



# Children First!

News & Information from Metro Nashville Public Schools

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December 14, 2007

## **Board approves assignment plan for 2008-2009 school year**

The Metro Nashville Board of Public Education has approved changes to zone lines affecting where children will go to school in the 2008-2009 academic year. The more significant changes occur in the Antioch area, where the new Cane Ridge High School will open in August of 2008. The Board also approved a task force to study possible additional changes in the future. That task force will be made up of community representatives appointed by Board members, MNPS Director Pedro E. Garcia, Ed.D., and Mayor Karl Dean.

The plan also includes a few additional changes to other clusters, the most notable being the assignment of current Dalewood Middle students to other schools for next year. The Dalewood building will then be used to house the Maplewood 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy during renovations of Maplewood High next year. The MNPS Student Assignment Office will be sending letters to all families affected by the plan by the end of January or first of February.

## **Task Force will look at future assignment needs**

The Board, at its Dec. 11 meeting, also approved a task force to study possible additional changes to student assignment in the future. That task force will follow a model used in Austin, Texas, proposed by Board Member Karen Johnson. The group will be made up of community representatives appointed by Board members, MNPS Director Pedro E. Garcia, Ed.D., and Mayor Karl Dean. The task force will be responsible for reviewing capacity to ensure efficient use of buildings, recommending specific proposals for more efficient use of under-utilized buildings and designing student assignment recommendations that meet the needs of the district with minimal impact on students. It was also decided this group would be formed as quickly as possible in January 2008, with the goal of making recommendations to the School Board in April for the 2009-2010 school year. Mrs. Johnson's full proposal for the task force and its responsibilities is pasted at the end of this issue.

## **Magnet applications available Dec. 17**

Applications for the 2008-2009 magnet school lottery have been printed and will be available in schools, on the MNPS website and in area community centers and library branches on or just after Dec. 17. The deadline to return those applications is Jan. 18 and the lottery is scheduled for Feb. 16. A complete timeline will be posted on the school district's website at [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org). Look for the "Magnet and Optional Schools" menu under "Our Schools." Please note that the entrance to Nashville School of the Arts is not tied to the lottery, however, applications for students wanting to attend NSA will also be available Dec. 17.

## **Maplewood player named defensive MVP in playoffs**

Congratulations to LeDarius Osborne, a junior at Maplewood High, who was named Defensive Most Valuable Player following the District 4A title game, held this past weekend.

### **McMurray teacher receives National Certification**

We have learned that a third MNPS teacher has received National Board Certification, a stringent, voluntary certification process administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Deborah Wilbrink, a teacher assigned to McMurray Middle School, joins MNPS teachers Kyle Alexander and Suzanne Hayes, as reported in earlier Children First! issues, in achieving this designation in 2007. To date, 287 Tennessee teachers have met the National Board Certification requirements which can take between one and three years to complete.

### **Winter Break begins Dec. 24**

Metro Schools will be closed beginning Dec. 24 for the Winter Break. Friday, Dec. 21 is a half-day for grades PK-12. The district's administrative offices will be closed Dec. 24-26 and Jan. 1, 2008. The second semester will begin for students Jan. 8.

### **Memorandum presented by Karen Johnson at the Dec. 11 Board Meeting:**

From: School Board member Karen Johnson

Proposal: Community Task Force for Student Assignment

1 Model Recommendation to consider: Austin Task Force Model

As mentioned to my Board colleagues at our last meeting, I am making a motion to create a Community Task Force for Student Assignment. The mission of this Task Force will be to make recommendations to the Board for a comprehensive student assignment plan for MNPS schools.

The creation and the work of the Task Force would follow these guidelines:

1. Each Board member will appoint one person to the Task Force. In addition, the Schools Director will appoint one committee member; the Mayor will appoint one committee member; and the School Board Chair will appoint one Board member to serve as committee member and chair.
2. The members of the Task Force will participate in an orientation workshop presented by Administration on concepts of capacity and utilization and on demographic information about the district and about the geographic area/s under consideration.
3. The Task Force will be responsible for:
  - A. Reviewing capacity parameters to ensure efficient building utilization.
  - B. Recommending specific proposals for more efficient use of under-utilized facilities.
  - C. Designing student assignment recommendations that meet the needs of the district with as minimal an impact on students as possible.
4. The general sequence of the Task Force's work will be:

- A. Work with MNPS administrators and Metro City departments such as the Planning Commission to develop tentative proposals for any new schools or revised attendance boundaries.
  - B. Involve parents, staff and community members of each affected school to provide feedback and/or suggested modifications to the draft proposal.
  - C. Revise draft proposals based on these comments.
  - D. Co-host a public hearing in cooperation with the School Board to hear comments and/or suggestions from the public on the revised draft proposals.
  - E. Made any necessary revisions to the proposals based on comments and suggestions from the public.
  - F. Present recommendations to the School Board for action.
5. The Task Force will require support from the Administration to:
    - Clarify district-wide needs and interests early in the process.
    - Provide timely and accurate demographic and development data.
    - Ensure effective facilitation of the group process when the Task Force is in session.
    - Provide sufficient support and other resources necessary for the Task Force to implement the process effectively.
  6. The Task Force would be convened as quickly as possible in January 2008 with the goal of recommendations to the School Board in April for the 2009-2010 school year.