

# Forward**FOCUS**

*A News Bulletin For Employees Of Metro Nashville Public Schools*

IN THIS ISSUE: ANNUAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD • LEADERSHIP HIRES • ALISON MCARTHUR IS KEY TO MNPS



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

*Dr. Shawn Joseph*

*"If you are a leader, you should never forget that everyone needs encouragement. And everyone who receives it – young or old, successful or less-than-successful, unknown or famous – is changed by it." – John C. Maxwell, Author of "Developing the Leader Within You"*

As usual, I had a busy week last week. My vantage point allows me to see all of the great things that are happening, but I am also privy to the "problems" and challenges we face within our district. It can get a bit overwhelming if I don't keep the right mindset. This week, I am appreciative of a friend who reminded me, "Don't focus on your problems, focus on your promise!"

We all need encouragement, even if we think we can manage without help. Stress, adversity, disappointment, failure, fatigue and poor progress all drain encouragement. In these busy, sometimes stressful times, we need to shift our thoughts to the promise tomorrow holds. This year is going to be filled with progress and our momentum will not be stopped!

This week, be intentional about saying an encouraging word to a colleague or a student. To help you to get in the mood, I am including a video link. I know I have an old soul, so there's no need for me to hide it. I'm taking us back to 1975 when Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes (Featuring Teddy Pendergrass) sang "Wake Up Everybody," which calls us to be the change we want to see. I hope it speaks to you! Have a great week.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TDfPgd3Kyc>

## FEATURE STORY



**Whirlpool's Care Counts program washes an average of nearly 50 loads of laundry per participant during the school year in participating districts.**

## PROGRAM TARGETS ABSENTEEISM WITH CLEAN CLOTHES

*By Chris Echegaray*

Three MNPS schools are the only ones in the state participating in the new program Whirlpool's Care Counts, which aims to boost student attendance by giving students and their families access to a washer and dryer. Gra-Mar Middle, Inglewood Elementary and John B. Whitsitt Elementary – all Community Achieves schools – received brand new commercial washers, dryers

and detergent to be used for free by families.

MNPS was invited to participate in this pilot test program to improve attendance, thanks to Community Achieves coordinator Alison McArthur.

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## STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS



Whitsitt Principal Justin Uppinghouse talks to media about the Care Counts program in front of the school's washer and dryer.

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are hopeful that we will see the same," McArthur said. "We are thankful to have partners working hand-in-hand with our schools, focusing on results."

For struggling families, something as ubiquitous as laundry does not seem as important as food and rent, so students nationwide go to school with their confidence waning from repeatedly wearing the same unwashed clothes. Or even worse: they don't attend school, with

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**Alison McArthur**  
**Community Achieves**  
**Coordinator**

absences impacting their grades- all stemming from the embarrassment of not having clean clothes.

"With the addition of the Whirlpool washer and dryer here at Whitsitt, we are expecting to see improvements in our student attendance rate and a boosted level of confidence for our students who may not have the option of wearing a different set of clean clothes each day of the week," Whitsitt Principal Justin Uppinghouse told media. "In receiving the generous donation of these machines," Uppinghouse added, "Whitsitt is able to further support its students in keeping them in a clean set of clothing every day, giving them one less stressor to worry about at an already challenging stage of life."

In its first year, the Care Counts program was piloted in 17 schools, with 90 percent of students in the program showing improvement in their school attendance. The Whirlpool data shows that at-risk participants attended almost two more weeks of school than the previous year. Our three Care Counts pilot schools are already putting their washers and dryers to good use, hoping to follow the program data trends and decrease our own district's chronic absenteeism problem. This partnership with Whirlpool is just one example of the many positive programs that the Student and Family Services department has implemented to make our students' lives more comfortable.

In the past few weeks, Metro Schools has made some important leadership hires. Learn more about their backgrounds and new responsibilities at MNPS.

**DEBORAH STORY** has been named the executive officer of Human Resources and Talent Services. Story comes to Metro Schools from an executive search and HR consulting firm where she served as the president. She has also worked at Saint Thomas Health and for the State of Tennessee as a top human resources executive. As a leader, Story focuses on familiarizing herself with employees at all levels, having an open door and listening to employees' ideas and concerns.

**KENNETH STARK** has been named the executive officer of Operations. Stark comes to Metro Schools from South-Western City Schools where he served as the director of business services. Stark has more than 16 years of experience working in three different school systems overseeing transportation, security, technology and food service operations.

**TAMIKA TASBY, ED.D.** is the new executive director of Professional Development, where she will lead the expansion of strategic professional development initiatives. Throughout her career in education, she has developed programs for students focused on increasing college and career readiness and strategic planning for systemic professional development with a focus on dual enrollment, AP and IB. She has had the opportunity to develop her expertise in roles with Prince George's County Public Schools, Johnson Controls, IBM and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

**JOE VANDERVEEN** has been named the new director of Central Services. In that role he is responsible for inventory, distribution center, textbooks, mail delivery and the print shop. Vanderveen has been with the school system for 40 years as a warehouse staff member, a surplus warehouse manager and was most recently the distribution warehouse manager.

### ADDITIONAL STAFF NEWS

Executive Lead Principal Bill Warren was honored as an American Graduate Champion. American Graduate Champions are community leaders that are chosen by Nashville Public Television (NPT) for their work in helping high school students to graduate.

# EXPLORE BENEFIT OPTIONS DURING METRO'S ANNUAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD

*October 5 is deadline for support staff to make benefit changes for next year*

Annual Enrollment is your once-a-year opportunity to make changes in your insurance plans or to enroll in new benefits, unless you have an eligible change in status during the year. No action is needed if you want your 2017 benefits to remain the same. However, if you are an active employee and want to enroll or re-enroll in an flexible spending account (FSA), you must complete an election form. If you do not submit benefit changes by Oct. 5, your current benefits will continue in 2017, except FSAs. You must re-elect the FSAs every year to keep participating.

Resources are available at [www.Nashville.gov/human-resources](http://www.Nashville.gov/human-resources) for you to review and compare insurance options, instructions on how to enroll online and 2017 employee rates. You can also attend an Ask & Enroll meeting to speak one-on-one with Metro's insurance plan representatives.

## ENROLL IN YOUR PLAN IN ONE OF THE WAYS BELOW:

- **Online:** The employee self-service portal for annual enrollment can be found at <https://essnm.mywts.com:10029/wps/portal>.
- **In Person:** *Ask & Enroll Days: September 19-29*  
Attend an Ask & Enroll session to get your benefits questions answered and talk one-on-one with insurance representatives. Be sure to bring your enclosed Benefit Election Form with you. Metro Human Resources representatives will be on hand to collect your completed form.

### Tuesday, Sept. 27

8 a.m. - 12 p.m. & 2 - 7 p.m.

Metro Police Department West Precinct - Community Room

5500 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209

### Wednesday, Sept. 28

8 - 11 a.m. & 1 - 4 p.m.

Metro Police Department North Precinct - Community Room

2231 26th Avenue North, Nashville 37208

### Thursday, Sept. 29

8 - 11 a.m. & 1 - 4 p.m.

Metro Police Department

Hermitage Precinct - Community Room  
3701 James Kay Lane, Hermitage 37076

- **By Mail:** Metro Human Resources  
P.O. Box 196349  
Nashville, TN 37219



## FINDING SOLUTIONS THROUGH COLLABORATION

*McArthur's work gives students much-needed support*

A few weeks ago in Forward Focus, we spoke about all of the great things on the horizon for social emotional learning, but Metro Schools Student Support Services already has a long track record of strong engagement and student success stories. Right now, Community Achieves, a Metro Schools program to strategically align resources for students, is working with more than 700 partnerships and programs to distribute thousands of food boxes, clothing items, toiletries and household supplies to students and their families.

Among many other projects, Community Achieves is in the midst of Whirlpool's Care Counts program, YWCA partnership programs like Girls Inc. and MEND, and a new program with Extended Learning and Nutrition Services to serve hot meals to students in the evenings.

"Community Achieves is not really a program — it is so much bigger than that. It is an initiative to get everyone working toward the same goal," said Community Achieves Coordinator Alison McArthur, "which is supporting our students in every way we can."

McArthur is an integral part of the Community Achieves team who attended Metro Schools herself and felt at home staying in that

educational environment. She spent 13 years of her career in the classroom and was one of the first academy coaches in the district. While working as an academy coach, she saw more needs brought to the surface as the learning became more personal to the student's life and career goals—and those needs could not be ignored. Transitioning to Community Achieves gave her the chance to address those needs tactfully.

McArthur's favorite part of her role is seeing the program's reach expand and as a result, gain more funding as the community hears about the initiatives. She hopes to form best practices and protocols each year to make an improved Community Achieves model to implement into new schools.

"Each year, we hope to increase the number of students and families served, add more department collaboration and continue to get the word out so families can benefit from these services," said McArthur.

The "stronger together" mentality of Team MNPS is not only for departments and offices of Metro Schools, but is important when connecting businesses and community supports to our schools.



## CALENDAR

### SEPTEMBER 27

Board of Education Meeting  
5 p.m.

Central Office Board Room  
2601 Bransford Ave, Nashville, TN 37204

### SEPTEMBER 27

Free Flu Shots  
2 - 5 p.m.

MNEA Headquarters  
531 Fairground Ct, Nashville, TN 37211

### SEPTEMBER 28

Free Flu Shots  
2 - 5 p.m.

Overton High School cafeteria  
4820 Franklin Rd, Nashville, TN 37220

### SEPTEMBER 29

College Night

TN State Fairgrounds  
500 Wedgewood Ave, Nashville, TN 37203

### SEPTEMBER 30

Last day to participate in the MNPS Employee Giving Campaign. Please indicate even if you are not giving this year.

### OCTOBER 3

Free Flu Shots  
2 - 5 p.m.

MNEA Headquarters  
531 Fairground Ct, Nashville, TN 37211

### OCTOBER 4

Free Flu Shots  
9 a.m. - noon.

Central Office Board Room  
2601 Bransford Ave, Nashville, TN 37204



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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

### Last Chance to Participate in Employee Giving Campaign

The 2016 Employee Giving Campaign is winding down. We currently have 7 percent participation, which is higher than last year but far below our 50 percent goal. Please participate by logging on to the secure site and making a selection either to contribute or not for the 2016 campaign year. Money pledged during this campaign year will begin to be collected with January 2017 paychecks and will be distributed in 2018.

### Middle TN State University Literacy Studies Program

The Middle Tennessee University Literacy Studies Ph.D Program helps teach educators to bridge the gap between scientific research on the development of literacy and educational practice, policy and professional preparation. Courses are available in the evenings and weekends. The priority deadline for application is Feb. 1 for the 2017-2018 academic year. Applications are accepted up until June 1.

For more information, visit:  
[www.mtsu.edu/literacy](http://www.mtsu.edu/literacy) or email  
[Jwa.Kim@mtsu.edu](mailto:Jwa.Kim@mtsu.edu).

### Rose Park Student Named Mayor for a Day from Summer Reading

On Friday, Sept. 16, Mayor Megan Barry visited Rose Park Math & Science Magnet Middle Prep and named sixth grader Zachary Cecil "Student Mayor for a Day." Cecil was one of 180 Rose Park students who participated in a Summer Reading Challenge sponsored by the mayor and Nashville Public Library (NPL). Ten students read for 1,000 or more minutes apiece, each earning entry into a drawing to be student mayor for a day.

### Reminders About Voter Registration

You can register to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, a Davidson County resident and you will be 18 years old on or before Tuesday, Nov. 8. Fill out the Voter Registration Application, print it, sign it and bring it, or mail it by Tuesday, Oct. 11.

If you've moved within the county or changed your name, update your voter registration information. Write your new address on the back of your voter registration card, sign it and mail it to the Election Commission.

Check your voter registration status at [GoVoteTN.com](http://GoVoteTN.com). If you don't find your name, re-register or call the Davidson County Election Commission at 615-862-8800.

### Free Admission Day for NAIA Pow-wow and Fall Festival Event

On Friday Oct. 10, schools can attend the Native American Indian Association (NAIA) Pow-wow and Fall Festival for free. Students will have the opportunity to visit with Native American Indian artists, musicians, storytellers and dancers. Call 615-232-9179 for more information.

**WHEN:** Friday, Oct. 14  
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**WHERE:** Long Hunter State Park  
2910 Hobson Pike  
Hermitage, TN 37076

### Employee Discount for Disney on Ice

Deadline to order discount tickets for Disney on Ice is Oct. 3. Call (866) 248-8740 to order and choose option one. Tickets are \$15 for MNPS staff. Email [jjohnson@feldinc.com](mailto:jjohnson@feldinc.com) with questions.

**WHEN:** Oct. 6-9  
Various times

**WHERE:** Bridgestone Arena

### Nominate a Student for the Prudential Spirit of Community Award

The Prudential Spirit of Community Award honors outstanding young people who have made a difference through volunteering. Students who are in grades 5 - 12 and have participated in a volunteer activity after Sept. 1, 2015 can apply. Applicants must fill out an online form at [spirit.prudential.com](http://spirit.prudential.com) by Nov. 8.