

Forward**FOCUS**

A News Bulletin For Employees Of Metro Nashville Public Schools

IN THIS ISSUE: EMPLOYEE GIVING UPDATE • PROFFITT UNDERSTANDS IMPORTANT ROLE OF BUILDINGS • BOARD ROOM REFRESH



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Shawn Joseph

Each of us has our own unique talents. Some of us are great at building relationships, some at managing all the pieces that go into large projects. Others can see “what could be” and some of us know how to build the teams to get the work done. It takes all types of talents for an organization to operate successfully and a successful organization recognizes and leverages its members’ unique strengths.

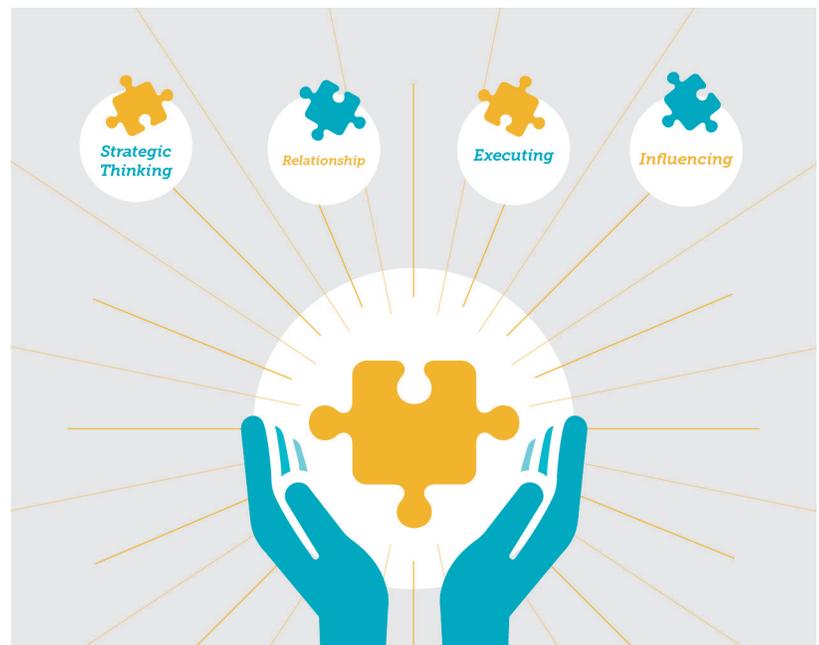
Today, we introduce Gallup StrengthsFinder - which will be one area of focus in the coming months. Gallup has years of research and experience in helping people learn and understand their unique talents and how those talents can be nurtured into strengths that help them be happier and boost their performance.

This self-awareness and understanding of how and why we do the things the way we do will not only help us individually, but in learning our colleagues’ strengths we will work better together as teams and as a district.

The plans for district-wide implementation are still being developed, so watch for additional information. As we roll this out, you will see more and more staff posting their top five talents – their most used tools for tackling and responding to any situation or project. Watch for these talents and use this information to work together with a higher level of understanding and collaboration.

Maximizer • Learner • Relator • Intellection • Harmony

FEATURE STORY



STRENGTHSFINDER™ OFFERS WAY TO LEARN OUR TALENTS, UNDERSTAND OTHERS'

In the coming months, Metro Schools’ employees will notice five words popping up in the signature of more and more of their co-workers’ emails. The words are different or in different order for each person, but their meaning and placement offer an important look at that person and the talents he or she possesses.

Metro Schools will be using the Gallup StrengthsFinder program to help employees identify their

talents and learn how to leverage those talents in their daily actions and interactions to attain goals and desired outcomes. It is important to note that StrengthsFinder is not a tool for hiring or evaluation, nor will it be used to assign tasks, although it should be used by employees to improve their performance.

The work began in August with a team of approximately 70 staff members

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from different departments participating in five days of training to become nationally certified StrengthsFinder coaches. These coaches will be integral to deployment of this program district-wide.

As part of StrengthsFinder, participants answer a series of questions in an online assessment. Their responses are the basis for a strengths profile that is unique to each individual and provides an in-depth analysis and lists their top 5 talents that, if developed, will become strengths. There are 34 different talents possible. Once they have received this report, they will have the opportunity to talk over the results with a coach to help them understand their strengths, how they are already using these strengths in response to different situations and tasks, how they can leverage their strengths for success.

One of the best features of Gallup StrengthsFinder is that it focuses on an individual's strengths and how those strengths can be applied to all areas of life, personally and professionally, to help that person achieve the goals he has set. It does not minimize one strength over another and it helps people to understand how to apply their own unique strength to any project or task. StrengthsFinder was chosen to help improve the culture and climate of the district by helping employees understand themselves, as well as develop an understanding of their co-workers. As employees receive this information, they will be asked to post their top five strengths publicly so others can learn about them. StrengthsFinder, along with the Arbinger Institute work discussed in the book **Leadership & Self Deception** shared in earlier issues of



APPROXIMATELY 70 DISTRICT STAFF RECENTLY COMPLETED FIVE DAYS OF TRAINING TO BECOME CERTIFIED COACHES FOR GALLUP STRENGTHSFINDER. THEY WILL HELP IN THE DISTRICT-WIDE ROLL-OUT OF THIS PROGRAM THROUGHOUT MNPS.

Forward Focus, are two key tools the district will be using for improvement.

It is important to note that StrengthsFinder is not a tool for hiring or evaluation, nor will it be used to assign tasks, although it should be used by employees to improve their performance.

Close to 14.8 million people have used the StrengthsFinder

program to discover what they do best. According to numbers released by Gallup, people who use their strengths every day are six times more likely to be engaged on the job. Teams that focus on their strengths are 12.5% more productive.

Watch for more details and announcements as plans are finalized for a full district roll-out.

PLEASE PARTICIPATE NOW IN 2016 EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN

Metro Schools is in the final two weeks of our 2016 Employee Giving Campaign. We appreciate all the employees who have chosen to participate this year and want to encourage those who have not to please do so. As of printing time for this newsletter, the district still had a long way to go to reach our goal of 50% participation.

Midway through the campaign, 522 employees had logged in to the Giving Campaign website, which translates to 4% participation.

When you give, you are investing in your community to improve conditions and change lives. Your donations benefit the Metropolitan Nashville Education Foundation, Nashville Public Education Foundation, Community Health Charities, Community Shares and the

United Way of Metropolitan Nashville. A donation of any amount makes a difference. Because of your donations last year:

- More children are prepared for kindergarten because of United Way's Read to Succeed program, with a 96% success rate
- 14,500 individuals and families received \$23M in tax credits & refunds using United Way's VITA Free Tax Prep program
- United Way's 2-1-1 Helpline is helping families cover basic needs in crisis situations

If you haven't made a donation, it's not too late! Please consider investing in the community through MNPS Gives today to make a lasting impact. To participate and to make your donation, log on to the secure

site using the information provided below:

<https://donor.unitedeway.org/login.aspx?campaign=mnps16>

Campaign Code: mnps16 (if prompted)

Your UserName: first initial, last name followed by birth date (jdoe10/19/91)

Your Password: same as username

Even if you are not interested in contributing this year, please help us achieve our 50% campaign participation goal by letting us know your wishes. Simply log on, click the "Invest Now" button and choose the last option: "I do not wish to contribute this year." That way, our records will accurately reflect that all employees participated in the campaign in some way.

MIDWAY THROUGH THE 2016 CAMPAIGN:

\$51,576

2016 CAMPAIGN TOTAL



522

TOTAL DONORS

4%

TOTAL MNPS PARTICIPATION

PROFFITT GIVES STUDENTS SAFE AND COMFORTABLE PLACES TO LEARN



Coming from Louisville, a city where David Proffitt spent most of his life, he expected that Nashville would become a new place to work but not necessarily his home. Seven months later, Proffitt is not only managing many projects in as the director of planning and construction at MNPS, but he says that he has never felt so at home in such a short time.

"Nashville has a lot to offer professionally, but also as far as the topography, community and culture," Proffitt said. "On top of that, naturally, I was nervous about leading a new team, but they are better than I ever expected— these are some of the most talented people I have ever worked with."

Proffitt is well-known and highly- praised for his ability to simultaneously lead multiple projects of various capacities. His department handles anything from large construction projects and renovations to building upkeep.

Previously, Proffitt was the senior architect for the University of Louisville, where he handled such a large scope of work that he touched almost every building in the area. His favorite project while with U of L was a state-of-the art student rec. center. He still fondly remembers seeing the students' excitement when they walked into their new building.

"I can construct a building quickly, that is no problem, but these projects require so much more than that; we want to do right by the students, staff and the community to make a building that serves the area and gives students a safe and comfortable place to learn," Proffitt said, "and a fun place—I am big on fun."

Proffitt shares many of Dr. Joseph's same goals as a leader—the sense of urgency, openness and transparency, accountability and overall mindset of "Team MNPS." He knows his department is just one arm of a bigger entity that must collaborate to make tangible solutions and that the work of his team has a direct impact on student success by providing useful learning and working environments.

BOARD ROOM GETS A REFRESH WITH NEW NEW AUDIO, TECHNOLOGY, PODIUM AND BRANDING

The MNPS Central Board Room has been updated to reflect the Metro Schools' breadth and depth of the board's responsibility, the need for better audio, our new logo, and our new color scheme. The new look includes a large painted logo behind the board

member's desk with our new MNPS turquoise color. The technology has also been upgraded to provide attendees with enhanced sound quality and viewing capabilities so that presentations are more easily seen and heard from the back of the room.



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

SEPTEMBER 13, 2016

The board elected Anna Shepherd to serve as chair of the board and Jill Speering as vice-chair.

Dr. Simyka Carlton, Stratford STEM Magnet School Freshman Academy Principal, was honored for receiving the Nashville Emerging Leader Award from the Nashville Chamber of Commerce.

Students from Thomas Edison Elementary performed two original songs, "Think Big" and "We Are Edison." You can view video of both songs on the Metro Schools Facebook page.

Along with contract approvals that can be found on MNPS.org, the board approved the 2017-18 district

calendar. This calendar includes a number of significant changes from previous years, including:

- More instructional time
- More consistency between days off to allow for longer stretches of instructional days
- More convenient and predictable time off for families
- Eliminating the extra day off after the first day of school
- Doing away with intersession
- Not grouping snow make-up days next to Spring Break, which often interrupts family plans
- Additional time before school starts for teachers to set up their classrooms and receive needed professional development

The full district calendar can be found on MNPS.org.



CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 20

Free Flu Shots

2 - 5 p.m.

Hunters Lane High School auditorium

SEPTEMBER 21

Free Flu Shots

2 - 5 p.m.

Hillwood High School library

SEPTEMBER 22

Free Flu Shots

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Board Conference Room

SEPTEMBER 24

School Choice Festival

1 - 4 p.m.

Music City Center

201 5th Ave. S Nashville, TN 37203

SEPTEMBER 24

Hands on Nashville Day

8:30 - 12:30 p.m.

www.hon.org/HONday

SEPTEMBER 26

Free Flu Shots

9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Antioch High School cafeteria

SEPTEMBER 27

Board of Education Meeting

5 p.m.

Central Office Board Room



**METRO NASHVILLE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Exceeding Great Expectations

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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

Scholarships Available for the Literacy Research Association Conference

The Department of Education, in partnership with the Literacy Research Association (LRA), is offering scholarships for 15 Tennessee educators to attend the 2016 LRA conference in Nashville. The theme of the conference is "Mobilizing Literacy Research for Social Transformation." More than 300 sessions will be available.

The LRA conference is Nov. 30–Dec. 3. The scholarship includes the conference registration fee, lodging and per diem. Any educator currently working in a Tennessee K–12 school or district is eligible to apply.

You can learn more about the scholarship and access the application here: <http://bit.ly/2cTPH0u>. Applications are due on Sept. 26 at 8 a.m.

Miss Tennessee 2016 to Visit Una Elementary School

Miss Tennessee 2016, Grace Burgess, will be at Una Elementary School on Thursday, Sept. 29 as a guest speaker for their College & Career Week. Counselors Robin Stewart and Dr. Nancy Lara will be hosting her and MNPS congratulates her for being one of the top 10 finalists in the Miss America competition for 2016-17.

PENCIL Partners-Nashville City Saver

This September, local PENCIL Partners can purchase a Nashville City Saver Membership for \$25 and receive the popular Nashville City Saver smartphone app for FREE. Half of each purchase goes directly to PENCIL. The City Saver App contains thousands of dollars in discounts from local restaurants, attractions and shops.

Ignite: Get Switched On to Technology Session at Lipscomb

Lipscomb's College of Education is hosting Ignite technology sessions on Sept. 24 from 8:30 a.m. - noon. The sessions showcase some of the newest classroom-ready technology tools. You'll learn practical and current technologies taught by local technology experts as well as current-service K-12 teachers.

Featured at Ignite:

20-minute break-out sessions, collaborative work session, door prizes light breakfast, BYOD and networking with other educators.

Register in the events section on Lipscomb.edu.

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW HIRE



LeTrecia

Gloster will be starting as the new executive lead principal for the L5

Innovation Schools on Monday, Sept. 19. Gloster is a native of Prince George's County, MD and attended Bowie State University, where she received her B.S. in Mathematics Education, and Trinity University, where she

earned her master's degree. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in educational leadership as a AACTE Holmes Scholar. She has served in schools as an educator, administrator and most recently as the principal of Drew Freeman Middle School in Maryland where she was a former student. Through Homes' leadership, she organized and established programs that transformed the educational experience for students.