

Forward**FOCUS**

A News Bulletin for Employees of Metro Nashville Public Schools

IN THIS ISSUE: ROUTING STUDENTS • A VETERAN SALUTE • MESSAGING IN FAMILY PORTAL • FORWARD FOCUS FEEDBACK



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Shawn Joseph

*Watch your thoughts; They become words.
Watch your words; They become actions.
Watch your actions; They become habits.
Watch your habits; They become character.
Watch your character; It becomes your destiny.*
– Lao Tzu

I love words. They are powerful. When used correctly, words can be inspiring, encouraging and bring a sense of “Life” into listeners. Conversely, when a speaker demonstrates a lack of discipline with words, the speaker can be hurtful, disrespectful, disparaging and/or destructive.

Exerting discipline over the words we speak is extremely difficult, but it is important. This is especially true when we are multi-tasking, when we are busy or when we are just frustrated for some reason(s). Have you ever sat with someone who complained all of the time, talked negatively about people or always focuses on the bad things that could happen? These are the type of people who make it difficult to “exceed great expectations” because their words lead them and others to uninspired performance.

As we move into this Thanksgiving season, I want you to be thoughtful about the words you are using with your colleagues and with our families. Let’s use the power of our words to show one another kindness, support and care. If you want to see an inspiring video that illustrates how we all can benefit from someone else’s strength, check out this link:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZlXWp6vFdE

FEATURE STORY



COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCING

Metro Schools outlines the next steps for this process

Professional employees* of Metro Schools will have an opportunity to cast their vote as the district hosts a confidential poll for Collaborative Conferencing. This poll comes on the heels of the Metro Nashville Education Association’s (MNEA) recent submission of 1,429 ballots from employees requesting collaborative conferencing.

WHAT IS COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCING?

In 2011, the Tennessee General Assembly passed the Professional

Educators Collaborative Conferencing Act (PECCA), which replaced teachers’ collective bargaining rights with Collaborative Conferencing. Collaborative Conferencing gives professional employees the ability to decide to engage in a series of employee-related issues with the Board of Education and the professional organizations chosen to represent

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them. Collaborative Conferencing is not limited to members of the organizations listed and it includes all professional employees*.

The full definition of Collaborative Conferencing, as stated in T.C.A. 49-5-602, is: "the process by which the chair of a board of education and the board's professional employees... meet at reasonable times to confer, consult and discuss and to exchange information, opinions and proposals on matters relating to the terms and conditions of professional employee service, using the principles and techniques of interest-based collaborative problem-solving."

HOW FAR ALONG IN THE PROCESS ARE WE?

On Oct. 11, MNEA attended the Board of Education meeting with a collection of almost 1,500 ballots from professional employees, which represents roughly 23 percent of our professional employee population. This was the first official step for the district to move forward with Collaborative Conferencing. At the following board meeting on Oct. 25, the Board appointed four people, two

Board Members and two professional employees, to a Special Question Committee in response to MNEA's submission of petition. The Special Question Committee worked to finalize the ballot and outline the polling process for professional employees.

WHAT'S NEXT?

If a majority of eligible voters (professional employees) vote in favor of Collaborative Conferencing, the Board will then create a committee to act as management personnel on behalf of the district and the professional organizations.

The poll will close at 5 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 18. Employees who are eligible to cast a vote will be notified via email and will receive a link to complete the confidential poll.

* T.C.A. 49-5-602 defines professional employees as "any person employed by any local board of education in a position that requires a license issued by the department of education for service in public elementary and secondary schools of this state, supported, in whole or in part, by local, state or federal funds, but shall not include any member of the management team, as defined in this part, or a retired teacher who is employed as a teacher in accordance with title 8, chapter 36, part 8". TCA 49-5-602 and the Collaborative Conferencing confidential poll only applies to professional employees. There is no provision for support employees, bus drivers or maintenance employees as it relates to Collaborative Conferencing.



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THE BUS ROUTING PROCESS EXPLAINED

How you can help execute this process

This year, the Transportation Department is using Tyler's Versatrans Routing & Planning, a mapping and routing program, to create the most efficient bus routes possible. Although this system is efficient, it still takes about three days for a student to receive a final bus route assignment. The best way to ensure a quick process is to enter student information in Infinite Campus (IC) correctly, completely and in a timely manner. The steps to a route are listed below:

GENERAL EDUCATION ROUTE ASSIGNMENT

(Takes approximately three days from enrollment.)

- Student enrollments in IC and record changes (transfers, address updates, etc.) complete by 3 p.m. are pulled into the routing system overnight if this information is present in the IC student record:
 - » Student has an active primary enrollment. (Future enrollment dates

entered in IC don't become active until the date occurs.)

- » Student has a primary household address entered correctly.
- The system will auto assign a bus stop/route for student if a current stop is already designated as an active pick-up location.
- If no bus stop/routing information is available, a new stop will be added and the driver alerted of the addition to their route.

What can parents do until their child is routed? If student data is correctly entered into the system and there is a stop nearby, the child will be automatically placed on a route. The family can use the MNPS Find My Bus application, enter their address to find the closest bus stop and print the stop information to bring to show the driver. The child will be able to ride that bus until the official routing is complete.

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION/SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION ROUTE ASSIGNMENT

(Takes approximately five days from enrollment and transportation ticket request from EXED.)

- After student is enrolled in IC, Exceptional Education receives Individualized Education Plan (IEP) based special transportation needs and creates a Transportation order with those accommodations.
- Transportation reviews request and determines suitable route assignment for student.
- Transportation prints updated rosters for signature by authorized drivers and monitors during roster pick up.
- Driver and monitor make contact with student's parent/guardian to provide a specific pickup and drop off time within 24 hours of receiving route updates.



Major Wayne Stiles, JROTC teacher at Hunters Lane High School

SERVING OUR COUNTRY AND OUR STUDENTS

Before Major Wayne Stiles was a JROTC teacher at Hunters Lane High School, he was in the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Armed Forces for more than 20 years. Stiles was stationed across the globe in Korea, Hawaii, Alaska and Iraq where he led large groups of American and foreign soldiers and oversaw logistics. For Stiles, the armed forces was the right choice for him, but as a JROTC instructor he helps students find their own passion—whether it is the military, college or a trade school. JROTC programs teach leadership and citizenship—characteristics that are important for any life path.

“I try to teach students things that will benefit any career like logistics, time management and a process for learning,” Stiles said. “Concrete skills like note taking were key for me in school.”

Stiles himself admits that he wasn’t the best student until college. In fact, he chose to serve in the military before pursuing a degree. The military discipline he developed during those years, as well as the lessons learned from his Lieutenant, helped Stiles’ develop his focus and drive. He taught Stiles to work hard for everything, including their shared hobby of boxing. This is where Stiles first learned the result of lacking focus and work ethic—in this case the consequence was a knockout. Stiles wants students to learn this same lesson, by encouraging them to be thoughtful about what it takes to reach a goal and to recognize the consequences if they don’t put in the work.

“I not only ask what their goals are, but for them to list the steps they plan to get there,” said Stiles. “Then I do whatever I can to help them achieve it.”

In addition to being a veteran, teacher and father of four, Stiles is a dedicated boxer, lacrosse player, hunter and archer. This summer he will represent Tennessee in the Sr. Olympics in archery. Stiles’ variety of experiences and specialties taught him focus, confidence and dedication which he now shares with his students.

INFINITE CAMPUS: THE MESSAGE CENTER

As you already know, *Family Portal*, the parent-facing piece of *Infinite Campus*, goes live for all Metro families in January 2017. Over the next few months, we will be sharing different ways for teachers and staff to capitalize on and expand upon their current *Infinite Campus* and *Family Portal* knowledge and skills. Starting in January, the frequency of family conversations around school work, attendance, and more will start to increase simply because of the visibility parents will have into their child’s education. This dialogue is an important step forward in family engagement at the school level. Teachers and staff can best prepare for and facilitate these conversations with a little bit of preparation and practice now to help play a part in a smooth transition in January.

Teachers will be able to communicate both with families and with students using the Message Center in *Infinite Campus*. This will give teachers and families the ability to have immediate conversations about a student’s classwork.

For teachers, it’s important to understand how you can use messages to increase productivity and engagement in your classroom.

- The Message Center is easy to use. Teachers can set up templates for messages that are repeated often and *Infinite Campus* already provides templates for three categories: missing assignment, grades and attendance.
- Families cannot enjoy all of the benefits the Message Center offers if they do not activate their *Family Portal* profile during the launch week in January. As a reminder, a unique code will be mailed to families’ homes. They will use this code to activate their *Family Portal* profile for all of their students enrolled in the district.

WITH STUDENTS

Teachers can use the Message Center to communicate with students about any classroom information. Teachers can easily message all students, a group of students, or one student.

WITH FAMILIES

Teachers can use the Message Center to communicate with families about classroom information, like events, or student progress— including missing assignments and student achievements. Teachers can send a message to a families’ *Family Portal* inbox, their personal email address, or both. Additionally, they can communicate with all families with one message or with targeted messages to certain groups, like the volunteers for a classroom event.

Parents can communicate with teachers by replying back to a *Family Portal* message that has been sent via email. Parents will need to register their email address to reply to messages. Parents cannot send messages directly from *Family Portal*; they are facilitated through email.

FORWARD FOCUS FEEDBACK



Please take a minute to provide feedback on the implementation of *Forward Focus*. We want to ensure that this weekly publication keeps you informed about district happenings and is delivered in a way that is beneficial to you. Your input is valuable to us and will be used to plan for the future.

» Take the survey here: www.surveymonkey.com/r/ForwardFocus1

OF NOTE: There will not be a *Forward Focus* distributed November 22. The next *Forward Focus*, a special edition covering Dr. Joseph’s 100 Day Update, will be distributed on November 29.



CALENDAR

NOW–DECEMBER 15

Register for MNPS Family Engagement University
Event on Jan. 4
Register here: <http://bit.ly/2dPgnhq> or email Marianne.Beebe@mnps.org

NOVEMBER 16

Progress reports issued

NOVEMBER 17

PENCIL Foundation's Principal for a Day
Start of school—11 a.m.

NOVEMBER 19

John Lewis Public Lecture for Nashville Reads
10 a.m.
Marthin Luther King, Jr. Magnet School
613 17th Ave. N, Nashville, TN 37203

NOVEMBER 22

Board of Education Meeting
5 p.m.
Central Office Board Room
2601 Bransford Ave, Nashville, TN 3720

NOVEMBER 23-25

Thanksgiving Holidays
(Nov. 24-25 for 12-month employees)

NOVEMBER 29

Board of Education Meeting
Dr. Joseph's 100 Day Overview
5 p.m.
Central Office Board Room
2601 Bransford Ave, Nashville, TN 37204

NOVEMBER 30

Close of certificated staff annual enrollment



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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

Nomination Window Open for Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching program has opened the nomination and application window for 2016-17. Established by Congress, this is the highest recognition that a mathematics or science teacher may receive for outstanding teaching in the U.S. National winners receive recognition from the President and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation. Directors, supervisors and school administrators can submit nominations for middle school and high school teachers (7-12) at www.paemst.org. Educators are also eligible to nominate themselves.

Guidance to Educators Available on Integrated Items

The Department of Education has posted samples of integrated items in mathematics for a few grade levels and sample writing items for social studies in grades 5–8. The examples showcase how these item types will appear in TNReady during the April/May administration window. Find resources at www.tn.gov.

School Psychology Awareness Week is Nov. 14 – 18

School Psychology Awareness Week (SPAW) is Nov. 14-18. The theme is *Small Steps Change Lives*, and is focused on how taking small steps can build greater successes and help develop the academic and social-emotional skills students need to promote personal achievement, growth and resilience, as well as a sense of belonging and wellbeing. Learn more at www.nasponline.org.

Apply to be a CMA Music Teacher of Excellence

CMA Music Teachers of Excellence is part of an effort to support quality teaching in music education in Metro Schools. The award will recognize up to 20 music teachers with a cash award of \$2,500. All MNPS music teachers with a score of 3+ on the 2015-16 Tennessee Fine Arts Growth Model portfolio evaluation are eligible to apply.

Applications must be submitted electronically by Dec. 16, at 5 p.m. A completed application will include an informational profile, three narrative responses and one video (maximum length of 15 minutes). The intent of the video is to showcase your teaching excellence with one or more students in an instructional setting (not a performance setting). Apply here: <http://bit.ly/2ejwoOf>

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

AWARDS & HONORS

Cynthia Minnis, MNPS school psychologist, was awarded the 2016 Beth Stokes Memorial TN School Psychologist of the Year Award by the Tennessee Association of School Psychologists (TASP).

Billy Fellman, Principal of The Academy at Hickory Hollow, is the Simon Youth Foundation National Principal of The Year. Simon Youth Foundation, a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit, exists to help at-risk students who are on the verge of dropping out of high school stay in school.

Gary Appenfelder, Director of Purchasing, has been nominated to be a member of the BuyBoard National Board of Directors. BuyBoard is a program of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) developed to comply with state laws which require governmental entities to make purchases from an approved list of vendors who have gone through a competitive procurement process.

Have a staff recognition or In Memoriam to share with others in the district? Please submit to <http://bit.ly/2acUpTv>.