



# News

from the MNPS Public Information Office

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

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## **Metro Schools, Alignment Nashville asked to share implementation of Smaller Learning Communities to D.C. policy forum**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn.** (November 14, 2008) – Metro Schools’ implementation of Smaller Learning Communities in district high schools has captured the attention of a Washington, D.C. based organization that provides learning opportunities for policymakers, practitioners and researchers working on youth issues at the national, state and local levels. The American Youth Policy Forum will host representatives from MNPS and Alignment Nashville Monday, Nov. 17, to share information on the implementation of SLCs in Metro’s high schools.

The delegation includes Starr Herrman, director for the district’s Smaller Learning Communities program; Sydney Rogers, executive director for Alignment Nashville; Nicholas Holland, president and CEO of business partner Centresource and former president of the Stratford High School IT Academy Advisory Council; and David McNeel, formerly the principal investigator for the Center for Innovation in Technological Education (CITE) at Nashville State and a consultant for the MNPS high school redesign project. The group will meet with between 80 and 100 policymakers at the Capitol, providing a presentation followed by questions and answers. Their topic will be the evolution of Nashville’s commitment to providing teachers and students with the skills and tools needed to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. They will focus on the district and community partnerships that have worked together to implement Smaller Learning Communities in Metro Schools.

“To be asked to present to this group is a real honor for Metro Schools, Alignment Nashville and the city of Nashville,” Rogers said. “Rarely do they devote an entire discussion to one group of presenters as they are with our group. That shows how interested they are in learning about what we are accomplishing here in Nashville.”

In the fall of 2008, MNPS took the next big step in its district wide high school redesign initiative by restructuring zoned high schools into smaller, more personalized learning environments. These smaller communities come in the form of Freshman Academies and Career and Thematic Academies. The district's 12 comprehensive high schools are offering Freshman Academies, which group ninth graders together with a team of teachers and an advisor. Freshman Academies allow for a smoother transition into high school. Tenth grade students at seven high schools have the option of joining a Career or Thematic Academy, which allows students

to study state mandated curriculum in the context of a particular career or theme of study.

“Through Smaller Learning Communities we are putting students in smaller groups where they can receive more personal, one-on-one attention and interaction with teachers,” said Herrman. “We are also offering them the chance to learn in classes geared to their specific career interests. All of this, we hope, will encourage them to stay in school and graduate prepared for the next phase of life, whether that be higher education or a successful entry into the workforce.”

The American Youth Policy Forum is a non-profit, nonpartisan professional development organization based in Washington, D.C. The organization’s goal is to help participants in its programs become more effective in the development, enactment and implementation of sound policies affecting the nation’s young people by providing information, insights and networks to better understand their development into healthy, successful and involved citizens and productive workers.

The purpose of Alignment Nashville is to create a system to bring community organizations and resources into alignment so their support to Nashville’s youth has a positive impact on public school success and the success of the community as a whole.

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](http://www.mnps.org).

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