

the Maury Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of the Parent / Teacher Association

Home of the Cougars



May 2015

Mathademics Madness!

by Norah Rabiah, Instructional Coach

On April 9th, five teams of 3rd-5th graders battled their way through numbers and equations at the sixth annual Maury Mathademics competition.

The teams, accompanied by their Maury staff member coach, solved problems in five different categories, including fast facts, the four operations, geometric measurement, fractions, and elapsed time.

The atmosphere was intense as teams worked together to solve tricky word problems and the areas of oddly shaped figures.

After a final round in which teams wagered up to half their points, 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams were named.

Congratulations to the Pi-Thons led by Ms. Bomba for winning first place, the No Namers led

by Mr. Ludes for winning second place, and Pump Up the Volume led by Ms. Rabiah for winning third place!

An extra special thank you to the PTA for providing the teams with personalized t-shirts and prizes (gift certificates to Labyrinth)!



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Pedal Power

by George Blackmon

A number of Maury families travel to school using two-wheeled transportation. Yes, they strap on the safety helmets and bike to school. With the number of bike packs at the front of the school, bicycling must be catching on.

Did you know there is a National Bike to School Day? The date is Wednesday, May 6th. To celebrate the occasion, a Bike to School Day event will take place at Lincoln Park prior to the school day. The format will be similar to the Walk to School Day event that occurred in October. There will be light refreshments, guest speakers and more.

Come on out with join other Capitol Hill schools in the festivities.



Upcoming Events

May 4-8	Staff Appreciation Week
May 6 & 7	APTT Grade 2
May 6	ECE New Family Orientation
May 8	Staff breakfast (PTA) (8am to 9am)
May 12	Sneak Peek (all grades)
May 15	Picture Day (Individual & Class)
May 15-16	Polite Piggy Play, May 15 6:30pm, May 16 2:00pm
May 18	Snow Make Up Day
May 18	Space Camp Mtg, parents and chaperones 6pm
May 25	Memorial Day Holiday
May 19-21, 27-29	PARCC EOY
May 28	Spring Concert
June 3-5	Space Camp

Project Lead the Way

by Carolyne Albert-Garvey, Principal

We will be adopting at least one STEM unit of study for Grades K-5 next school year from the Project Lead the Way Launch Program for elementary schools.

We were selected by DCPS to receive \$15,000 (thanks to Lockheed Martin) to launch the program over a two-year period. There are detailed lesson plans for the ten lessons in each unit, and all teacher demo and student materials will be provided. V. Ford (Think Tank) and C. Fox (Grade 2) will be the teacher leaders at Maury. They have a 3-day training at the end of April.

This program is designed for students to become problem solvers. Students use structured approaches, like engineering design process. They apply STEM knowledge, skills, and habits of mind, and discover that trying different approaches and solutions is an essential part of the learning process. At least one unit will be taught by the classroom teacher. Mrs. Ford will also use these materials in the Think Tank.



We are considering the following units for year 1 implementation:

- Kindergarten: Pushes and Pulls, Animals and Algorithms
- Grade 1: Light & Sound, Light: Observing the Sun, Moon, and Stars
- Grade 2: The Changing Earth, Materials Science: Properties of Matter
- Grade 3: Variations of Traits (genetics)
- Grade 4 Energy: Collisions, Energy: Conversion
- Grade 5 Robotics and Automation

Please see www.pltw.org for more information.

SNEAK PEEK: What's happening in your child's upcoming grade level? Come see and chat with teachers on May 12.

- PS/PK: 9:00 to 9:30, Observation 9:35 to 10:00, Q&A
- Kindergarten and Grade 3: 1:05 to 1:30 Observation 1:35 to 2:00 Q&A
- Grades 1 and 2: 10:45 to 11:10 Observation 11:15 to 11:45 Q&A
- Grades 4 and 5: 1:55 to 2:20 Observation 2:25 to 2:55 Q&A

SPRING CLEANUP: The Maury School Improvement Committee will be holding our Spring Garden Cleanup Day on Saturday, May 16th from 9:30 am - noon to help improve the school grounds. We encourage all members of the Maury Community to come help to beautify our school. Light refreshments will be available and the playground should be open for the kids. This event is timed so that participants will be able to attend the School House Rocks performance later that day.

This month's meeting began with an awesome performance from the award-winning Maury Cheerleaders!



Announcements

Staff Appreciation Committee Update: Staff appreciation will take place May 4-7. Fundraising for the events, The Coin Wars, is underway. Rules changed this year so that all coins are positive points, not just pennies. Only dollars and checks are negative. We're doing surprise counts -- winners of the surprise counts get no uniform days. The class winner at the end gets an ice cream party. The coin wars will continue for one more week.

We already had a luncheon for staff on April 3rd. Reminders will come out in the next two Tuesday folders for ways you can help. We will decorate the school Saturday, May 2nd from 10am-noon. Friday of staff appreciation week, we'll have a breakfast for staff. Adina Wadsworth will organize. Sign up to bring/ bake things. We'll need about 10 parent volunteers to hang out on the playground so teachers can enjoy the breakfast. We'll also need a couple of volunteers for each ps3 and prek class.

Hospitality: One of the PTA-funded educational aides, Ms. Angela Caudle, was hit by a truck while walking through a crosswalk a couple months ago. She sustained significant injuries and missed a significant amount of work. Through all of your generous donations, we were able to provide her with about \$700 during her time out. She wrote a lovely thank you note, which Sara Hais read.

Fundraising: Outside of SOS, PTA raised \$105K last year. So far this year, we're at about \$99K, and we are on track to exceed last year's total!

- **PJ Day** was a huge success. Lots of parents and kids enjoyed it! Stand by for the date of the next PJ day in May or June. Next year we might expand to different options other than just PJ (some kids suggested maybe crazy hair day, backwards clothes day, etc.)-- if your kids have ideas - let us know.
- **Maury at Market** raised \$78K which was just short of goal. We will have an online auction soon for the remaining items and hopefully that will help us reach our goal. Huge thanks to Annie and Becky for all their hard work putting on an amazing event. We are looking for someone to chair the event next year. We'd like to have a Chair and rising chair (to shadow for next year, but commit to the following year).
- **Dining Out for Maury.** Don't forget to collect your gems at Argonaut. The next Maury night at Tunicliff's is Tuesday.
- **Maury Day at Nats Stadium.** Kate is selling tickets before school. Tickets are \$20. We have 200 tickets to sell and the Nats will *not* buy them back. If you know anyone who might want to go to the game, please give them a heads up.

Announcements (continued)

- **Box Tops** The next collection will be May 23rd. Take a minute to see if you have any at home. It really adds up and we end up raising about \$500 at the end of the year.
- **Labels Labels** sale will start May 4th -- look in the Tuesday folder for info-- share the code -- anyone can use it.
- The **yard sale** will be Sep. 19th.
- **Maury Tshirt** sales will start May 1.
- **SOS effort for next year.** SOS is extremely important. It raises about \$50K on top of general PTA fundraising. This year it was used to provide teacher's aides to all classrooms.
- **WINE Sale!** The owners of Schneiders are putting together a special wine sale. 1/2 cases of wine (that could retail around \$400) for \$150 and they will give \$50 back to Maury. More info will be in Tuesday Folder. Tell friends and neighbors as this is a great way to get a great deal on good wine and also make a lot of money for the school.

Middle School Committee Update: Thank you to everyone who has called and written in about EH's renovation budget getting pushed back again. The Mayor did send a crew to do some quick patches and fixes. So now at least we have locks on the stalls, lights are fixed, etc. This does not take the place of full modernization, but at least it is a start. We need to keep the pressure on. We are hoping they will vote to restore funding in the 2016 budget. The next open house will be Tuesday May 12 at 9:30 am (there will also be an evening open house). The next PTO meeting will be May 13 at 6pm.

School Improvement Committee Update: Thanks to the parents who testified to restore Maury's renovation budget. It's time to reach out to the council. David Grosso was really impressed with what Maury has been able to create, especially with specials and understands how important they are, and why we can't just take away specials classrooms to solve the space issue. Max Keiba mentioned our need for at very least some more trailers if funding continues to be pushed back. Some of the schools that are getting renovated will no longer need their trailers and if they could be given to Maury, that would at least be a short term solution.

Next steps: we will be organizing our talking points regarding Maury's situation, and drafting sample letters that you can sign and send to council members. There is hope that the effort towards the council members will be more fruitful.

Spring cleanup day will be Saturday, May 16th. We think *Hands On DC* will be out there volunteering so it would be great if a lot of parents were there to help and direct.

Enrollment: Our budget is based on enrollment. So far we have 220 enrolled. Our projection is 380. The sooner we get everyone enrolled, the better to prove to the council that we really *are* at capacity. Please get your enrollment forms in!

Picture Day: Picture day is coming up (May 15). The kids do not need to wear uniforms. Please return the order forms or pay online. We need another volunteer to help out.



Announcements (continued)

STEM EXPO: 29 organizations are coming. We're using the front yard, the hallway, multipurpose room and upstairs classrooms. There will be a lot of really exciting exhibits. We're hoping to get a lot of people outside of the Maury community and we are expecting 400 people. So we need volunteers -- even if you haven't signed up, if you show up at 5, we could use your help. A certain number of the first kids to arrive get a think tank bag.

Space Camp is fully funded. Not only is every kid going, but they all get \$25 spending money and flight suits! June 3rd-5th

Citizenship Award: Community member Steve Cymrot passed away. His organization has been very generous to our community. We'd like to create a committee for the citizenship award. It would either be a think tank thing or work through the other specials. The kids will propose a community project in honor of Steve -- the winner's project will get funded. We think this is a great way to give back to the community that has done so much for us.

Bike to School Day: May 6th. More info will be coming home soon.

Whole School Morning Meeting: The date of the next meeting is changing. Stay tuned for more info.

Introduction of Maurice Wilkins

Maurice Wilkins is our Ward 5 and 6 rep from The Office of Family and Public Engagement at DCPS. His job is to not only to help improve the public image of DCPS but also help foster relationships between community and central office. He will gather information and feedback to bring back to central office. He grew up in Wards 5 and 6 and attended DCPS (Ms. Vick was his 2nd grade teacher!). He went to college in Atlanta and then came back to DC. He currently runs a boys group at Eastern, lives in Ward 6 and is committed to the community. He can answer any questions and looks forward to building a positive relationship with all of you.

Contact info for Maurice. Phone: 202-423-0351 Email: maurice.wilkins2@dc.gov

Exec Board Update

- The following positions are up for election on the Exec Board: Vice President and Secretary. Emily Patterson has completed her term and is not seeking reelection. Please let JR Ford know if you would be interested in running for Vice President. Jessica Gardner will run for reelection for a full term. If anyone else is interested in running, please let JR know. We will announce everyone who is running at the next meeting.
- Bylaws: We will be voting on amendments to our bylaws at next meeting.
- Financial Irregularities: The MPD case is closed, an arrest has been made and the case has been handed over to the US Attorney's office. We are waiting on the US Attorney for more information, but we hope to have everything resolved by next meeting so we can move on.



Principal's Update

- Maurice Wilkins did a walk through and witnessed how very crowded we are. It's great to have him share this info with central office.

Testing:

- Lots of parents asking -- why so much testing. There are two parts to the PARCC. The actual number of days of testing are about the same as DCCASS, but the first part needs to be hand graded and takes a long time which is why at section was done earlier the second half is multiple choice.
- This year will be a baseline. It's our first time taking a new test. We're not officially counting this year's test scores.
- DC was given a window for taking the tests. DCPS started the tests early for some good reasons, but many of the charter schools were able to take the test later which means they got 3 extra weeks of instruction before they were tested. We feel that that is not fair and that it should be a standard date across DC. CAG complained and that is why we had the last minute change to push back the last tests by one week.
- The testing window creates another challenge. DCPS should figure out earlier when the testing windows will take place instead of letting us know at the very last minute. We have had to continuously make changes to the schedule because of the late notice of testing window.
- ANET is a unit specific assessment -- not just another standardized test. Next year will be moving to the DCPS unit assessment test (more or less the same thing, but it won't be called ANET anymore). There will be a science portion even though we didn't have the standards 3 years ago.

Q&A on Testing

Q: Even though the PARCC doesn't count this year, will the results be analyzed?

A: Yes, absolutely. We think it will give us much more detailed data than DCCAS. So it can have a bigger impact on how we adjust.

Q: Will 2nd graders be tested?

A: It's optional and we will probably opt-in. In 2nd grade, the directions are read to them (especially important in math section).

Class Supply List

- We will launch the school supply list for next year, next week.
- We are not doing it as a fundraiser because we want to keep the cost down.
- If you get your orders in early, you don't have to pay shipping (and shipping is expensive) and all the supplies are shipped to the school BEFORE the first day of school.
- 1st grade and early childhood are not participating in the online supply list. Those classrooms will just give a check for \$40 for 1st grade, and slightly more for preS and preK (I think \$50).
- If you'd prefer to do your own shopping, you have the option to print out the list and buy your own supplies.



Principal's Update (continued)

PTA Aides They currently work from 9:30 to 2:30 and they don't take a lunch break.

- We've decided to extend their day to 3:00pm so that they can participate in the last special of the day.
- We will offer them a paid lunch break.
- We want to maximize their time so we are going to work with each individual teacher to find out what they need an aide for and when, and put together a master list so no one is idle and everyone has help. This will also make it easier to place the aides in areas where they are strongest. Please feel free to email CAG with any thoughts or if you have any ideas of a more clever way to roll this out.

Volunteer breakfast is Thursday, June 4. Please put it on your calendars. It's the only time the staff gets to do something for you. The kids create artwork that is on the table.

World Language. Our World Language instructor will be Chinese.

- We did not receive good Spanish instructor resumes and there are so many vacancies for Spanish in other schools (so very competitive environment - difficult to get good teacher).
- We decided to interview the Chinese instructor, Ms. Wang, and she was fantastic. The 4th graders and adults she met loved her. We made her an offer. She also got an offer from VanNess, but she chose us (yay). We'll try to invite her to the May meeting. She will work with Donny to write a Grant to launch the Confucius school -- they will give us 10K start up and 10K more.

Other Q & A

Q: How do we vote to change next year's DCPS calendar?

A: We can't actually change next years' calendar, but what DCPS is looking for is feedback about the calendar that they can take into consideration when planning the 2016-2017 calendar. The biggest change is that spring break is later. I've heard good arguments on both sides. One other positive about a later spring break is that when you come back from the later spring break, there are only 9 weeks left of the school year rather than 12 which can feel more exciting for both staff and students.

In Attendance

Elsa Huxley, Emily Paterson, Jessica Gardner, Adam Hais, JR Ford, Principal Albert-Garvey, Franny Decker, George Blackmon, Vanessa Ford, Heather Bonome, Donny Kirsch, Amanda Mentzer, Heather Schoell, Shannon Von Felden, Antonio Evans, Michelle Evans, Karida Green, Contessa Riggs, Cody Rice, Dinkar Mokadam, Sarah Hais, Susan Wall, Janin Valentine, Anne McFadden, Erin Bibo, David Bibo, Scott Douglas, Maureen Shove-Brown, Max Kieba, Jessica Lowther, Kristina Vidal, Gillian Penswick, Jonnel Herndon, Paula Caira.

Next Meeting

5/21/2015 6:00 PM, Maury Multipurpose Room

