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■ The Student Transfer application period is open until February 26. For more info, visit <https://www.mcpss.com/studenttransfers>

■ MCPSS First Class Pre-K online application period started January 15. Visit <https://www.mcpss.com/pre-k> for more info.

The Magnum Memo

Division News from Mobile County Public Schools' Central Office



MCPSS Health Science students at Faulkner Career Tech Center collect vital signs and treat a "patient" in a classroom setting that closely resembles a real-world medical center.

Celebrating Career and Technical Education Month

Health Science opportunities expanding for MCPSS students

There is a growing demand for qualified healthcare professionals globally.

From this perspective, the Health Science Cluster is expanding the curriculum to offer a variety of health care pathways with a Career Readiness Indicator (CRI).

High school students with an interest in pursuing a career or post-secondary education in a health care related field can earn a nationally recognized certification in one of three areas: Certified Nursing Assistant, Certified Patient Care Technician and the newest one, Certified EKG Technician.

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Newsletter to help divisions and departments share good news

As part of Superintendent Chresal Threadgill's three major areas of focus for employees - working together as a team; telling our own story; and letting the world know we are creating greatness - The Magnum Memo is a monthly newsletter that will feature news from all MCPSS departments and divisions. Each department or division will be featured on a quarterly basis. Department/Division heads will be contacted one month prior to publication to provide information for the newsletter. Questions? Email Joy McGough at jmmcgough@mcpss.com. Special thanks to the MCPSS Department of Communication for use of their photos.



Above, eight school counselors received special awards from the Alabama School Counselor Association. Below, Dr. Monica Motley and Dr. Kimberly Walker were named Counselor Advocate of the Year and Guidance and Counseling Supervisor of the Year, respectively.

Counselors lauded by state association

This has been a record breaking, award winning year for the Guidance and Counseling division. Earlier this school year, MCPSS School Counselors were recognized by the Alabama School Counselor Association for their excellent implementation of outcome-based, data-driven school counseling programs. The following school counselors received the RAVE (Recognition of Accountability, Verification, and Excellence) Gold recognition:

- Alicia Clevenger, Castlen Elementary
- Malinda Gray and Darlene Lewis, Pillans Middle
- Kellie Henderson, Fonde Elementary
- Caroline Newman, Shepard Elementary
- Heather Polk, Indian Springs Elementary
- Brittnay Powe-Inge, Leinkauf Elementary

This year, for the first time, we have three school counselors who received the Program of Distinction award. This award recognizes



school counseling programs that demonstrate an exemplary level of implementation of a comprehensive, data-driven school counseling program. The application process is quite extensive and requires a significant amount of documentation which includes a collection of 15 components that align with the Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Model for Alabama Public Schools (State Plan) and the American School Counselor Association National Model. Schools who earn the Program of Distinction designation will be eligible for RAMP (Recognized ASCA Model Program), which is awarded by the American School Counselor Association as the highest national recognition for a school

counseling program. Congratulations to the following school counselors who are the firsts to receive this prestigious recognition for MCPSS:

- Malinda Gray and Darlene Lewis, Pillans Middle
- Darlene Lewis and Apryle Williams, Scarborough Middle

Additional awards

were given from the Alabama School Counselor Association to the leadership of the Guidance and Counseling division for their exemplary work:

- Dr. Monica Motley, Director of Guidance and Counseling, Counselor Advocate of the Year
- Dr. Kimberly Walker, Supervisor of Guidance and Counseling, Supervisor of the Year

This is the first time Guidance and Counseling has received this number of recognitions in one year. We are so fortunate to have outstanding school counselors in MCPSS. We are thankful for their dedication to serving and making a positive impact on our students and school communities.

Retirement bells ring for Mrs. Carolyn

Carolyn Pearce of Teaching, Learning & Assessment has loved every part of her 37-year career with the Mobile County Public School System. If you ask her, she will say, "Retirement came too quickly!"

Mrs. Pearce (we know her as Mrs. Carolyn) is married to Mac Pearce, has 5 children, 16 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Carolyn served in many different positions during her tenure with the school system. She started as a Physical Education Aide at Kate Shepard Elementary in 1984. She later became the Chapter 1 Media Aide at Mertz Elementary before transferring to Barton Academy in 1998 where she held the magnet school clerk position under the leadership of Marilyn Pace. In 2002, Mrs. Carolyn moved to the clerk position of the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Carolyn L. Taylor, until Dr. Taylor's retirement in 2013. From that time until now, she was the "go to" clerk serving under Toni Worsham and Helen Miles. If anyone had a question, Mrs. Carolyn would make sure she found the answer.



From left, TLA clerks Larkie Lundy, Teresa Lewis, Sarita West, Carolyn Pearce, Lisa Ladner and Kathy Reynolds

Mrs. Carolyn is loved and respected by her co-workers and friends (not because she has the candy). Over the years, many have visited Mrs. Carolyn's desk to grab a piece of chocolate (Hershey Kisses), peppermints and/or Werther's and

friendly conversation.

Mrs. Carolyn has formed many friendships in her 37-year career and will be missed greatly in the Division of Teaching, Learning & Assessment. We wish her the very best during her retirement.

Counselors' virtual PD features excellent slate of speakers

MCPSS schools celebrated National School Counseling Week February 1-5. This is a time to recognize the valuable contributions school counselors make in the lives of our students.

On Wednesday, February 3, MCPSS Guidance and Counseling hosted a virtual Winter Professional Development. The theme for Winter PD was The Power of Programming. This virtual conference style event featured national speaker and well-respected pioneer in school counseling, Dr. Carolyn Stone, as

the keynote speaker. The breakout sessions featured the following presenters:

- Mr. Sean Stevens (Alabama State Department of Education)
- Dr. LaWanda Edwards (professor and Past-President of the Alabama School Counselor Association)
- Dr. Daniel Birdsong (school counselor and President-Elect for the Alabama School Counselor Association)
- Dr. Taqua Lewis (school counselor and former Alabama High School

Counselor of the Year)

- Mrs. Sheryl Smith (school counselor and Alabama School Counselor Association board member)
- MCPSS Guidance and Counseling partnered with South Alabama Research Inservice Center (SARIC) to offer the professional development opportunity to school counselors in 5 districts in our region. School counselors enjoyed learning from this quality professional development experience designed especially for them.

Workforce Development



Mobile County Public Schools' 2019 National Technical Honor Society inductees.

NTHS is an important part of a CTE student's high school experience

National Technical Honor Society is the acknowledged leader in the recognition of outstanding student achievement in Career and Technical Education, and our business and industry partners play a huge role in supporting this experience. Each school year family, friends, and the community show up in record numbers to support their student's induction into the nationally renowned organization. Along with academic excellence, NTHS promotes seven additional attributes

of membership: skill, honesty, service, responsibility, scholarship, citizenship, and leadership.

Not only do NTHS students embody all the attributes and talent that are in demand today, these students also embrace a clear vision for tomorrow's workforce and their role in it. NTHS serves over 100,000 active members annually in both secondary and post-secondary chapters across country. To date, MCPSS Career and Technical Education programs have inducted

more than 5,000 graduating seniors into the organization. According to Faulkner CTC Principal William White, "Since the pandemic, our local chapters have not been able to induct students face-to-face. The annual NTHS Induction Ceremony is an important part of a student's high school experience. We have great students and being able to recognize them for all they do is a privilege for me; I am very proud of our NTHS officers, inductees, and program."



Students in the PLTW pathway solve real-world science, technology, engineering and math challenges.

Project Lead the Way programs illuminate future possibilities

Middle and high school students enrolled in a Project Lead the Way pathway develop skills in science, technology, engineering and math concepts in order to investigate and resolve real-world challenges. Course projects engage students in compelling activities to help them become better collaborators and thinkers.

The PLTW program shows students the relevancy of what they are learning in the classroom and gets them excited about solving the world's grand challenges. As part of the program's curriculum, students join the Technology Student Association and participate in a variety of competitive events.

Currently the PLTW middle school programs are piloting the We Build It Better program with Flight Works Alabama. We Build It Better provides innovated kits and hours of curriculum, activities, and technologies to expose students to techniques that will help build new skill sets and promote career awareness.

Prowell enjoys leadership role at Central Office

Mrs. Amanda Prowell is a new Supervisor to the Division of Career and Technical Education. Prior to coming to Central Office, Mrs. Prowell served as an Academy Specialist for five years at Ben C. Rain High School. She also worked as an elementary teacher at Leinkauf and Florence Howard elementary schools.



Amanda Prowell

Mrs. Prowell is a 2003 graduate of Mattie Thomas Blount High School. She attended the University of South Alabama, earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She obtained both her master's and Educational Specialist degrees from the University of West Alabama. Now, Mrs. Prowell is currently in the MCPSS Leadership Academy.

Mrs. Prowell is student-centered and goal oriented as she works together with 12 Academy Specialists (one at each MCPSS high school) as they continue to support the educational successes through the Academy Model. As a leader, it is Mrs. Powell's purpose to work with others to ensure that we graduate students who are college and career ready.



JROTC cadets restore veterans' gravesites at Oaklawn Cemetery

Mobile County JROTC Cadets participated in a district-wide service learning project to help restore Oaklawn Nonperpetual Care Cemetery in the Toulminville Community on January 15. More than 120 cadets and cadre participated in this worthy cause. Special attention was given to the grave sites of hundreds of veterans who are buried there. The cemetery was originally founded to serve the needs of the African-American community in Mobile, but has fallen into a state of disorder over the past decade. A non-profit group consisting of local veterans initiated this undertaking. Veterans Memorial Recovery is dedicated to preserving the memory of these men and women who served our nation.

Health Science, continued from page 1

Upon successful completion of a program, students have the option to earn a work-ready credential and go directly into the workforce. All Health Science pathways have an approved course of study, state of the art equipment, and engaged partners. The integration of work-based learning experiences and membership in HOSA-Future Health Professionals allow students to make informed decisions regarding their educational pursuits while acquiring leadership skills. Health Science programs are located at the following schools: Baker, Blount, Bryant CTC, Citronelle, Faulkner CTC, LeFlore, MGM, and Theodore.



Health Science Pathway students from Citronelle High School take a group photo in their professional-grade medical masks and gowns.

Army Ranger-style competition pushes cadets to the limit

Mobile County JROTC introduced a new type of competition to the district just a few short years ago and it has gotten better every year since! Our semi-annual Raider Team competition, now hosted on the campus of the Bryant Career Tech Center, continues to draw a huge interest from our cadets and cadre alike!

Seeking to emulate the demanding physical and mental skills needed by the Army's elite Ranger units, this competition is not for the faint of heart. It requires teamwork, superb physical conditioning, great leadership, and the tenacity needed to finish the demanding course. Our Mobile County cadets are up to the challenge and continue to demand more challenging obstacles to conquer as our program develops.

A huge shout-out Mr. Bill Meredith



JROTC cadets take on the Raider Team course at Bryant Career Tech Center.

along with the CTE staff and students at Bryant CTC for building the course used by our cadets. This is a great

collaboration among two outstanding Career and Technical Education programs!



JROTC drill competition safely takes place

One of the key components of JROTC is Drill and Ceremony, which every cadet must learn. It requires discipline, teamwork, leadership, precision, and lots of practice under the watchful eye of one of our dedicated JROTC instructors. Those who are good enough are able to compete in our annual

Varsity and Freshman Drill Competitions sponsored by the Director of Army Instruction staff at Central Office. Our cadets are some of the best in the state, and many go on to compete in regional and national level competitions. We were able to host two matches thus far this year by implementing strict COVID protocols.



Cadets love VEX Robotics

Mobile County's JROTC program introduced VEX Robotics as one of its cocurricular events last year and it has been a resounding success! Cadets from eight of our district's high schools currently field VEX Robotics Teams. After setting up an independent JROTC League last year, cadets compete at the local level to determine who will represent Mobile County at the annual State Competition sponsored by the Robotics Education & Competition (REC) Foundation. Teams can further compete to get invited to National and International competitions. Our cadets are super excited to be a part of this growing movement. Participants come from Blount, Bryant, LeFlore, Murphy, Rain, Theodore, Vigor, and Williamson High School JROTC programs.

JROTC cadets fearlessly rappel at Fort Whiting

The Mobile County JROTC Program sponsored a fantastic day of rappel training at the rappel tower on Fort Whiting near downtown Mobile. Cadets from several local high schools participated, including 8th grade cadets participating in a pilot program at Satsuma High School. Cadets learned the basic fundamentals of rappelling at one of the finest rappel towers in the state of Alabama. We want to thank LTC Shirah and SFC Allen of the Alabama Army National Guard for making this facility available.

Our JROTC cadre provided outstanding Rappel Masters to support the training event for students. In order to offer this training, JROTC cadre must undergo rigorous training to maintain Rappel Master certifications. During Fall 2020 training at Fort Benning, Georgia, Mobile County Public Schools were represented by Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Robert Barrow and First Sergeant (Ret) Timothy Wright. LTC Barrow is the Director of Army Instruction for the district and 1SG Wright is an Army Instructor at Rain High School. They had to demonstrate proficiency at rigging the tower and proper rappel techniques off the 65-foot rappel tower. It takes years of experience to become a certified Rappel Master and our district is lucky to have five qualified instructors able to conduct this type of training.



JROTC cadets (above) are able to participate in rappel training due to adult leaders (right) completing certified Rappel Master training.



Students' success stories inspire LTC Barrow

One of the greatest feelings any teacher can have is to hear back from a former student and learn of their success as young adults! JROTC instructors are routinely contacted by former cadets who thank them for the guidance and mentorship they received from these highly experienced officers and noncommissioned officers. I recently had three such encounters over the past few weeks. While serving as the Senior Army Instructor at LeFlore

High School, I had the privilege of teaching hundreds of outstanding young men and women, most of whom have gone on to successful careers. Two followed my footsteps and became officers in the United States Army. Cyrus English attended Alabama A&M on a 4-Year Army ROTC Scholarship and Myea Rice went to the United States Military Academy (West Point). Both contacted me on Facebook to

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Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Robert Barrow and a former student, who is now a fire fighter.

Bryant Career Tech Center

Partnerships allow students to learn more about aquaculture and horticulture

Partnerships with Auburn University and Bellingrath Gardens are offering students at the Bryant Career Technical Center more opportunities for hands-on learning.

Bryant CTC is working with Auburn University in providing students with the opportunity to learn all phases of operating off bottom oyster aquaculture. Auburn University has started a nonprofit organization, Bonus Point Oyster Company, with the mission of training high school students to work in the oyster aquaculture industry. Students are paid an hourly rate of \$12.50 to receive on the job training. The training consists of assembling oyster aquaculture equipment, stocking the



Bryant CTC students are working with Auburn University to learn all phases of operating off bottom oyster aquaculture.

cages with young oysters, tending the oysters as they grow out, marketing the oysters to vendors, and bringing the oysters to market. Students are working with Auburn University professor Dr. Bill Walton with technology new to the United States.

This new FLIPFARM system was developed in New Zealand to cut down on the labor required to desiccate (dry out) the oyster cages to minimize biofouling of oysters and the aquaculture equipment.

This year Bryant Career Technical Center

is collaborating with Bellingrath Gardens. During the school year, students in several different programs will be doing repair work for Bellingrath Gardens both on campus and on the grounds at Bellingrath. Students are helping with fence and bridge repair, making decorative metal and wooden objects using the school's CNC (computer numeric control) machine, landscaping, turfgrass, and greenhouse work. Agriscience students will get to work for SAE's (Supervised Agricultural Experience) during the summer at a premier horticultural and historic tourist destination. The Bryant Career Technical Center will have their graduation ceremony on the Bellingrath lawn at the end of the school year.

Citronelle students incorporate service learning into Career & Technical Education Month plans

The month of February each year is declared Career & Technical Education (CTE) Month in the state of Alabama and celebrated throughout the United States. What is CTE Month? CTE Month is a time for us to celebrate CTE, promote our CTE programs offered in our school and to give something back to the community

that supports us throughout the year.

This year the CTE programs at Citronelle Center for Advanced Technology, Citronelle High School and Lott Middle School have decided to help clean up as much of the community surrounding our campuses as we can. Each program will be assigned a street, or area, and

students and the instructor will pick up all the unwanted trash they can find. This event will take place on February 19, 2021 throughout the school day.

The other events that are planned to celebrate CTE Month at C-CAT are:

- Agriscience/FFA will host the Mobile

Continued on page 9

Citronelle Hospitality and Tourism program opening Wildcat Cafe

At Citronelle's Center for Advanced Technology, the Hospitality and Tourism Pathway has made some positive changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program, led by Mrs. Tiffany Weaver, has taken advantage of the Culinary facility's dining area being closed by updating the building's look. What once was called the "old" cafeteria will now have a new look and will be known as the Wildcat Cafe. Students in the Agriscience classes, taught by Mr. Ryan Crews, assisted with the remodel. The Cafe will showcase a rustic feel and make the building more inviting.

This year Citronelle has partnered with Bishop State Community College, adding two dual enrollment courses taught by Chef Gabrielle Wilson. The courses offered include Culinary Basics and Safety and Sanitation. The students are eligible for summer dual enrollment culinary courses through Bishop as well. Once a student successfully passes his/her dual enrollment course, they receive a College and Career Readiness Indicator (CCRI).

Before Christmas, the students participated in an in-house cookie decorating competition. Citronelle High School's faculty and staff served as the judges by voting for their favorite cookie. Sophomore Ava Lambert, took first place with the most votes. The program has two upcoming competitions, the Junior Chef Competition, sponsored by The Child Nutrition School Programs, and a virtual

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Courses evolve due to pandemic

The recent educational experience has been one of change for all involved, teachers, students, admins and staff. True to form, the programs at Citronelle's Center for Advanced Technology have adapted and excelled. Within our PLTW Engineering pathway students were able to transfer the hands-on experience to a digital one that continued to push the students deep understanding and learning of the core concepts and skills.

▪ **Intro to Eng Design** – Entry level students into the pathway were able to excel in CAD 3D modeling through instruction via a free cloud-based site, OnShape. All active students, both face-to-face and virtual, received certification of OnShape's basic level standards. Students competed with each other designing their own toy. The toys were then 3D printed in the classroom and with live video conferencing students at home got to see their products produced. The students then formed teams and shared design ideas to create a marketable toy. The winning design, a balloon powered race car, was also 3D printed. As a final project, students were responsible for the full design process of

creating their own marketable doghouse design. This included full CAD assemblies, from framing to finish of a doghouse with roofing, patio and designated foot and water areas. The host site we used, OnShape, has since offered our program a free upgrade to an enterprise account which should mean even more efficient instruction and student accomplishment.

▪ **Principles of Engineering** – The same level of mathematics and physics principles where able to be taught through video conferencing as before. The face-to-face students were able to maintain social distancing practices and still be hands on, creating their products for each unit, while virtual students were also able to design and create their own products using different software. Student designs included electrical circuits, compound machines for mechanical advantages, gear trains, ROBOTC coding and bridge designs.

▪ **Robotics** – This capstone course faced a major challenge. A traditionally a hands-on, simulated workplace experience had to adapt to becoming

Continued on page 10

Service learning, continued from page 8

- County FFA Safe Tractor Driving Contest.
- Advanced Manufacturing/SkillsUSA is having a Can Food Drive throughout the month of February with all donations going to help support local churches food pantry programs.
- PLTW Engineering/TSA will be competing in a national contest through the Association of Career Tech

Education (ACTE) called the NASA Hunch Student Video Challenge that helps promote CTE and project-based learning. Culinary Arts/FCCLA is preparing "Care Bags" for the local fire departments, creating and displaying in high traffic areas on campus Health Awareness Displays and creating a video for FCCLA awareness and why students should join.

Middle schools welcome 'We Build It Better' program

Thirteen teachers in eleven MCPSS middle schools were selected to participate in We Build It Better, an industry-developed aviation and engineering educational program developed by Flight Works Alabama and its partners. The program, delivered through seven

We Build It Better innovation kits, will introduce 21st century skills, inventive technologies, provide hours of hands-on learning, offer unique resources, and promote career awareness.

The middle schools selected to participate in the pilot program this spring are: Alba, Burns, Calloway-

Smith, Causey, Chastang-Fournier, Denton Magnet, Grand Bay, Hankins, Lott, Pillans, and Scarborough.

Flight Works We Build It Better partnerships include Airbus, ALSDE, Alabama Power Foundation, Amazon Web Services, Snap-on

Continued on page 12

Culinary Arts teachers use creativity to teach remotely

Culinary Arts teachers are combining in-person and virtual learning, allowing students to interact with the instructor via live video demonstrations. Although hands-on learning has its challenges in a virtual classroom, Chef Baxter at Davidson High School has embraced this method for her students by teaching them how to cook healthier and sometimes more advanced dishes, as well increase their overall culinary skills.

Projects and competitions range from the Food Truck Project, where students create the design, logo, menu, and advertisements, to Global Flavor Profiles where students learn about cultures and culinary traditions from around the world. This spring, Career Tech is partnering with Bishop State Community College on a virtual competition focusing on individual appetizers, a recent industry emphasis during the pandemic. Despite COVID-19, learning and leading continues in some great and unexpected ways!



Davidson's Culinary 2 class demonstration was Salmon en Papillote with roasted butternut squash and an apple and kale salad with a classic French vinaigrette.

Courses, continued from page 9

mostly virtual and social distanced for face-to-face students. The local robotics competitions did not offer an event in 2020. There were opportunities in some new, national level and virtual competitions. During the course of the robotics world adapting, students focused on the business side of teamwork, establishing communication norms, division of labor and determined an internal direction. They created two teams and began working on designs for a robotic catapult just as if it was this year's event. This included research, an engineering notebook, coding, CAD, marketing, an interview and a presentation. Once that was completed the students as a whole competed in a coding challenge by Amazon and Coderz. We ended the competition with a 100% completion rate. This year we were also rewarded a grant from AMSTI.

▪ **AP Computer Science** – A new course currently in its first weeks. This college level course will teach students skills in Python coding to the point that they will design and create their own apps, games, utility programs, widgets and cyber security protocols. The course offers an AP exam and if passed students will earn a College and Career Readiness Indicator (CCRI) and college credit.

Hospitality, continued from page 9

cook-off, sponsored by Bishop State.

February is Career Tech Education month, and the Hospitality and Tourism pathway has many activities planned to promote Career Tech awareness. Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) is the pathway's Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO). The organization is giving back to the community by having a cleanup day around the town, making care packages for the local fire departments, and educating the student body on healthier eating choices.

FCCLA week begins February 8th, and Citronelle's chapter of FCCLA is promoting the Beyond Measure campaign and hosting a membership drive.

Massive renovation project at Barton Academy set for completion in May

We have overcome some adversity along the way, but the renovation project at the Barton Academy for Advanced World Studies is moving right along. Construction on the interior renovation is about 55 percent complete, and is starting to show the finished layout. Everyone is very excited.

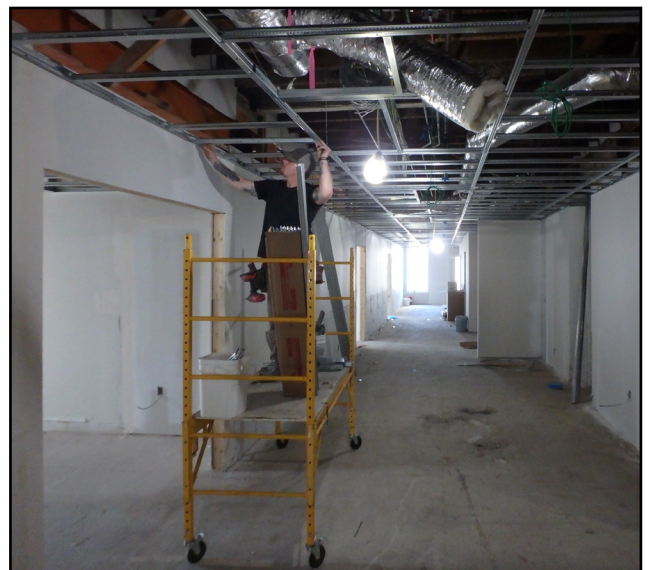
When completed, this will be a state-of-the-art magnet school that will include music, art, two computer labs, and STEM lab with 3-D printers and a robotics area. Project completion is scheduled for the end of May, and Barton is slated to open as a functioning school for



the 2021-2022 school year. Space is still available for the 2021-22 school year

for students in grades 7, 8 and 9. There is a waiting list for grade 6. For more

information, contact Principal Amanda Jones at acjones@mcpss.com.



Energy Management program saves MCPSS millions

Since implementation of the Energy Management program in 2015, the system has saved millions of dollars per year. In January 2020, MCPSS converted from a shared-savings energy management firm to in-house energy management with the Controls and Energy Management Department. This department is taking on the full responsibility of delivering continued cost avoidance while maintaining occupant comfort. This responsibility is shared, but so is the success, and it depends on cooperation from every level of our organization and we appreciate your contribution to the program. Our mission is to utilize expertise, synergize with partners, and the latest technologies in building automation to reduce energy waste and foster a culture of sustainability while ensuring a safe, comfortable environment for the staff and students.

We monitor and keep historical records on over 50,000 data points every day across the district—we capture data like temperature, humidity levels, carbon dioxide concentration, fresh air flow, building occupancy along with HVAC equipment run time. In the near future we will be monitoring in real-time - water,

electrical, lighting, and gas usage. This will help us catch problems like water leaks long before we get the bill, ultimately saving thousands of dollars per year.

We all are aware that our district has some aging equipment and infrastructure. We are working diligently to address this with the savings delivered to us from our Energy Management Program. Our Capital Plan includes a timeline to update HVAC units but accomplishing the goal will take time. We are currently in the process of surveying all the schools to identify opportunities for creating a more comfortable environment while balancing our energy savings goals.

On a day-to-day basis we work in concert with the Maintenance Department to help keep our schools environmentally safe and comfortable. We are working to create tools that will give them real-time access and insight into building conditions,



Heather Gray

allowing them to prioritize and address issues in a proactive way.

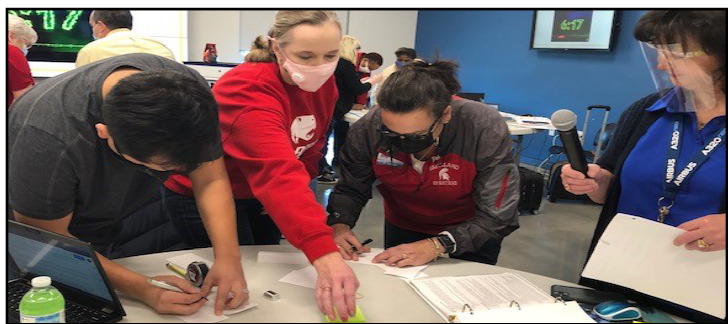
This month we would like to highlight the newest member to our team, Heather Gray. Heather joins Energy Management team members Jason McKay and Gerry Fulton. She comes to us with a background in business analytics and high-level office management skills. With so many streams of data coming

into our department, it is crucial to warehouse and catalog this data into something meaningful. On our team Heather is directly responsible for gathering disparate data on all of our systems and sensors, while also organizing it into actionable information via dashboards on our servers. She is responsible for helping us create an upgrade path and timeline for each school we survey. She also serves as a liaison to the schools on all after-hours scheduling of events. Some of you may know Robert Gray, Heather's husband who is a long-time member of the MCPSS family and linchpin in the IT department. Please help us welcome Heather to MCPSS!

We Build It Better, continued from page 10

Tools, and Mott MacDonald.

Link to WBIB video <https://www.facebook.com/FWA.WeBuildItBetter/videos/432362011493052>



Above and left, teachers attended professional development where they worked through the curriculum and activities and were provided resources such as Snap-On tools and 3-D printers for their classrooms.

Lange helps Budget Office implement new software

My name is Marc Lange and I am the newest member of the Budget Department.

Growing up in a family of two Alabama educators instilled the value of education to me at a young age. As I grew older, I used that base to propel myself into the study of accounting and finance.

Consequently, it was no surprise to anyone when I started my career at Mobile County Public Schools as a Budget Analyst.



Marc Lange

I was brought into the Budget Department to aid in implementing a new budgeting software, Adaptive Insights. Our goal with Adaptive Insights is to streamline the budgeting process while offering a higher degree of accuracy and precision to the proforma financials.

As Budget Analysts, it is our job to ensure that the schools have the necessary funds available to provide teachers with the tools they need to

grow the minds of their students.

If I am not at the Central Office crunching numbers, I can usually be found at home doing the same thing. I have a passion for studying the economy and creating valuations on financial markets. I am also an avid outdoorsman, whether backpacking in the mountains, hunting the rural Alabama wilderness, fishing Mobile Bay, or racing a sailboat across the Gulf of Mexico.

It has been a great experience learning from the knowledgeable and dedicated staff within the Business Division. And I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to serve the school system.

Success stories, continued from page 7

announce they had been selected for promotion to Major. What a fantastic achievement (It also means I am getting old!).

Another young man asked me to attend his graduation from the Fire Academy at the Orange Beach Fire and Rescue Department. Mykyle McCaskill is now a Fireman with the Prichard Fire Department. He asked me to pin on his badge, a high honor in the world of First Responders. It is difficult to convey just how proud I am of these three former cadets. It also brings me comfort knowing that we are in good hands as a nation with young people like them at the helm!



PEEHIP health screenings

- February 19 from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.
- February 23 from 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

All screenings take place in Building B/PD Center. Flu shots are also available during Central Office health screening sessions.

Magnum Memo Publication Schedule

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Facilities Academic Affairs Teaching, Learning and Assessment Accounts Payable General/Local School Accounting Workforce Development Board Services Superintendent's Office Environmental Services	Maintenance Human Resources Health Services Information Technology Forestry and Landscaping Instructional Technology	CNP Communication Federal Programs Distribution/Warehouse Payroll Purchasing Security Social Services Special Education Student Services
Group 1 - August, November, February, May Group 2 - September, December, March, June Group 3 - October, January, April, July		

Gamble celebrates 27 years serving schools

Celebrating 27 years with MCPSS has been a very rewarding experience for me.

My journey first started as a Title I Aide at Fonvielle Elementary and Washington Middle School. I was hired as an accounting Clerk in the Local School Accounting Department in 2000. I have been an Accountant I since

2003. I am the direct contact for the 12 high schools. Also, my duties



Velma P. Gamble

include providing training for all new bookkeepers and accounting clerks; assisting the bookkeepers with the daily functionalities of the Nextgen accounting software; as well as ensuring that the local schools follow the guidelines set by the State Examiners and the policies/procedures of Mobile County Public Schools.

Local School Accounting has always been a great department to work in.

We have gone from a staff of three to seven and now to five, nevertheless we have always interacted as a family. I have been very fortunate to see this department develop from its infancy. We were a department that had dual processes for cumulating financial data. Elementary schools were excel-formula based, middle & high schools were DOS based and stand-alone users of Harris Computer accounting software. That all changed in 2002-2003 when the Local School Accounting department became the first users in the state to convert all the schools over to Harris Computer's

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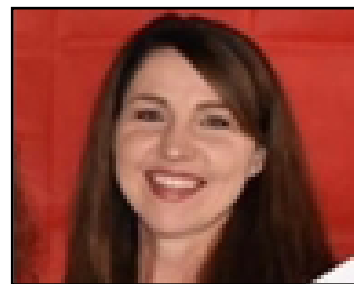


Julia Myers and her son

Myers is a Davidson and Auburn alum

I am Julia Myers and I am the newest member of the Local School Accounting Department. As an LSA clerk, I work with some elementary schools and all special schools to process monthly reports and resolve day-to-day issues. I also maintain the vendor profiles for each school. **Continued on page 15**

Horton is happy to be back at MCPSS



Sherry Horton

My name is Sherry Horton and I am an Accountant in the General Accounting Dept. I started working for MCPSS in November 2008. In August 2019, I made the decision to take a job opportunity with the City of Mobile. It didn't take long to realize how much I missed MCPSS! I really loved the work and the relationships that I had with my amazing coworkers.

So, in September 2020, I made the decision to return to MCPSS! It was such an easy transition and it honestly feels like I never left! Some of my job duties include: bank reconciliations, handling contracts and grants, posting cash receipts, reconciling LEA reports, special projects as needed, and assisting other departments with account numbers and inquiries.

Outside of work, I will earn my MBA in June and I look forward to the possibilities that will bring! I love spending time with family and friends and taking weekend trips when I can!

Gamble, continued from page 14

Nextgen Budgetary Accounting. The department has since then developed many new and improved programs to assist parents and bookkeepers.

On a personal note my husband Roger and I have three grown children, Farren, Xavier and Lauren, who I am very proud of. We also have four beautiful grandchildren (Marlo, Zoe,

Milan and Kyrie) who keep us busy and on our toes. In my spare time I enjoy attending basketball and gymnastics events with my grandchildren as well as traveling. I am a bit of a TV buff so watching Turner Classics is a real treat, and I am often teased about it.

Finally, working for the Mobile

County Public School System has afforded me many opportunities and I would like to think that I have given my all to this great system. It has been an honor to be apart of a true message, "Learning today, Leading Tomorrow," because it should always be about the children of the future, the children of Mobile County!

"The new dawn blooms as we free it, for there is always light if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we are brave enough to be it."
- Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate

Myers, continued from page 14

I am a Mobile native and Davidson High School graduate. I completed my bachelor's degree in Accounting at Auburn University in 2016. From there, I moved to Birmingham, AL, and started my career in public accounting as an auditor, specializing in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. After four years in public accounting, I was ready to pursue a career path that would afford me a better work-life balance. I feel so fortunate to have found that here at MCPSS.

I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know each of the bookkeepers that I work with and each of the staff members in the LSA Department. Everyone has been kind, helpful, and supportive of me, as a new employee and as a new mother. I am grateful to be learning from people that have been where I am currently and can offer advice.

When I'm not working, you'll find me spending time with my husband and 6-month-old son. I love tackling a project, whether it be updating a room in our home, working on the landscaping of our yard, crocheting a blanket, or finding the perfect recipe for a lemon pound cake. These days, though, I spend much more of my time changing diapers, washing bottles, and trying to get my son to say "Mama" before he says "Dada."

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