

Forward**FOCUS**

A News Bulletin for Employees of Metro Nashville Public Schools

IN THIS ISSUE: RALLY @ THE RIDGE • MCMURRAY TEACHER SPOTLIGHT • CELEBRATE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Shawn Joseph

MNPS is a diverse school district. Our diversity encompasses our students' and communities' socioeconomic status, race, culture, religion, and achievement levels.

To raise the level of achievement and levels of expectation in all communities we must pay close attention to the makeup of our communities and their unique needs.

We are committed to differentiating resources within the school system based upon what our schools need to support students. This is evident in how we've appropriated our student-based budgets this year where we have provided more money to schools based upon students' socioeconomic status and whether they are English Language Learners. We recognize these two factors require more resources to adequately ensure our children can achieve the high standards that have been set for them.

We will begin realigning how we are structured to provide targeted supports to schools. Step one is creating a K-12 model of organization and creating four community superintendent positions. The positions will replace the current elementary, middle, and high school executive officers and the executive officer of priority schools. These positions will place a leader in each of four areas of the county who is accessible to the community and understands its specific needs.

In the coming weeks, you will learn more about how we are realigning our district structure to better support what happens in your schools.

FEATURE STORY



COMMUNITY NEEDS ARE FOCUS OF REALIGNMENT

Four new community superintendent positions announced

Metro Schools' is moving to a community superintendent model starting next school year. The district's organizational structure is being realigned to better support the unique needs of the many communities we serve. Director of Schools Dr. Shawn Joseph gave a brief overview of one of the most significant changes during the monthly A&S Meeting for principals and district supervisors March 1.

The plans include repurposing the four existing executive officer

positions to create four community superintendents who will each supervise a quarter of our clusters. The new structure will not change clusters, school zones or School Board districts, but will change supervision from the current tiered structure for elementary, middle, high and priority schools to allow for better planning and coordination across all tiers and to meet the specific needs of students and families in each community.

continued on page 2

continued from page 1

"This realignment will allow us to provide better equity of access to programs and supports for all students," Dr. Joseph said, "which is one of the recommendations of our Transition Team. Our schools and communities are unique and have different needs. This restructuring will take us a step forward in better servicing our diverse school community."

The four community superintendents will report to Chief of Schools Dr. Sito Narcisse and will sit on Dr. Joseph's Executive Leadership Team. Salary for the positions will be the same as the current executive officer salaries. The changes will take effect July 1.

"Community superintendents will be selected in a similar process to our principal selection process," said Dr. Narcisse. "We will create a diverse panel representative of each of the four zones to provide input, conduct interviews and submit recommendations to Dr. Joseph for final selection."

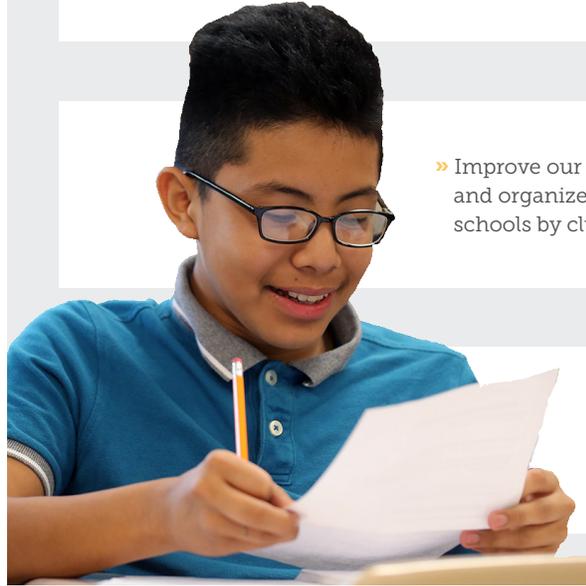
The March 1 announcement will be followed in the weeks to come with additional plans for realigning to support this new structure.

IN ADDITION TO IMPROVING EQUITY, REALIGNING TO A K-12 SCHOOL SUPERVISION MODEL WILL ALSO ALLOW THE DISTRICT TO:

» Provide each community with a leader who is able to understand and pay particular attention to their community's unique needs

» Improve our ability to communicate and organize families to support schools by cluster

» Provide better infrastructure to support school leaders



MORE THAN 600 EDUCATORS GATHER FOR RALLY AT THE RIDGE

Cane Ridge Cluster hosted Professional Development Symposium on Professional Development Day

On Feb. 20, while students were out of school, all MNPS teachers reported for a district-wide professional development (PD) day. Various opportunities were available for educators to choose from, including classes specific to grade, subject or specialty. The Cane Ridge Cluster chose to come together for the second annual "Rally at the Ridge," a full day Professional Development (PD) symposium attended by staff from Antioch Middle Prep, A. Z. Kelley Elementary School, Cambridge Early Learning Center, Cane Ridge Elementary School, Cane Ridge High School, Cole Elementary School, Henry Maxwell Elementary School and Thurgood Marshall Middle Prep.

The day began with a presentation from the keynote speaker, Dr. Dave Moore, an educator with 39 years of experience in public education. Moore spent many years working in Metro Schools but he currently teaches at Vanderbilt University and Lipscomb University and also works as an education consultant with several schools and school districts.



Rally at the ridge

The day consisted of four hour-and-a-half long sessions with approximately 30 class offerings per session. The sessions covered a wide span of topics like, Strategies for Teaching Literacy Standards, Technology in the Classroom, Office 365 and EL Student in General Education. The classes were led by experienced teachers and district personnel who included interactive activities and opportunities to ask questions in their lessons. Teachers were also provided with snack-filled swag bags and food trucks were on site for lunch break.

A first year kindergarten teacher at Maxwell, attended a session about making stations in the classroom meaningful. She was pleased with the session and her overall experience with the PD day.

"The Rally at the Ridge is great, especially for a first year teacher, I can learn from experienced educators and see what they are doing that works," the teacher said. "Sure beats trial and error!"

EL TEACHER BUILDS TRUST WITH HIS STUDENTS

From his experiences teaching in Egypt for 15 years and in the states for 10, Hisham Michael learned that kids are the same everywhere, regardless of their ethnicity or preferred language. All students need support, love, encouragement and sometimes a good talking-to. Michael is an award-winning English Language (EL) teacher, seventh grade team lead and assistant to the soccer team at McMurray Middle Prep. He also knows that although all students require diversified supports, EL students do require extra accommodations because of the two-fold challenge they face.

"These students have two challenges, to learn the language and grasp the content, so they need a lot of positive support and motivation," Michael said. "To meet their academic needs we have to first meet their personal needs so they can focus on learning."

To meet personal needs, Michael invests time in the first few weeks to get to know his students and to build a level of comfort and trust. He encourages other teachers to do the same - even if they are not in EL specific roles. McMurray is home to one of the most diverse student populations in the district. With a student body where more than 50 percent of students are English Learners and many others

were once classified as EL, almost every educator at McMurray will likely have an EL student in his or her classroom. When supporting EL students in a diversified classroom, Michael emphasizes the use of visuals and hand movements during lessons which not only help EL students understand, but can help all students grasp concepts better.

McMurray has at least 25 dialects that can be heard in the hallway at one time. Michael knows a few languages that his students commonly speak and tries to greet them in those dialects. In Egypt, Michael completed extensive language studies to learn Arabic, Spanish, French and English. The admiration is mutual between student and teacher language skills.

"These students teach me a lot," Michael said, "We learn from each other."

In the past two years Michael has seen the district respond to the diverse population at McMurray by increasing the EL staff by almost double. Although challenges still exist, he feels hopeful for the future and he is still happy he decided to turn down a future as a professional soccer player to pursue his calling as a teacher.

"My students keep me busy," Michael said. "But they [also] keep me loved."



Hisham Michael and family

STAND UP FOR SOCIAL WORK MONTH

March is National Social Work Month; the theme for 2017 is SOCIAL WORKERS STAND UP! Every day social workers stand up to improve the quality of life for all people. The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance each person's well-being and to help meet the basic needs of all people, particularly those who are vulnerable, oppressed, or living in poverty. Social workers stand up to help people to overcome adversity while promoting social justice and change on behalf of their clients. MNPS social workers are part of a much larger group of social workers who use these core values to guide them in their daily practice:

SERVICE: This is one of the core values that is woven throughout the day of a school social worker. In their roles, social workers serve all, including students, their families and school staff members.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: This drives social workers to make improvements on a larger scale. They participate in meetings to improve the quality of service and ensure that education is accessible and equitable. Social workers also advocate for their clients to stakeholders.

DIGNITY AND WORTH OF THE PERSON: Every person matters, and all staff should work to ensure that all persons, their beliefs, their experiences and their talents are valued.

IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS: As a social workers, little progress is made without first establishing relationships, which foster trust and invite clients to be partners in positive change.

INTEGRITY: Social workers, above all else, are bound by strict ethical standards. MNPS social workers practice in a manner consistent with these standards, and promote ethical practices within MNPS.

COMPETENCE: All MNPS social workers are master's level practitioners who have been certified by the state of Tennessee to specifically serve schools and communities. MNPS social workers strive to increase professional knowledge and skills in order to best serve their clients.

March 5-11 is National School Social Work Week. We encourage all who read this to stand up with us in your own way to create a more loving and accepting world for our students and their families.

BUDGET MEETING NOTICES:

The Budget Meeting planned for March 7 has been rescheduled to March 14 at 3:30 p.m. Additionally, the meeting on April 11 is at 4 p.m., not 12 p.m. as communicated last week.



CALENDAR

MARCH 2

Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)
Tag events with @MNPSLibraries
and #MNPSReads

MARCH 3

TN Educator Fellowship Application Deadline
More details: <http://tmscore.org/programs-outreach/tennessee-educator-fellowship/>
Application: <http://www.bit.ly/TNedApp>

MARCH 4

Minerva's Closet- Free Prom Dresses
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
McGavock High School
3150 McGavock Pike

MARCH 6-10

Kindergarten Registration Kick-Off Week
March 6 - March 10
Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2lTiva8>

MARCH 10

Read to be Ready Grant Application Closes
<http://bit.ly/Read2bR>

MARCH 14 & 28

Board of Education Meetings
5 p.m.
Central Office Board Room
2601 Bransford Ave
Nashville TN, 37204

MARCH 27 - APRIL 7

Prekindergarten Application Period

APRIL 1

Kindergarten Readiness Fair
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Lentz Public Health Center

MAY 2

Save the Date: Teacher of the Year
(Invite Only)



**METRO NASHVILLE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
Exceeding Great Expectations

2601 Bransford Ave • Nashville, TN 37204
615-259-INFO (4636) • WWW.MNPS.ORG

To submit to Forward Focus use this online form:
<http://bit.ly/2acUpTv>

The deadline for submissions is the end of the business day on Tuesday. Submissions received by this deadline will be reviewed for the following week's edition.

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

Email communications@mnps.org.

NEWS BRIEFS

Carson-Newman University Teacher Meetings

Carson-Newman University information sessions will provide details on off-campus programs for Master's, Ed.S. and Ed.D. Visit www.cn.edu for more information.

SESSION 1:

WHEN: March 8, 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.
WHERE: Davidson Academy - Library
1414 W. Old Hickory Blvd., Nashville

SESSION 2:

WHEN: March 9, 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.
WHERE: East Nashville Magnet High School, 110 Gallatin Rd., Nashville

RSVP & Contact: Cherraine Washington: (800) 956-8903,
cwashington@graduateprogram.org.

Lipscomb University Technology Integration Degree Information Session

Learn how to earn a Certificate, a Master's of Education, or an Education Specialist degree in Technology Integration from Lipscomb University at an upcoming online information session. Participants will be able to speak to professors and staff about the program.

WHEN: March 9, 4 p.m.

After registration you will receive further instructions.

Register here: <http://bit.ly/2ls82SF>

MNPS Teacher and Certificated Staff Job Fair

This job fair is aimed at recruiting recent graduates, new hires and internal teacher transfers.

WHEN: April 8, 8 a.m. - noon
WHERE: Allen Arena, Lipscomb University, 1 University Park Dr, Nashville, TN 37204

ESSA Feedback Results from the State

Over the past year, the Department of Education drafted a state plan to transition to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Department aims to further improve the draft and submit a final plan in April.

An overview and a statement from Candice McQueen can be found here: <http://bit.ly/TNessaFB>.

UPDATES SINCE THE INITIAL DRAFT:

- Grades 3-4 Social Studies and Science tests will be cut in half in the 2017-18 school year.
- The Opportunity to Learn weighting will be reduced to 10 percent for all schools and subgroups, and this metric will be labeled as "Chronically Out of School" to better describe chronic absenteeism and out-of-school suspensions.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIVE MNPS TEACHERS SELECTED FOR T4E FELLOWSHIP

The Business Innovation Factory (BIF) launched the Teachers For Equity (T4E) Fellowship and selected 20 teachers to participate in work to support the spread of equitable practices. With a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, teachers from across the country will focus on advancing practices related equity

and closing opportunity and achievement gaps. Congratulations to these five MNPS teachers selected for the T4E Fellowship:

- May Beasley
- Chris George l
- Erica Hayes-Schultz
- Amy Ryan
- Natalie Sessoms

NEW HIRE



David Sevier has joined MNPS as the Director of Board Relations and Management. He will support the Board of Education by providing information and resources needed for them to make important decisions. Sevier comes to MNPS from the Southern Region Education Board in Atlanta where he was Deputy Senior Vice President on the School Improvement team. Prior to that, he served as the Deputy Executive Director at the Tennessee Board of Education and was a high school educator and administrator.