

# Parent Pulse

St. Louis Public Schools



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*Parent Pulse* is a publication of the Office of Public Information. If you have questions, please contact Julie Linder at Julie.Linder@slps.org.

## HONORING EDUCATORS

For the 2009-2010 School Year, the St. Louis Public Schools District is pleased to name **Emily Masengale**, a tenth grade World Literature and World History teacher from Big Picture High School at Kottmeyer, as SLPS' Teacher of the Year.

A former Teach for America: St. Louis Corps member, Masengale's eyes were opened to the academic needs of students in urban school districts.

Since that time she has dedicated her career to ensuring that her students meet her high academic expectations.



*(Pictured above: Masengale, center, with her family.)*

During her reign Masengale will serve as a role model for students and teachers alike across the District, and is now eligible for the state's Teacher of the Year honor.

Also recognized for outstanding contributions are:

**Jamie Timmons**, a kindergarten teacher from Oak Hill eMINTS Academy, who earned the Gertrude Faust Potthoff Kindergarten

Teacher of the Year Award.

*(Pictured right: Left to Right, Jamie Timmons, Adelaide M. Schlafly, Sandy Haley, and Jane O'Donnell)*

**Sandy Haley** from Meda P. Washington Parents As Teachers Center as the Adelaide M. Schlafly Parents as Teachers Parent Educator of the Year.

**Jane O'Donnell** from Ames VPA Academy was named the Adelaide M. Schlafly Preschool Teacher of the Year.



**Fendler** of Carr Lane VPA School as the Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year, and **Zana Ware** of Northwest Academy of Law is the 2009 High School Physical Education Teacher of the Year.

*(Pictured below: Bottom Left to Right, Zana Ware, Mathew Fendler, and Tyler Harris. Top Left to Right, Jason Brown [professional Rams football player], Leanne White [SLPS Physical Education Supervisor], and Michael Yarbrough [Rams Director, Community Outreach and Youth Football Programs])*

**Tyler Harris** from Cole Elementary as the Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year, **Mathew**



# HELPFUL HOMEWORK TIPS FOR PARENTS

Research shows that parents involved in a child's learning provide numerous benefits inside and outside the classroom.

One benefit gained by helping children with homework is fostering a parent and child relationship. If education is of value to a parent then it will be of value to a student. In addition, with homework support by a parent, students are able comprehend lessons faster and with greater ease.

Helping a child with homework can improve communications with the school. It can clarify for parents what is expected of students, and give a firsthand idea of what students are learning and how well their child is doing in school.

With that in mind, the St. Louis Public Schools is pleased to offer homework tips for parents to support students during the 2009-2010 school year:

**Make sure your child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.**

Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.

**Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary, are available.** Ask your child if special materials will be needed



for some projects and get them in advance.

**Help your child with time management.** Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.

**Be positive about homework.** Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.



**When your child does homework, you do homework.** Show your child that the skills they are learning are related to things you do as an adult. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.

**When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.** Giving answers means your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him or her.



**When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it.** Cooperate with the teacher. It shows your child that the school and home are a team. Follow the directions given by the teacher.

**If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away.**

Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.

**Stay informed.** Talk with your child's teacher. Make sure you know the purpose of homework and what your child's class rules are.

**Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework.** Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material

will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.

**Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration.** Let your child take a short break if she is having trouble keeping her mind on an assignment.

**Reward progress in homework.** If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that success with a special event (e.g., pizza, a walk, a trip to the park) to reinforce the positive effort.

*Works Cited: The US Department of Education*

## Chess Enhances Student Abilities through Strategic Play



Max Euwe once said of chess, "Strategy requires thought. Tactics require observation." These simple words have a profound impact when it comes to the academic benefits of the game.

Currently there are fourteen elementary schools, six middle schools, and four high schools with chess clubs in the District.

Of the fourteen schools who participate at the elementary level, 10 are part of the First Move program. The First Move program was created

by the America's Foundation for Chess, and aims to help 2nd and 3rd grade teachers utilize chess as a learning tool for their students by mapping to state standards for education.

At Dunbar Elementary, the chess program is open to all students third thru sixth grade, with the top 15 students earning spots on the school's chess team. The students practice every morning before breakfast and during recess, not because it is mandatory, but because the students love to play.

During the 2008-2009 school year, Dunbar's chess team earned notoriety across the District after defeating both Sumner and Roosevelt high schools in head to head matches. Dunbar's Chess Coach, Kevin Hamilton, stated, "I started a chess team at Dunbar during the 2003/2004 school year. That school

year we lost more than we won, which was an educational and character building experience for us. Since that time Dunbar hasn't lost a tournament and recorded several lopsided victories over every opponent it faced. Two of Dunbar's players haven't lost a single match in three years."

Another school, Mark Twain E-mints Elementary, took home the second place team trophy from the Red Rook Chess Tournament held on the campus of Washington University. Students from public and private schools across the region played two matches each week for seven weeks.

All students in the elementary, middle and high school levels receive support from Linda Bell, AVID Coordinator, who arranges tournaments between schools as well as promote opportunities for competition outside of the District. A self-described "chess cheerleader," Bell states, "I love how chess helps children focus and think about consequences. Chess also teaches the importance of sportsmanship and the value of ethics."

## SLPS Students Shine On Fox Theatre Stage

From a soulful rendition of "Back In The Habit" to a toe-tapping performance of "Puttin' On The Ritz," SLPS students were shining brightly on the stage of the Fabulous Fox Theatre as part of the 7th Annual St. Louis Performing Arts Night held May 7.



Singers, dancers and musicians from Soldan, Central VPA, Metro, Cleveland, Carr Lane VPA, Ames VPA and Shaw VPA participated in glitzy stage presentations.

## NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE NAMES METRO TOP MISSOURI PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

The St. Louis Public Schools is pleased to announce Metro Academic and Classical High School as the only school in the state of Missouri to make the top 100 list in Newsweek Magazine's annual ranking of the top public high schools in the United States.

Up 26 spots from Newsweek's rankings in 2008, Metro Academic and Classical High School serves as a college preparatory school that admits students based on the merits of academic performance. Course offerings include the coveted International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma, a variety of Advanced Placement courses, SAT and ACT preparation, and a rigorous curriculum to challenge the advanced academic minds of students.

"In my 16 years of education, Metro has continued to provide a high quality and consistent style of instruction that remains unsurpassed," said Paula Knight, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for St. Louis Public Schools. "Metro's educators set high expectations of its students which has allowed the school to attract a diverse group of students that represents not only the city's superior students, but the county's advanced student population as well," added Knight.

Since its inception in 1971 as an alternative high school with selected enrollment, Metro has continued to provide high quality instruction for its diverse group of students. Metro's students persist to a 100% commencement rate, marking the road to graduation with top scores on district and state tests. Metro is home to numerous National Merit and National Achievement finalists, averaging two to four finalists yearly. Competitively high ACT and SAT scores produce mean scores exceeding both state and national means.

Missouri placed 13 schools on the magazine's list. Other high schools in the St. Louis region making the list are Ladue Horton Watkins (256), Clayton (368), Lafayette (552), Marquette (691), Lindbergh (697), Rockwood Summit (984) and Parkway West (1426).

## DISTRICT EXPANDS MENTOR PROGRAM WITH BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS



The St. Louis Public Schools and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO) have agreed to expand the BBBS mentor program operating in district schools, allowing more students to participate.

Currently, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri serves more than 800 children attending district schools. Children, ages 5 through 17, are matched with mentors in professionally supported one-to-one relationships that have a direct and measurable positive impact on student academic performance, behavior and attendance.

The Special Administrative Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding with BBBSEMO to double student participation in the next three years and measure the program's effectiveness through BBBSEMO's ABC Education Initiative.

The ABC Education Initiative focuses on strong mentor relationships that lead to improved attendance, behavior and classroom success of each student by:

- Tracking absences and tardies of participating students
- Monitoring discipline referrals
- Evaluating reading and math grades
- And annually reviewing matches and the program to adjust support and services

To ensure program accountability, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri will work with families/guardians and school staff regularly to assess a student's progress and needs. BBBSEMO will also report successes, challenges, and opportunities within the partnership to the district on a quarterly basis.

## SLPS SUPPORT NUMBERS

Weather Emergency Hotline: 314.345.2466

Events Hotline: 314.345.INFO (4636)

School Safety Anonymous Tips Hotline: 314.345.SLPS (7577)

Transportation Support Number: 314.633.5100

Recruitment and Counseling Number: 314.633.5200

For the most up-to-date information:

[www.slps.org](http://www.slps.org)

