



News

from the MNPS Communications Office

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

For Immediate Release

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Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach program expands to Hillsboro High School

Science partnership with Metro Schools challenges students

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (March 31, 2011)—More high school students in Nashville will have access to leading researchers and rigorous hands-on science education with the expansion of a partnership between the Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach and Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Now underway at Stratford High School, the four-year interdisciplinary science and research pathway will launch at Hillsboro High School with the start of the 2011-12 school year. The program is based on the School for Science and Math at Vanderbilt, a rigorous program on the Vanderbilt campus for 26 high school students per grade from Metro Nashville Public Schools. Admission to the School for Science and Math is highly competitive; admission to the Stratford and Hillsboro programs is open to a broad range of students who express interest and demonstrate the drive and commitment to complete the challenging program.

Virginia Shepherd, the director of the Center for Science Outreach (CSO) and a professor of pathology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, is leading program development. The program will begin with one 9th grade science elective and will increase to an elective that covers two class periods in 10th grade. The program will culminate in a student internship with a Vanderbilt researcher or faculty member. Students will have six or more elective science credits upon graduation.

“We are establishing a model of a Vanderbilt scientist working with a Metro Nashville Public School teacher to develop and implement a rigorous research-based curriculum. The teacher will continue the instruction in future years with graduate students working as ‘science teaching fellows’ in the classrooms,” said Shepherd. “Courses will begin teaching students how to ask scientific questions and will lead up to how to answer those questions.”

For the internship, students will work on research projects at Vanderbilt or at their high schools during the summer between their junior and senior years. Students must make presentations about their research and defend their presentations.

“We expect Hillsboro and Stratford students to present their research results to local and national scientific bodies,” said Shepherd. “Students will also learn by sharing their knowledge in national science competitions, scientific journals, and by science outreach projects in their communities.”

Now in its first year, the Stratford High School program has 52 9th and 10th grade students as part of its Academy of Science and Engineering. The program at Hillsboro High School will also begin with 9th and 10th grade students in its Academy of Global Health and Science. Both Academies are part of The Academies of Nashville, the district’s program to teach academics through the lens of a particular area of interest. Students graduate ready for college and career.

“We are excited about expanding our relationship with the Center for Science Outreach to Hillsboro High School,” said Jay Steele, associate superintendent for high schools with Metro Nashville Public Schools. “It fits very well with our vision to raise academic achievement for all high school students by engaging them in challenging theme-based classes in our Academies. Students and parents at Stratford are energized by the program and it has already attracted national interest.”

The Stratford cluster—Hattie Cotton Elementary, Bailey Middle School, Litton Middle School and Stratford High School—is becoming a center of excellence for science, technology, engineering and math education funded with \$1,000,000 in Race to the Top funds and additional funds from a federal magnet school grant. The Hillsboro High School program is paid for with \$500,000 in Race to the Top funds. The funds will pay for scientists, teachers’ professional development, program evaluations, and supplies and equipment.

“It is very exciting to go into the classrooms at Stratford,” said Shepherd. “The kids are great and they have moved a huge distance this year. This is learning by doing.”

Dr. Shepherd is a leader in the national movement to develop partnerships between university scientists and K-12 classroom teachers and in research on the effects of those partnerships.

About the Center for Science Outreach

The Vanderbilt Center for Science Outreach (CSO) is dedicated to enhancing scientific and technological literacy through partnerships between University scientists, K-12 educators and students, and the local and global science community. CSO efforts, funded through a variety of state and national public and private agencies, reach thousands of children, support teachers in residence at Vanderbilt, host summer professional development for teachers, offer summer programs for students, and place teachers and students in research laboratories. As a national leader in outreach efforts, the CSO is committed to elevating pre-collegiate science expertise and literacy.

About Metro Nashville Public Schools

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools serve more than 78,000 students with the goal of being the first choice for families in Nashville and Davidson County. The governing body for MNPS is the Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County Board of Public Education, a nine-member group elected by residents of Metropolitan Nashville. For more information, please visit www.mnps.org.

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