At the event, for just \$30, women will be able to get comprehensive health exams. Insured patients will pay the co-pay and the rest of the fees will be charged to insurance. Women on TennCare will have the exam and lab fees covered. Women ages 40 – 64 within certain federal income guidelines will qualify for a free exam. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 383-VINE (8463).

### **ELL Executive Director Headed to Ireland**

Dr. LaWanna Shelton, Executive Director of English Language Learning at Metro Nashville Public Schools, will be traveling to Ireland and Northern Ireland on an educational exchange visit Nov. 8 - 17.

Dr. Shelton's selection comes after a meeting with Irish educators and policy-makers last December when the visitors came to Nashville on a study exchange delivered by Irish Institute. The group, comprised of principals, policy-makers, and community leaders, were examining successful models of inclusive education in the U.S. While visiting, Dr. Shelton made such an impression on the group, they in turn invited her to visit Ireland for this November's educational exchange. According to the group, meeting Dr. Shelton was "a highlight of their visit to the U.S."

The Irish Institute's mission is to support the peace and reconciliation process through the provision of educational seminars and best practice visits for public officials, business leaders, and educators from Ireland and from Northern Ireland. The Institute's work is funded by a grant from the U.S. Congress through the Department of State. Each of their programs consists of two parts, the first in which they bring over to the United States a group of Irish leaders to meet with relevant experts such as Dr. Shelton, and the second in which they send one of those U.S. experts on a subsequent "follow-up" visit to Ireland and to Northern Ireland. In funding these follow-up visits, the State Department's intent is to both promote professional exchange and to demonstrate this country's commitment to improving the lives of our friends abroad by sharing with them the best of American expertise.

### **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence Offers Support for Families Facing Disabilities**

Saturday, Nov. 1, from 9 – 11 a.m., and Thursday, Nov. 6, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence is offering a free orientation session for families facing developmental disabilities. The event is open to the Nashville community and will provide support for families affected by all forms of developmental disabilities. The session covers important terms, definitions, relevant laws; it will cover people-first language and civil rights issues; and it will provide sources of information and support. An experienced parent presenter will discuss the various choices parents have that lead to positive outcomes. For more information, or to register, visit <http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/site/newsandevents/calendar/default.aspx> or call (615) 936-8852.

### **Percy Priest 2<sup>nd</sup> Graders Display Art at Maggie Moo's**

Original artwork by second grade students at Percy Priest Elementary School is on display at Maggie Moo's in Green Hills now through Nov. 3.

Wednesday, Oct. 8, students and parents celebrated the opening of the exhibit with a reception at the popular ice cream shop. Maggie Moo's provided discount coupons for all artists, while students enjoyed sharing their artwork with friends and family. The display features self-portraits.

This exhibit is part of Percy Priest's *Tigers Around Town* series of community art shows. Each year, artwork by Percy Priest students is displayed in various locations, including Maggie Moo's, Davis-Kidd Booksellers and the Green Hills Public Library.

### **Percy Priest Raises Money for Breast Cancer Research**

Percy Priest Elementary School recently raised more than \$500 for breast cancer research. The entire school participated in Lee National Denim Day, sponsored by Lee Jeans Company. Thursday, Oct. 9, students, faculty, and staff could wear denim, along with a Standard School Attire or Percy Priest shirt, in exchange for a small donation of "pocket money" to the American Cancer Society. A total of \$589.17 was collected, far exceeding the fundraising goal.

Since its inception in 1996, Lee National Denim Day has raised more than \$70 million for the fight against breast cancer and unites nearly one million supporters each year.

### **AP Teacher Training**

Friday, Oct. 10, more than 100 MNPS teachers joined dozens of teachers from surrounding counties for Advanced Placement (AP) training at East Literature Magnet. The training was offered by the College Board in 10 subjects: Biology, Calculus AB, English Language/Composition, English Literature/Composition, Spanish Language, U.S. History, Pre-AP Strategies in English, Pre-AP Strategies in Math, Pre-AP Strategies in Science and Pre-AP Strategies in Social Studies. Taking advantage of this rich professional growth opportunity were teachers from all 16 MNPS high schools and the following five middle schools: Bailey, Bass, Cameron, Goodlettsville and Jere Baxter. One participant wrote that she has attended many workshops during the last 37 years and was pleased to find her informative Friday session taught by

someone who is still a practitioner. Another veteran math teacher reported that he is already using some of the strategies learned in his Pre-AP session.

### **McGavock to Host Career and Thematic Academy Meeting**

Tuesday, Oct. 21, from 5:30 – 7 p.m., McGavock High will host an information meeting for parents of current middle school students who will be attending McGavock in the years to come. The meeting will inform parents of the new Career and Thematic Academies offered at McGavock and the benefits associated with the academies.

The meeting will be held in the CTE presentation room, which is located behind the main office on the first floor. Refreshments will be served and representatives from McGavock will be on hand to answer any questions. For more information, call the MNPS Community Career Center at 298-6752.

### **COPLA Receives Outstanding Advocacy in Education Award**

COPLA (the Committee of Latino Parents) recently received the Outstanding Advocacy in Education Award at the 2008 NAHCC Hispanic Heritage Month Awards ceremony. The award was in honor of COPLA's dedication to helping Latino parents participate more actively in Metro Schools and with Latino students. COPLA hosted the first *LO LOGRAMOS* high school graduation event last June thanks to a successful partnership with community and business organizations including Lipscomb University, the YMCA, Conexion Americas and our organization.

### **MNPS Student Wins Fashion Design Contest Through Teen Vogue**

Isabel Kirsh, a senior at Nashville School of the Arts, has been selected as a winner in the Council of Fashion Designers of America/Teen Vogue fashion design contest. As one of only six winners from the entire country, she'll receive a \$5,000 scholarship to a participating Art College, some of which include Pratt, Parsons, SCAD, CCA, and Art Institute of Chicago.

Isabel was chosen based on a fashion mood board she submitted, an essay, high school transcript and letters of recommendation. Congratulations, Isabel!

### **H. G. Hill's YMCA Fun Company Lights on After School Read-A-Thon**

Each year, the YMCA Fun Company hosts a program called "Lights on After School" for families at H.G. Hill. This event is designed to bring attention to the after-school programs that keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement. At the event, special guests read to the students and encourage students to read. At this year's event, which was Oct. 16, students participated in a read-a-thon. Students requested donations from family and friends to raise money for We Build People, a charitable organization that helps all people experience the benefits of the YMCA.

### **Hillwood High School Band Wins Division III Championships**

The results are in! This past Saturday, Oct. 11, the defending Division III Champion Hillwood High School Band traveled to Chapel Hill, TN for the 2nd Annual Middle Tennessee Small Band Championships, hosted by the Forrest High School Band. Representing Hillwood High School and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, the band competed in class AAA. Out of the 20 bands, the Hillwood High School Band was one of only five bands that received superior ratings in the following captions: Field Commander, Visual Ensemble, Percussion, Band Music Ensemble, Band General Effect, and Band Marching General Effect.

In addition, the band captured the first place finish in Class AAA for Visual Ensemble (Color Guard); first place finish in Class AAA Field Commanders; first place finish in Class AAA Percussion; and overall first place band in Class AAA.

With the scores averaged the Hillwood High School was once again proclaimed Division III Champion for the second consecutive year in a row. Congratulations to our other competitors Cascade High School Band who clinched the Division I Championship, and to Station Camp High School Band who won the Division II championship.

A special congratulation to Jordan Frederick and Rachel Smith who were ranked Best Overall Field Commanders at the 2008 Middle Tennessee Small Band Championships.

### **MLK Students Excel**

Sixty-four students at Martin Luther King Academic Magnet have earned AP Scholar Awards in recognition of their exceptional achievement on AP Exams. The College Board's Advanced Placement Program (AP) provides motivated and academically prepared students with the opportunity to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school, and to earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, for successful performance on the AP Exams. About 18 percent of the 1.6

million students worldwide who took AP Exams performed at a sufficiently high level to also earn an AP Scholar Award. Congratulations to all of these students at MLK for their outstanding achievement.

#### **Antioch Teacher Named 107.5 The River and Nissan Teacher of the Week**

Congratulations to Antioch teacher Jessica Slayton for her recent recognition as the 107.5 The River and Nissan Teacher of the Week. Ms. Slayton was nominated by one of her students who wrote, “She is an awesome teacher. She’s like a friend to us.” Ms. Slayton received \$100, as did Antioch High, and will now be eligible for the Nissan Teacher of the Year contest.

#### **Glenciff Halloween Performance**

Oct. 22 - 23 at 6 p.m., Glenciff High will present “Tales from the Cliff.” The play will be a series of twelve student scenes and one student written short film based around a Halloween theme. Tickets are \$3 for students and faculty, \$5 for everyone else. Audience members are encouraged to wear appropriate Halloween costumes (NO MASKS).

#### **Other Upcoming Events**

- Oct. 18 Antioch HS & Overton HS Marching Band compete at MCI Marching Contest  
McGavock HS Marching Band & Overton Marching Band at APSU Mid-South Invitational
- Oct. 20 Bellevue Beginning Band Concert, 6:45 p.m.  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade Elementary Music Assessment (Oct. 20 – 24)
- Oct. 21 Creswell Beginning Band and String Concert, 6:30 p.m.
- Oct. 22 Frist Workshop, The Best of Photography and Film, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Oct. 23 Una 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Arts Night, 7 p.m.  
Westmeade 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Program, 6:30 p.m.



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.

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