



Children First!

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Board Finance Committee braces for tough budget year

The Metro Nashville Board of Education's Finance Committee met Tuesday, Jan. 12, before the regularly scheduled board meeting to discuss what looks to be a difficult budgeting process. With an estimated \$35 million shortfall, due to increased pensions and insurance premiums among other factors, the group faced the grim reality and began looking at a timeline for preparing the 2010-11 budget proposal. Now through mid-February, district administrators will be thoroughly examining departments and programs to finalize a budget plan. The one area that will not be cut? Teachers. Director of Schools Dr. Jesse Register made that clear. With last year's cuts to the certificated staff, that is an area the district simply cannot afford to touch.

Hillsboro students send support to Haiti

Hillsboro High School Leadership students have stepped up this week, leading the rest of the student body to support Haiti relief efforts. In one day, the group collected more than \$340 from classmates and teachers to send to the International Red Cross, which is out of medical supplies. They will be taking another collection early next week.

Comprehensive high schools to adopt same schedule

This fall, all 12 MNPS comprehensive high schools will operate on an A/B Block Schedule. Students will take eight courses per year, four classes per day on alternating days. Teachers will teach six periods each year with two planning periods. The district did not come to this decision lightly, interviewing principals, students, community members, and national experts. However, district administrators, principals, and other leaders came to the consensus to make this uniform change to create consistency and stability in our highest mobility areas.

Several important factors contributed to this schedule change. They include:

- Relationships – To truly implement Smaller Learning Communities (SLCs), students need to develop relationships with teachers and community partners over a longer period of time.

- Teacher Collaboration – Having two planning periods for teachers allows time for collaboration, curriculum integration and the establishment of strong, professional learning communities at each school.
- Students will be able to focus on four classes per day.
- Advanced Placement and IB testing – Testing dates will correlate with the master schedule.
- Students will have more opportunities for accelerated coursework and course recovery if needed.

To help with this transition, MNPS plans to offer numerous professional development courses over the summer for teachers and administrators. Courses might include formative assessment, teaching on a block, shared leadership, classroom management, integrated curriculum, effective communication, etc. The district is finalizing plans on what professional development courses will be offered. All will have a significant impact on the quality of instruction and the success of our students.

MNPS names Libbey Assistant to Superintendent

Director of Schools Dr. Jesse Register today announced that Meredith Libbey has been named Assistant to the Director with responsibility for communications.

Libbey, a parent of two Metro Nashville Public Schools students, is a communications professional with more than 20 years' experience. She will join MNPS from Ford Motor Credit where she is global communications manager with responsibilities that include media relations and internal communications for the company's North America, Latin America and Asia Pacific & Africa regions. Libbey begins work Feb. 1.

Nashville schools rank among top in state for performance



Several MNPS elementary and middle schools have ranked among the top in the state for student performance. New data, generated from the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS), published by the Education Consumers Foundation (ECF) shows that Glenview Elementary ranks 1st in the district (pictured left) and 16th in the state; Amqui Elementary ranked 2nd and 18th; Stanford Montessori Elementary ranked 3rd and 30th; Charlotte Park Elementary ranked 4th and 31st; and McGavock Elementary ranked 5th and 33rd. Meanwhile, McMurray Middle ranked 1st out of all middle schools in our district and 7th in the state; Meigs Middle Magnet ranked 2nd and 20th; Cameron Middle ranked 3rd and 31st; Dupont Tyler Middle ranked 4th and 44th; and H.G. Hill Middle ranked 5th and 47th.

TVAAS measures school effectiveness by monitoring student growth from year to year. Each year, ECF compiles a ranked list of all of Tennessee's elementary and middle schools based on TVAAS scores. For more information, visit www.education-consumers.org.

Volunteers needed to serve as educational surrogate parents

Over the years, state laws have come into place that strongly advocate the rights of children with disabilities. One of those rights is directly related to students with disabilities who do not have a parent or guardian, or whose parent or guardian cannot be located. In these instances, the law requires these students to have an educational surrogate parent who can represent them in all educational settings. Wednesday, Feb. 3, MNPS Department of Exceptional Education will hold a special training session for adults willing to volunteer to serve in this important role. The training will be held at Cohn Adult Learning Center. Reservations for the session must be made by Tuesday, Feb. 2, by contact Camille Flemming at 259-8696, or camille.flemming@mnps.org.

Students benefit from service-based learning projects

Friday, Jan. 15, more than 250 students and teachers worked together with representatives from more than 30 community organizations to plan service-learning projects that students will lead in coming months to implement positive change in their own schools and communities. The event, titled *Leadership, Service, Unity*

2010, was hosted by the Alignment Nashville High School Committee to support the Developing Community Leaders (DCL) program currently offered in nine of the district's comprehensive high schools.

The DCL program exposes students to a wide range of readings, studies, and films that feature leaders from Abraham Lincoln to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The program also encourages students to use their new leadership skills to create service-learning projects that will improve their own school and community.



Head Middle inducts new Beta Club members

The Head Middle Magnet School Chapter of the National Junior Beta Club held its induction ceremony on Jan. 13. Thirty new members were inducted based on their academic performance, character, and leadership qualities. Eight students are returning as second year members making this year's club the largest ever. Congratulations!

Teachers get training in Rhythm, Reading and Rhyme

Monday, Jan. 4, MNPS Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers participated in training for Rhythm, Reading and Rhyme at Jones Paideia Elementary School. This new initiative will be used in Pre-K and Kindergarten



classrooms to help advance reading skills through musical activities. During the training, teachers were able to participate in each musical activity, use the instructional musical instruments and receive materials about the curriculum. Rhythm, Reading and Rhyme program will kick-off in February and will be taught over a five month period at Cockrill, Jones Paideia (Bethlehem Center), Park Avenue Enhanced Option and Buena Vista elementary schools.

About Rhythm, Reading and Rhyme

Earlier this year, Bill Collier, Family School Liaison for MNPS, met with Music Row executives to discuss ways the Pearl-Cohn cluster could partner with the entertainment industry. As a result of the meetings, a committee of MNPS employees was established and "Rhythm, Reading and Rhyme" was born. The mission of the committee is to advance reading skills through musical activities for all Pre-Kindergarten students in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. The committee is composed of Bill Collier, Carol Crittenden, Florence Kidd, Debra Smith, Sharon Wright and Phyllis Phillips; the teacher and facilitator responsible for instructing the music teachers is Amy Alley.



Recently, the committee obtained \$10,000 in funding from Nashville Alliance, which allowed the committee to purchase the necessary teaching materials from ABC & Me, Inc. Students will be given musical instruments, materials and CDs to take home and practice learning skills and involve their parents in their education.

Park Avenue students learn 'Creature Care'

Friday, Jan. 15, at 10 a.m., children at Park Avenue Enhanced Option Elementary School will participate in the Creature Care Program. This program teaches young children (Pre-K – 2nd grade) the wants and needs of animals, both physical and emotional, and how animals are similar to humans. The goal of the program is to promote the humane treatment of animals and prevent animal abuse by reaching out to children in their formative years.

Creature Care incorporates games, photos, activities and live Delta Society therapy animals to address five basic components:

- Basic Needs of Animals

- Kindness
- Feelings
- Humane Treatment
- Safety – avoiding animal bites

It also involves an assessment component with pre-and-post testing. Reading materials, a backpack, and a stuffed animal similar to the one in the reading materials will be provided to the classrooms. Students will be able to take the backpack and materials home to share with their families. All Creature Care instructors will be trained by an MNPS teacher.

Antioch students get their ‘Hands on Nashville’

The United Nations of Antioch High School, an international club within the school, recently volunteered for Hands on Nashville, donating two hours of time to sort food. The group of 18 students included American and international high school students. They were joined by club leaders Juan Alonso-Santillana and Lauren Armstrong.

AVIDly Seeking Solutions

AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) Site Teams from 14 Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools collaborated on Dec. 2 to improve the effectiveness of Metro’s AVID programs. The collaboration consisted of aligning AVID’s 11 program essentials with school and district NCLB performance goals, formulating program effectiveness committees, receiving AVID data updates and discussing solutions to program obstacles. This type of collaboration is important to share best practices. Nashville is currently being considered to serve as the home of the first AVID demonstration school in Tennessee.

The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program was implemented in the Metropolitan Nashville Public school district in 2002 with sights set on improving the academic performance of students, and increasing the graduation rate and college attendance rate of students who are traditionally underserved or facing challenges that may hinder their chances of post-secondary education.

Since its inception, AVID has increased access into rigorous courses (Honors, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Programme) for Metro students and was responsible for sending more than 250 Metro high school seniors to college in 2009.

W.A. Bass Fueled Up and Ready to Play!

W. A. Bass Middle School has been awarded a \$2000 *Fuel Up to Play 60* grant, sponsored by Southwest United Dairy Industry Association (SUDIA). To help the school celebrate, Tennessee Titan #25 LenDale White made a special trip to the school to promote education, health and wellness (pictured right). He spoke to the entire student body and later held a more private session with the Fuel Up to Play student team leaders and the sponsors, where he answered questions and gave them an autographed Titans poster.



A special thank you to physical education teacher Coach Monica Walker who applied for the grant. W. A. Bass is excited about making healthier eating choices and becoming more physically active. The school is “Fueled Up and Ready to Play for 60!!”

A+ weekend at the Adventure Science Center

Students who have demonstrated success in science class are invited to participate in Adventure Science Center’s Scholar Days, Jan. 23-24. On these days, students who received an ‘A’ in either general science or a specific science class (such as biology, anatomy, chemistry, physics, etc.) on their last report card will receive free general admission as a reward for their hard work in science class. To take advantage of this offer, students

need to take their last report card (actual or a copy) to the front desk at the Adventure Science Center. Students under age 16 must be accompanied by an adult.



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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