



News

from the MNPS Public Information Office

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

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Speakers Needed for MNPS Academies

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (Jan. 8, 2008) – Twelve of Metro Nashville’s public high schools -- currently involved in the high school redesign into Smaller Learning Communities -- are opening their doors to area business men and women who would like to share their industry knowledge and expertise with high school students.

A new online Speakers Bureau, www.schoolvolunteers.org, has been created to help MNPS teachers recruit qualified professionals willing to share career advice and industry insight with students. The Speakers Bureau, coordinated by PENCIL Foundation and funded through Alignment Nashville, will play a major role in engaging the Nashville business community in the district’s Career Academies. Through the website, teachers can search a database of professionals willing to address a classroom, while professionals can search a database of classroom speaking needs.

“The Speakers Bureau is an excellent opportunity for schools and businesses and provides a win-win situation,” said Starr Herrman, MNPS Director of Smaller Learning Communities. “Students and teachers receive interesting and relevant information regarding careers and what is needed to be successful in those careers, including educational requirements and the skills that are most valuable to the 21st Century workforce.”

The purpose is two-fold: to provide relevant and meaningful information to students as they begin learning about various careers through the Academies and to allow the business community a chance to help educate and shape Nashville’s future business leaders. Speaking topics include engineering, arts, communications, real estate, law, management, business technology, construction, diversity skills, resume writing, and much more. The district hopes the Speakers Bureau will help nurture a strong partnership between the Nashville business community and the school system, paving the way for internship and job shadowing opportunities for upper-level Career Academy students, externships for teachers, industry certifications for students, project-based learning, and other forms of business community support.

According to Herrman, “The Speakers Bureau will allow students the opportunity to explore many career paths and speak directly to professionals in those careers. This should help students make better decisions regarding the academies they choose in high school and the careers they plan to prepare for in post secondary education.”

Career Academies, along with Thematic Academies and Freshman Academies, are currently being phased in to all 12 comprehensive high schools under a district-wide redesign initiative based on Smaller Learning Communities. Academies offer students a chance to study traditional high school curriculum in the context of a particular career, get relevant, hands-on instruction, and build closer relationships with teachers. Academies are designed to benefit all students -- those who will pursue a higher education after high school and those who will go straight into the workforce.

Strong support from the business community is critical for the success of Career Academies. MNPS, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, Alignment Nashville, PENCIL Foundation, and various Nashville business professionals have spent the last year working to organize a successful model for business engagement within the Career Academies. In addition to the Speakers Bureau, six industry partnership councils -- Arts, Media & Communications; Business, Marketing & Information Technology; Engineering, Manufacturing & Industrial Technology; Health; Hospitality & Tourism; and Human & Public Services -- have begun meeting to align business resources and needs with the district’s Career Academies. For more information about the redesign, visit <http://www.mnps.org/Page21671.aspx>.

Businesses or professionals interested in supporting MNPS Career Academies should contact PENCIL Foundation at (615) 242-3167 or visit www.schoolvolunteers.org.

Metro Nashville Public Schools provide a range of educational opportunities to more than 75,000 students in Nashville and Davidson County. The governing body for MNPS is the Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County Board of Public Education, a nine-member group elected by residents of Metropolitan Nashville. For more information, please visit www.mnps.org.

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