



# News

from the MNPS Communications Office

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Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

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## **Maplewood High School Opens New Automotive Training Center in Cooperation with Bridgestone Americas and Firestone Complete Auto Care**

*Center is both a classroom workspace and operational automotive service center*

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** (August 13, 2015) – Today Metro Schools leadership joined Mayor Karl Dean and Bridgestone Americas CEO and President Gary Garfield to cut the ribbon on the new Maplewood High School Automotive Training Center, the latest public-private collaboration to benefit Nashville education. Maplewood High School's Automotive Training Center will give students hands-on experience working with top-of-the-line automotive technology and help them learn the business practices necessary to run a retail store.

"This is a significant moment in the history of Maplewood High School, and we are grateful for the investment in our students," said Interim Director of Schools Chris Henson. "Maplewood and the Academies of Nashville are taking another major step in giving students multiple paths to success after graduation."

"Maplewood High School's Automotive Training Center is another example of how Maplewood continues to generate positive effects on Nashville and its educational system," said Gary Garfield, CEO and President of Bridgestone Americas, Inc. "As a leader in innovation, this training center reflects our commitment to educating the next generation of automotive and retail professionals, using the latest technology, operational procedures and business practices offered in our Firestone Complete Auto Care tire and automotive service centers."

The training center is the heart of the Automotive Technology pathway in the Maplewood Academy of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. It represents a contribution from Bridgestone Americas, which includes volunteer hours, assistance with making the curriculum Automotive Service Excellence- (ASE) certified, retrofitting the customer waiting area and equipment and materials worth more than \$300,000. Metro Schools' construction crews spent the summer building a new customer care center to handle the retail transactions and customer waiting area. The training center, staffed by Maplewood High School students under the guidance of their automotive teacher Twjuana "TJ" Williams, will be open to the public for repair services and tire installation. All revenue generated from service and sales will be reinvested into the program.

While working in the center during class time and after school, students learn specialized knowledge and skills in automotive technology and hear from guest speakers from time to time. The classroom coursework will be directly tied to the repair work they do in the center.

Through dual enrollment at Nashville State Community College or Volunteer State Community College, students will have the opportunity to earn up to three college credits in maintenance and light repair. They can also take the exam for the ASE professional certification, a key step in starting a career or post-secondary education in automotive technology.

“We are focused on long-term positive outcomes for our students, not just short-term gains,” said Henson. “That means looking beyond our school walls and empowering them with the skills and drive to succeed after graduation. We don’t have to choose between preparing students for college or career – we can do both and give all students a choice in where to take their lives next.”

Maplewood executive principal Dr. Ron Woodard has taken that focus to heart, giving students the chance to find their interests and passions while in high school along with the opportunities to pursue them. The graduation rate at Maplewood climbed to more than 82% in 2013-14, the highest it’s ever been, while scholarships topped \$3.3 million. The Bridgestone Americas collaboration is just the latest for the school’s Academies, which have 46 local businesses and nonprofit organizations signed on as official Academy partners.

“Exciting times are on the horizon for our students and our community,” said Dr. Woodard. “As a result of our work with Bridgestone, students will obtain the knowledge and skills that they need in order to compete for higher wage earning positions. This is truly a life-changing opportunity that will foster hope and inspire future generations to succeed.”

Bridgestone’s support of Maplewood was made possible by the PENCIL Foundation, which is the organization charged with connecting business and organizations with schools. With PENCIL’s help, the Academies of Nashville have found more than 300 business partners to support academic pathways with materials, volunteers, job shadowing and more.

“Thank you to Bridgestone and the PENCIL Foundation for making this possible, and thank you to the teachers and leaders at Maplewood,” said Henson. “They have created a culture where this kind of cooperative project is not only possible, it is attractive to global corporations like Bridgestone. This is yet another sign that they are putting students first and are focused on their success.”

### **Metro Nashville Public Schools**

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools is the nation’s 42<sup>nd</sup> largest district, preparing more than 86,000 students to excel in higher education, work and life. With the goal of being the first choice for Nashville’s families, Metro Schools is committed to providing a high quality education to every student. The district is earning a national reputation for urban school reform, its commitment to social and emotional learning and rising academic achievement. Its strategic plan, *Education 2018: Excellence for Every Student*, sets the goal of becoming the nation’s top performing urban school system by 2018. The governing body for Metro Schools is the Metropolitan Nashville Board of Public Education, a nine-member elected body. For more information, visit [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org).

### **Bridgestone Americas**

Nashville, Tenn.-based Bridgestone Americas, Inc. (BSAM) is the U.S. subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, the world’s largest tire and rubber company. BSAM and its subsidiaries develop, manufacture and market a wide range of Bridgestone, Firestone and associate brand tires to address the needs of a broad range of customers, including consumers, automotive and commercial vehicle original equipment manufacturers, and those in the agricultural, forestry and mining industries. The companies are also engaged in retreading operations throughout the Western Hemisphere and produce air springs, roofing materials, and industrial fibers and textiles. The BSAM family of companies

also operates the world's largest chain of automotive tire and service centers. Guided by its One Team, One Planet message, the company is dedicated to achieving a positive environmental impact in all of the communities it calls home.