

# Parent Pulse

St. Louis Public Schools



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*Parent Pulse* is a newsletter designed to keep parents of the St. Louis Public School District informed about news and events associated with their school system. This publication is produced at no cost to the district or taxpayers. The advertising contained in the *Parent Pulse* envelope offsets the cost of producing and distributing the newsletter. The district does not endorse any of the companies whose ads appear with this publication.

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

## Students Relive Inaugural Experiences



With the first African-American man taking the reins as our nation's commander in Chief, SLPS celebrated history in the making by following several students who had the privilege to witness the Inauguration firsthand.

Four students from Cleveland NJROTC

attended the swearing in ceremony and were "called into action" by some Congressional staffers to assist with crowd control so that the busses for the Congressmen and other dignitaries could make it to the swearing in on time.

Twenty-three students from Roosevelt High School

Marine Corps JROTC Color Guard and Drill Team had the honor to march in the Inaugural Parade for President Obama.

Cadet Gunnery Sergeant Ernest Thompson described the event as, "a very historic moment that I or any of the other cadets would not have passed up. It was great marching in the parade of the first African American president."

Also in attendance were students from Beaumont and Sumner High School who used the opportunity to tour historical sites and colleges.

## Sumner NHS Program Promotes Reading

The National Honor Society at Sumner High School, as part of a service learning project, developed a program to engage elementary students in learning and reading activities.

This program, known as Bulldog Books, provides an opportunity for the students at Sumner to give gifts such as reading books, pencils, and journals to participating kindergarten students.

Recently the National Honor Society visited two kindergarten classes at Simmons Elementary to read stories and work with the elementary students on

shape recognition, writing and colors.

The kindergartners enjoyed working with the National Honor Society students so much that Simmons Elementary asked the group to return on February 11th to not only work with

kindergarten students, but with first grade students as well.

The NHS students at Sumner were excited to work with the elementary students at Simmons and hope that the students learned that "Reading is Cool" at any age.



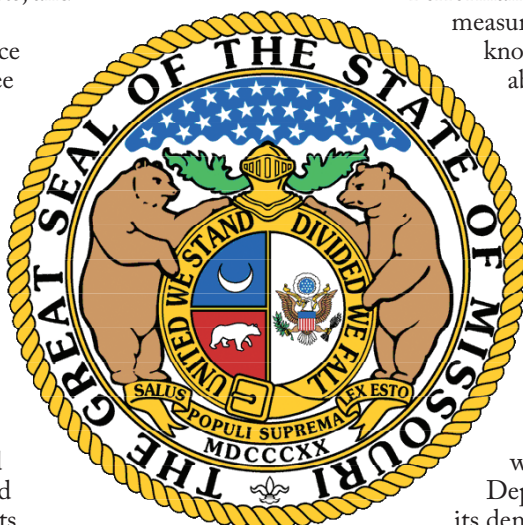
# SLPS Prepares Students for the Missouri Assessment Program

Each year, students across the state spend the year preparing for the Missouri Assessment Program. This test, designed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, sets out to identify the knowledge, skills, and competencies that Missouri students should acquire by the time they complete high school and to assess student progress toward those academic standards.

The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) will assess proficiency in mathematics, science, communication arts, and social studies at a statewide level once at each of the three grade levels, elementary, middle and high school. The state-level subject area assessments will be comprised of three types of items: multiple choice items, constructed response items and performance events.

Multiple-choice items present students with a question followed by four or five response options, one of which is correct. The advantages of these items are: 1) they are effective in measuring students' breadth of content knowledge; and 2) a large number of these items can be administered and scored in a short amount of time. The major limitation of multiple-choice items is that they do not adequately measure students' ability to apply what they know. The survey portion of TerraNova, a nationally norm-referenced test developed by CTB/McGraw-Hill, will be used as the multiple choice component of the MAP in mathematics, communication arts, science, and social studies.

Constructed-response items require students to supply (rather than select) an appropriate response. Students might be asked to provide a one-word answer, complete a sentence or show their work in solving a problem. In addition to measuring students' content knowledge, constructed-response items can provide some information about how students arrived at their answers. These items are more time consuming than multiple-choice items to administer and score; however, they provide more information about students' understanding and thinking.



Performance events measure students' knowledge, and their ability to apply that knowledge in problem situations. The performance events used in MAP may require students to work through a complex problem or present a written argument. Depending upon its demands, students might be expected to take

up to 45 minutes to complete a performance event. Performance events generally allow for more than one approach to arriving at a correct solution. The advantage of this type of assessment item is that it provides insight into students' ability to apply knowledge and understanding in various situations. The disadvantage is that performance events are time consuming and costly to produce, administer, and score.

St. Louis Public Schools will be taking the test beginning March 30th and ending April 24th. For more information please contact the Office of Public Information 314-345-2367.

*Content provided by [www.dese.mo.gov](http://www.dese.mo.gov)*

## Successful Test-Taking Advice

- Carefully listen to or read directions. It's okay to ask questions if you don't understand the directions.
- Read the entire question or problem. Be sure you understand the question before giving an answer, being careful to notice words like "not" or "never" or "all of the above."
- Take notice of special headings or pictures on the page. These may give clues to help answer the questions.
- Go back and check answers if you have time. Even the best test-takers skip questions or make simple mistakes.
- As tempting as it may be, never try to get answers from another student's test. First of all, the test is created for you to show what YOU know. Second, the penalty for cheating can be severe. Finally, there is no way of knowing that the student's answers are correct.
- Understand that some sections of a test will take longer than others. For example, when you have to read a story and answer questions, there is usually plenty of time allotted. It's okay if you don't remember all the answers; you can look back at the story and skim through it to find the answers you need.
- Wear comfortable clothes.
- Be prepared with extra pencils and erasers, just in case.
- If you don't know an answer to a question, skip it and come back to it later. You don't want to spend too much time on questions you don't know.
- Think positive thoughts!

*Reprinted with permission from Practical Parenting Partnerships [www.pppctr.org](http://www.pppctr.org)*

## SLPS robotics team tackles innovative sport of the mind

Gateway Institute of Technology's robotics team is kicking off its eighth season of competition. The robotics contest, a varsity sport of the mind, is sponsored by FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), a nonprofit organization that inspires young people to be leaders in science and technology.

The robotics competition consists of a six-week season showcasing student skills in the design, construction, and testing of a fully functioning robot. This year, Gateway students are joined by those from Metro Academic and Classical High School, Central Visual and Performing Arts High School, and McKinley Classical Leadership Academy. The season will highlight the efforts of nearly 50 SLPS students, teachers, and community mentors.



Team 931, as the SLPS robotics team is known, will be showcasing its robot in two separate regional competitions. The first contest took place February 26 -28 in Kansas City and included some 60 teams from six states. Team 931 will be home for its next regional. That event will be held March 19 - 21, 2009 at St. Louis University's Chaifetz Arena. For this event, some 35 teams will compete from nine states.

In its eight years of competition, Team 931 has been the recipient of several honors, including the FIRST Chairman's Award. SLPS administrators and teachers say they are thrilled to see the collaboration of several schools. They are also happy that so many students are excited about science and technology.

Careers in robotics, computers, and engineering are growing in demand. Students who participate in the robotics events use the opportunity to hone their skills and prepare themselves to fill these future positions.

### E-newsletter Sign-Up

SLPS is pleased to introduce Parent Pulse Online. This monthly e-newsletter will highlight news and events happening across the District on a monthly basis. To receive please visit [www.slps.org](http://www.slps.org) to sign up.

## Numbers to Keep at Your Fingertips

### STUDENT SERVICES

Early Childhood	314.771.4626
Parental Involvement	314.345.4692 314.345.2418
Record Center / Archives	314.645.2648
Recruitment & Student Placement	314.633.5200
Safety Hotline	314.241.7577
Students in Transition	314.345.4501
Student Support Services (Counseling, Health, Psychological & Social Services)	314.345.4401
Testing	314.345.2250
Transportation	314.367.6074
Volunteering	314.345.4577

### CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Academic Office	314.345.2488
Athletics	314.345.4419
Curriculum & Instruction	314.345.2338
Innovative Pathways	314.345.4465
Operations	314.345.4469
Public Information	314.345.2367
Safety & Security	314.345.4505
Superintendent's Office	314.345.2500

## New SLPS Hotlines



SLPS Weather Emergency  
Hotline: 314.345.2466

SLPS Events  
Hotline: 314.345.INFO (4636)

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

For the most up-to-date information:  
[www.slps.org](http://www.slps.org)

## Class of 2011 College Fair

The Class of 2011 College Fair will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2009 from 9:00a.m.-12:00p.m. at St. Louis Community College-Forest Park campus. Sponsored by St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) and GEAR UP-ST. LOUIS, this event is free and open to all 10th grade SLPS students, and their parents/guardians.



The fair will allow students and their parents the opportunity to explore higher education options, visit with university representatives, and obtain information on scholarships, test preparation and summer opportunities from community agencies.

## St. Louis Internship Program is Taking Applications

Are you interested in becoming involved in an enriching program over the summer? Would you like to earn wages and work experience over the summer? Would you like to meet and build networking relationships with professionals in corporate America? If your answer is yes then the St. Louis Internship Program (SLIP) is for you.

The St. Louis Internship Program provides hope, support, assistance and inspiration to high school students with financial and other needs so that they can obtain summer internships in professional settings and develop life skills necessary to expand their educational and employment opportunities. A few of the program supporters include the Bar Association of St. Louis, BJC Healthcare, Monsanto, Washington University and St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association.

For more information visit: <http://www.stlouisinternship.org/>



## Revolutionized African-American Literature Curriculum at SLPS

Paula Knight, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, has revolutionized the way African-American curriculum is taught within the St. Louis Public School District.

Current history books only cover two main components of African-American history, slavery and the Civil Rights Movement; however, there are many more events and African-American leaders who have helped make America great. With that in mind, Paula Knight set out to update core curriculum to teach students about African-American history AND culture, a component that Knight felt would help motivate learning. Next year, all seniors will be required to take a year-long course in African American Literature which will provide core curriculum in not only literature, but in history and arts/humanities as well from 1526 to the present.



## 2008-09 Dates to Remember

Spring Break.....	<b>March 16-20</b>
Parent Conferences.....	<b>March 26 &amp; 27</b>
Recordkeeping Day (no students).....	<b>May 22</b>
Memorial Day Holiday.....	<b>May 25</b>
High School Semester Exams.....	<b>May 28-29 &amp; June 1</b>
Last Day of School.....	<b>June 3</b>
Snow Days.....	<b>June 4-11</b>
Summer School Begins.....	<b>June 15</b>
6 Week Summer School Ends.....	<b>July 24</b>