



# Children First!

News & Information from Metro Nashville Public Schools

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## **First Week a Big Success!**

What a great start to the school year! Minus a few scheduling issues and minor classroom disruptions, Metro schools jumped back into the swing of things without skipping a beat. In a report to the Metro School Board Tuesday, Aug. 12, Associate Superintendent of Elementary Schools Greg Patterson said, "We started off with a great beginning to school. The other Associate Superintendents and I are on cloud nine!" While the reports were overall very positive, the first days did not go off without incident. According to Interim Director Chris Henson, "The first day was not flawless, and it won't be with any organization this size. But overall, it was a good, smooth, and successful start to the school year."

According to the report delivered by Associate Superintendent of High Schools Jim Briggs, district high schools were fortunate to have a great team of individuals in place. Teachers, principals, support staff, board members, parents, and others were all working to make sure the year got off to a good start. Student response to the first day was very positive and according to Board Member Gracie Porter, "This was the best start to school I've ever seen, and I've been a part of this district for 40 years." Several high schools have already begun making changes to student schedules and scanning text books, both of which rarely happen in the first few days of school.

Sandy Tinnon, Associate Superintendent of Middle Schools, echoed Mr. Briggs' report with a wonderful report on the district's middle schools. According to Mrs. Tinnon, parent and staff volunteers worked to greet the children as they returned to school, every child had a schedule when they arrived, locker assignments were already being distributed, and instruction began within 20 minutes of the start of the school day. There were a few problems noted including some late buses, a special education routing glitch and limited parking at some of the schools. However, most of these issues were corrected very quickly.

For the elementary schools' first day, Associate Superintendent Greg Patterson couldn't find the words to express his excitement and pleasure with the first day. So he passed out smiley face candy to convey his enthusiasm. According to Patterson, every single elementary school hosted some type of "Welcome Back" event for students and their families. Other first day successes included tremendous community involvement with greeters at the schools, new students were welcomed and placed into classrooms very quickly, Standard School Attire is working very well, instruction began by 8:15, and there was an overall feeling of excitement and happiness at the schools. However, the elementary schools did experience some problems, such as heavy traffic, a few late buses, a few students were missed at the

bus stop, some test book shortages, and a few air conditioning problems. All of these issues have been addressed and corrected.

On behalf of the district, thank you to all parents, teachers, administrators, support staff, students and community members who made this first week back a tremendous success. MNPS is very pleased with the first week and excited for the rest of the school year.

### **Family and Community Service Backs Promise with Action – “Your concern is Our Concern.”**

When the Family and Community Service Department first gathered, each employee was charged with one ever-important task -- reaching out to parents. Led by Director of Family and Community Services Wanda Holman, the team consists of Parent Liaisons, a Family and Community Outreach Coordinator, Community Education, and Community Outreach Resource Managers. Their goal is to foster continual and meaningful communications with families and to increase family and community involvement with the schools, as both are vital to the academic success of students.

Within months of initial establishment the department is making good on its promise to parents, first at the Tom Joyner 92Q Back to School Celebration and at the Mayor’s First Day Festival. At both events, the team met with hundreds of parents. Their booth at the Mayor’s First Day Festival was so popular, it even caused a bit of a traffic jam. At the events, parents were able to interact with the staff the second the booths opened. Printed materials were distributed in English and Spanish that provided parents information on Public School Choice Options, supplemental services tutoring opportunities, district Parent Advisory Council information and contacts, immunization center information, Title I brochures (detailing parental rights under No Child Left Behind), and Parent University: the High School Graduation Initiative.

At the Tom Joyner 92Q Back to School Celebration, the department represented Nashville as one of only three school districts in the nation, garnering the district national attention. Three members of the team, Ruben De Pena, Bill Collier, and Marquis Churchwell, shared stories about Nashville’s new outreach efforts with the media. Aside from countless face-to-face conversations with parents, more than 1,400 backpacks were distributed to students (donated by *Feed the Children*) and gift certificates donated by Nashville businesses were handed out to booth visitors.

Aside from these two specially organized events, Family and Community Services made the first day back to school easier than ever for many families by offering increased assistance to parents visiting the MNPS Customer Service Center. Throughout the first week of school, the department set up stations in the Customer Service Center lobby to help answer parents’ questions quickly and accurately. Roughly 60 parents were served by 10 a.m. that first day of school.

### **J.T. Moore Kicks Off the Year with *Read to Race***

John Trotwood Moore Middle kicked off the new school year by celebrating *Read to Race*, a special partnership with Music City Motorsports. Students were greeted Monday morning by race car drivers and other professionals in the racing industry who are active partners with J.T. Moore in promoting literacy. Speakers at a 9 a.m. assembly included Senator Thelma Harper; former Titans CEO, an ESPN spokesperson, and now sports consultant Jeff Diamond; Director of Schools Chris Henson; and Principal Jill Pittman.

Initial corporate sponsorship and support has been provided by Dollar General in the form of a \$1500 donation for expansion of the school’s Accelerated Reader book selection. J.T. Moore will participate

in events throughout the year, with opportunities for students to earn public recognition and to get involved with the racing industry.

### **Live Where You Work!**

Want to live where you work? Mayor Karl Dean is making that a lot easier with the city's first Mayor's Housing Fair which will be held Saturday, Aug. 16, from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. The fair will be held at the Tennessee State Fairgrounds and is designed to educate the public on affordable Nashville living. Guests will be able to visit dozens of booths, speaking to professionals in all industries associated with purchasing a home (builders, bankers, loan officers, appraisers, non-profits, realtors, real estate agents, etc.). Fair-goers will be provided invaluable information regarding new homes in the Nashville area, how to obtain a mortgage, how to increase your credit score, how to maintain your first home, and much more. Guests can also attend a short presentation that will cover everything from the seven great reasons to buy a home now to steps to buying a new home. Also at the fair, guests will be eligible for a variety of prizes and giveaways -- all of which are paid for by fair sponsorships.

### **Glenciff to Host South Korean Pastry Team**

August 25-29, Glenciff High will play host to the South Korean Pastry Team who is visiting the Music City to compete in The World Pastry Championship. The competition will be held at Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center during the Labor Day weekend, Aug. 31 – Sept. 1. While visiting, the team will spend the week working and practicing in the Glenciff Culinary Arts Department kitchen.

The World Pastry Championship is one of the most talked about events in the world of pastry. It is a two-day, 13-hour a day competition of 12 teams. Each team consists of three professional chefs currently living and working in the country they represent. Countries represented in this year's world championship include Belgium, China, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Korea, Switzerland, and the United States. This year's theme is "Imagination" and has a total prize package of \$100,000.

### **NCLB Choice Informational Forum**

Tuesday, Aug. 19, from 6:30 – 8 p.m., Metro Nashville Public Schools Federal Programs Office will hold an informational meeting for parents regarding No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Choice. The meeting will be held in the Board Room at the Central Administration Building, located at 2601 Bransford Ave.

Through NCLB, students zoned for schools listed as High Priority are given the option of attending another school in the district. The law also requires these schools offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES), such as tutoring programs, for all students.

At the forum, parents will learn what Choice is, the stipulations and regulations surrounding Choice, where students attending High Priority schools are eligible to transfer, and transportation options surrounding Choice. Parents will also learn how schools become targeted as High Priority. Parents will be given a tutoring request packet and helpful information on how to choose the best tutoring service for their child. All state approved tutoring services have also been invited to attend the meeting so parents can begin searching for possible tutoring programs that best fit their child's needs. Parents unable to attend this meeting can contact the SES Coordinator at their child's school after Monday morning, Aug. 18 for more information.