

# Forward **FOCUS**

*A News Bulletin for Employees of Metro Nashville Public Schools*

IN THIS ISSUE: GOV. HASLAM'S K-12 PROPOSALS • NUTRITION SERVICES SPOTLIGHT • FREE TAX PREP



## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

*Dr. Shawn Joseph*

Tuesday (Feb. 7), Dr. Betty Morgan and Mr. David Williams presented MNPS with a transition report. The report was produced working with 47 local, state, and national leaders. The charge of the group was to help me understand the complexity of our school system and offer short-term and long-term recommendations to guide our school district's work moving forward.

As a result of their efforts, more than 100 recommendations were made in the areas of student achievement, school choice, community/parent engagement, and human resources. Please take time to review this report. The report highlights a number of strengths within MNPS, but it also creates a sense of urgency for us as we think about areas of improvement within the four identified areas researched by the committee.

We are working to be transparent with you and the community about the complexity of this work, so you can understand why changes will occur in the coming months. The board of education and I will complete the next big task on February 14 when we begin discussing system-wide key performance indicators to monitor the school system. The key performance indicators that are identified will have an impact on what happens in schools and offices across the district. You can anticipate that we will re-align offices and resources to ensure that we make progress on all key performance indicators that are identified. As we move through this semester, it will be important for us to begin looking at some of our policies that directly affect the key performance indicators that we identify.

## FEATURE STORY



## TRANSITION TEAM RELEASES THEIR FULL REPORT

*Report provides guidance and actions for the strategic plan*

One of the first steps Dr. Joseph took after arriving in Nashville was naming the members of his Transition Team. Dr. Joseph charged the accomplished 47-member team, consisting of local community members and national experts, with researching the district, uncovering challenges and creating both short- and long-term recommendations for key issues that confront Metro Nashville Public Schools.

To narrow their focus, Dr. Joseph created four subcommittees based on specific areas of need within the district.

**1. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT** - Focus on the instructional program, determine how well the school system is meeting academic goals and identify ways in which its vision could be better achieved.

**2. SCHOOL CHOICE** - Review the availability of school choice and the processes, policies, and systems that support the school choice selection, and recommend strategies to ensure school choice is equitable, accessible, and in support of the needs of diverse students and families.

*continued on page 2*

continued from page 1

### 3. COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY

**ENGAGEMENT** - Assess the district's strategic communications plan, including the communications office organization and functions, as well as needed resources.

### 4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND TALENT

**MANAGEMENT** - Assess the systems and processes for recruiting, hiring, onboarding, supporting, and evaluating employees and make recommendations on how the district can recruit and retain the best and the brightest educators and support staff.

After researching documents, data, presentations, interviews and other feedback, these four subcommittees released their recommendations for strengths, opportunities, and challenges found within their respective area of focus. These recommendations will help Dr. Joseph and the district's leadership team begin to organize the many priorities of the district and outline a strategy to bring to implement these recommendations. Each committee outlined four priorities within their topic.



#### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- A. Academic priorities and goals
- B. Instructional tools and instructional coherence
- C. Professional development
- D. Assessments and data



#### SCHOOL CHOICE

- A. Choice programs
- B. Diversity
- C. Transportation
- D. Marketing, outreach, recruitment in the school choice process



#### COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- A. Communication of Vision
- B. Customer service culture
- C. Parent and family engagement
- D. Organizational structure



#### HUMAN RESOURCES AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

- A. Processes
- B. Customer service
- C. High quality staff
- D. Performance management

Even though these four subcommittees operated and completed their work separately from the other committees, undeniable themes about the district emerged from each committee's research.

- The strength and of the people and the community to do the work.
- The benefit of diversity and the challenge of achieving equity.
- The need for clear district vision and unity of direction.
- The establishment of clear structures and processes to guide the system's work.

Although the Transition Team's work is now done, a new phase of work has just begun. Dr. Joseph will use the information presented to him in this report to continue to outline the district's new strategic plan.

The Transition Team Report can be reviewed in its entirety here: <https://mnps.org/transition-team>

## GOV. HASLAM ANNOUNCES NEW EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

*The governor proposed a variety of new educational initiatives during his State of the State address*

On Monday, Jan. 30, Governor Haslam addressed the Tennessee General Assembly for his annual State of the State address. His address included a number of proposals for lawmakers to consider, including many K-12 education initiatives. Gov. Haslam proposed to invest approximately \$250 million in education, including in these areas:

- **TEACHER SALARIES** – the governor proposed a significant investment in teacher compensation to a total of just over \$100 million.
- **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS** – a proposal of an additional \$22.2 million to give districts additional assistance for English Learners.
- **ADDITIONAL BEP INVESTMENTS** – the next fiscal year's budget allocates just over \$59 million for BEP enrollment growth and \$18 million for current year enrollment growth.
- **CAREER & TECHNICAL PROGRAMS** – to ensure students graduate ready for

careers in today's workforce, \$15 million would be allocated to empower districts to purchase necessary equipment for CTE curriculum.

- **READ TO BE READY** – the state's Read to be Ready initiative aims to build foundational reading skills. Gov. Haslam has proposed a \$4.5 million investment in the second year of this program.

Gov. Haslam's budget requested funding for additional educational investments. You can watch the State of the State address or read the full transcript here: <http://tn.gov/governor/topic/state-of-the-state>

The governor also announced a new commitment to post-secondary education with the Tennessee Reconnect initiative. Much like the Tennessee Promise program, Tennessee Reconnect will provide scholarships for adults who never received a college degree to attend a Tennessee community college free of charge. With this initiative, Tennessee



would be the first state in the national to offer all citizens access to a degree or certificate.

These topics, and others addressed in the State of the State, will be introduced to the legislative body during the upcoming legislative season.

## 28 YEARS OF SERVING OUR STUDENTS

### Shane Sees Positive Changes in MNPS Cafes



Pamela Shane

A lot has changed in school cafes since Pamela Shane first started at MNPS in 1989. She no longer has to make hamburger buns from scratch each morning, or keep track of students via paper, but she still has the same passion for feeding children—especially

those in need. Shane is the food service manager for Lillard and Alex Green Elementary Schools, and has shown incredible dedication and leadership at MNPS for more than 25 years.

“Ms. Shane is always willing to help others and recognizes the importance of all students receiving quality meals,” Dr. Braina Corke, the assistant director of Nutrition Services said.

Soon, Shane plans to retire and take well-deserved time off to be with her family, including her five grandchildren. Those days will be filled with visits to national parks, fast-pitch softball and maybe a few drag races. For now, she continues to lead her kitchen staff to serve MNPS to their best abilities. Although Shane has strong management skills herself, she praises the leadership of Dr. Corke, and the other nutrition administrators.

“Dr. Corke sees that we get the things we need—usually finding out because she is so involved in the schools that she sees what is needed herself,” Shane said. “We are all so appreciative of the support of the central nutrition services team.”

Shane’s favorite part of her job are the programs that give children access to fresh produce and hot meals even if they cannot afford to pay. Two of those programs are the Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program, a grant that provides access to nutritious meals in schools through fresh produce, and the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) which among other benefits, (explained in the story to the right) provides breakfast to children in their classrooms every morning.

“We no longer have to see children struggle to pay for their meals—we have never turned a child away from a meal even if they don’t have the money,” Shane said. “That is the most rewarding part of my job.”

Shane reminds her staff daily that this is their purpose—feeding all children so they can be focused on their school work. To do this she encourages them to work together, get along and to never put out food they wouldn’t eat themselves. The focus remains on quality and teamwork in Shane’s kitchen.

## PROGRAMS TO KEEP OUR STUDENTS FULL AND FOCUSED

More than 70 percent of Metro School students qualify for free or reduced meals, but because of nutritional programs introduced in the past few years, free meals now reach all of our students no matter their families’ income and provide a new variety of nutritional options. One of these programs is the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program, a program that is currently up for re-application by elementary school principals and nutrition managers (<http://bit.ly/2kxDi19>). Funds are granted ranging from \$8,000 to \$45,000 per school and are used to prepare, purchase and distribute fresh fruits and vegetables at no charge to the students. Along with keeping students healthy and full during the day, it also gives them the opportunity to taste new foods that they may not get to try at home.

With the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), students in Metro Schools have access to a nutritious breakfast and lunch at no cost. The CEP came out of the 2010 federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act and reimburses the district for nearly 100% of the cost of providing school meals to all students. As a result,

more students are able to take advantage of the healthy meals available at schools. This has an effect on academic achievement, student discipline and school culture. There are no income requirements and there is no application needed to take part in this program. It alleviates the burden on families by eliminating household applications, while helping schools reduce costs associated with collecting and processing those applications.

This year, the after-school supper program has also expanded to provide additional wrap-around services to MNPS students. Dinner is made possible through the district’s participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Child and Adult Care Food program. Dinner is served to students at participating schools who are enrolled in the applicable after-school programs immediately upon school dismissal. The meals served are approved by the USDA, which requires a dairy item, protein, fruit and a vegetable. With these programs, MNPS gives our children access to healthy foods and an increased focus on learning.



Churchwell Elementary



## CALENDAR

### FEBRUARY 7

Special Board of Education Meeting:  
Transition Team Findings  
5 p.m.

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

### FEBRUARY 10

Conference on African American  
History and Culture  
<http://bit.ly/2kpIQdS>  
5 p.m.

Tennessee State University  
Downtown Campus  
330 Tenth Ave North, Nashville, TN 37203

### FEBRUARY 10

School Choice Selection Day

### FEBRUARY 11

TWISTER Conference  
[www.adventuresci.org/twister](http://www.adventuresci.org/twister)  
8 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Adventure Science Center  
800 Fort Negley Blvd, Nashville, TN 37203

### FEBRUARY 18

Bringing Justice to You Forum  
9 a.m. - noon

Margaret Allen Middle Prep  
500 Spence Ln, Nashville, TN 37210  
(This event required pre-registration)

### FEBRUARY 20

President's Day  
Students do not report, teachers report  
for professional development.



METRO NASHVILLE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Exceeding Great Expectations

2601 Bransford Ave • Nashville, TN 37204  
615-259-INFO (4636) • [WWW.MNPS.ORG](http://WWW.MNPS.ORG)

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](mailto:communications@mnps.org).



## NEWS BRIEFS

### Free Tax Prep with United Way VITA Program

United Way is now offering their  
annual free tax prep program,  
VITA. Households that earned less  
than \$64,000 in 2016 are eligible to  
participate. You can use the free do-  
it-yourself tax preparation software  
at [www.unitedwayfilefree.com](http://www.unitedwayfilefree.com), or  
visit a VITA walk-in or appointment  
site where volunteers will  
prepare your return for you.  
Find a VITA location here:  
<http://bit.ly/2kx8WPO>

### ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Math and Science Scholarships

Named for the first African  
American to walk in space,  
ExxonMobil Bernard Harris Math  
and Science Scholarships are  
available to 2017 graduating high  
school seniors.

Four scholarships for two males  
and two females - \$5,000 each  
- will be awarded to two African  
American and two Hispanic  
students on behalf of the former  
NASA astronaut, physician and  
businessman, Dr. Bernard Harris.  
Deadline for submissions is April  
10. Students may apply to the  
scholarship online. Learn more:  
<http://www.cgcs.org/domain/19>

### Shared Reading Video Resources are Available

Last semester, shared reading  
video resources were filmed at Cole  
Elementary School for the state  
education website. Those videos are  
now live on [tn.gov/readtobeready](http://tn.gov/readtobeready)  
website located under the shared  
reading section for public use.

Watch the shared reading videos here  
<http://tn.gov/readtobeready>.

### Clarification about Retirement Info Last Week

The information in the Forward  
Focus titled, "Planning to Retire  
Soon?" from last week is concerning  
certificated employees only.

#### FOR SUPPORT EMPLOYEES:

- Questions about sick leave  
payout at retirement contact:  
[Catina.Beaird@mnps.org](mailto:Catina.Beaird@mnps.org)  
if last name begins with A – Gi  
[Donna.Gosnell@mnps.org](mailto:Donna.Gosnell@mnps.org)  
if last name begins with Gj – O  
[Ashley.Blake@mnps.org](mailto:Ashley.Blake@mnps.org)  
if last name begins with P - Z
- Any other retirement questions  
please refer to the MNPS.org website  
under Current employees (bottom  
of page)>Employees Handbook>  
Support Benefits Handbook2016>  
Page 28 or contact 615-862-6700.

## THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR MNPS SCHOOL COUNSELORS

National School Counseling Week, Feb. 6-10

## STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MNPS EDUCATORS PRESENT AT NATIONAL MUSIC CONFERENCE

Nola Jones, coordinator of visual  
and performing arts, and Laurie  
Schell, director of Music Makes  
Us, recently traveled to Los  
Angeles to present at the National  
Association of Music Merchants.  
NAMM is a global music products  
trade association and the annual  
NAMM Show attracts almost  
100,000 people from the music  
industry. As part of the trade  
show, NAMM partners with Conn  
Selmer, a manufacturer of music  
instruments, to facilitate a Music  
Administrative Coalition where  
Jones presented a session on

"Current Issues in Music Education  
Leadership" to arts administrators  
from across the country.

Schell presented the Music  
Makes Us model in two coalition-  
building sessions, each interested  
in building local and statewide  
coalitions to advance music  
education. Additional activities  
included an interview for NAMM's  
Talking Up Education Podcast  
and meeting with national  
thought leaders on the status and  
opportunities for music education  
within the new ESSA Framework  
and the current political climate.