



SUPERINTENDENT GREGORY DURING A READ-ALoud TO SCHOLARS AT SELECT ACADEMY



Voice of the Village

Dear Families and Friends:

The human life cycle is filled with change, and our scholars enter the world with the innate ability to learn and evolve across their development. All of them are born with multiple possible pathways to success and a distinctly unique potential. Our job as educators is to ignite their curiosity, awaken their inner-genius, and unlock their potential; and that of, a universe where all things are possible. We must act as beacons of light who create opportunities that map our scholars towards successful futures. We remain the gatekeepers of **Freedom** and must ensure the **American Dream** becomes their living reality.

The Village is on the Move! We sprang into the month of March using its first day to celebrate Read Across America at all elementary schools. We launched a village wide literacy task force; for the first time in the history of our schools, English Language Arts teachers, from 3rd grade to 12th grade, came together to prepare to implement and explore researched-based, rigorous and aligned curriculum. Thank you to

Dr. Shavon Chambers, Director of Curriculum, for leading this effort and to the Divine Nine, parents, partners and friends of MPTCS, who read to our scholars on March 1, 2019. **“Oh, the places we will go!”**

The labor demands of the 21st century continue to shift. We must reimagine our schools to ensure our scholars graduate ready for **college, careers, and life** in a global economy. We have amended our mission as such, adding the word, **life**. Thank you to our **Board of Trustees** for approving this addition as it places emphasis on the importance of Socio-Emotional Learning. The ability to set goals, be organized, understand your social media presence, and persevere through challenging situations are indispensable skills of the 21st century that can't be ignored. Our mission will continue to drive our work.

Change is inevitable in everything we do. On March 15th and 22nd, I look forward to hosting our inaugural

State of the Schools Address where I will be forecasting changes and providing all staff a glimpse into **the future of MPTCS**. During the first week of April, this news will be shared with our parents, partners, and the greater Newark Community. Our scholars must remain at the core of everything we do. **It truly, takes a village...**

As we honor, revere, and celebrate Women's History Month throughout the village, I end my message with words of inspiration from **Dr. Maya Angelou**: **“You may shoot me with your words, you may cut me with your eyes, you may kill me with your hatefulness, but still, like air, I'll Rise!”**

Let's remain rainbows in the clouds of our scholar, committed to moving the **Village Forward!**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Robert Gregory'.

A. Robert Gregory
MPTCS Superintendent/CEO



To commemorate Black History Month, Chef Andy Kallimanis, Food Service Manager for Center Café 78, worked with the students and the culinary team of Newark's Marion P. Thomas Charter High School of Culinary & Performing Arts to develop culturally-rich lunch entrées.

“What a great opportunity for our culinary students to bring their culture and culinary talent to Warren, NJ. We are grateful to GlaxoSmithKline's Mosaic employee resource group, who serve as mentors to our scholars, for introducing our school to Chef Andy Kallimanis and spearheading this culinary collaboration,” said MPTCS' Superintendent and CEO, A. Robert Gregory.

“It was a phenomenal experience. I look forward to participating in more opportunities like this.”

~ MPTCS Culinary Students

MPTCHS instructional chef, Taiesha Clark, and culinary students agreed on what dishes would best represent the contributions of people of African descent to American cuisine. “We thought a Black History lunch option should include a variety of spices and foods that exemplify the diversity of Black people and their journey from Africa to America and the Caribbean,” explained Chef Clark. The students were challenged to look at their own families' traditions and discover new foods and spices as well.



Together they created an eclectic menu, including:

Ethiopian Fried Chicken – Ethiopian-born Chef Marcus Samuelsson's recipe was the inspiration for this dish, which features a blend of Ethiopian spices to add new flavor to this southern delicacy.

Jollof Rice – A large portion of the student body at MPTCS is Nigerian, and this dish is a celebration of their culture and their contributions to American cuisine. The task of cultivating, processing, and packaging rice on South Carolina plantations was commonly assigned to slaves. This task proved to be quite common to the slaves who had been purposely imported from the rice growing region of West Africa, which includes Nigeria.

Callaloo – With its main ingredient being a green leafy vegetable, this dish was created by enslaved Africans using ideas of the indigenous people along with both African and indigenous plants. It is now a popular dish served in different areas across the Caribbean and America.

Brown Sugar Cinnamon Cornbread - Since enslaved people ate some form of corn at almost every meal, they created a variety of ways to prepare it drawing inspiration from their Native American neighbors. Cornbread became a common dish on

the plantation and today is part of traditional soul food cuisine, which encompasses foods that are a part of the African American culture.

The Black History Culinary collaboration was supported by GlaxoSmithKline's (GSK) Mosaic Employee Resource Group. Mosaic group members Terri Cobbs, Esther Thermesi and Olufunmilayo Ogunsulire coordinated the partnership.

“I was thrilled to introduce these new meal options, as well as the MPTCS High School of Culinary & Performing Arts, to our patrons,” said Chef Kallimanis. “I am truly thankful GSK's Mosaic group introduced me to the school and these amazing students. It proved to be a great way to celebrate Black History and bring to life the influence of African, African-American and Caribbean culture on today's cuisine,” Chef Kallimanis added.



MPTCS Culinary students getting a few tips from a chef at Warren, NJ's Café 78

LITERACY EVENTS & INITIATIVES



PAC Academy Principal, Genique Hamilton, helps scholars make Dr. Seuss inspired Green Eggs



Members of the Divine Nine participated in STEAM Academy's Read Across America Day

Marion P is LIT!

A bevy of exciting literacy events and initiatives occurred in the Village. **In February, award-winning author, Rita Williams-Garcia visited STEAM Academy to help kick-off Black History Month.**

Williams-Garcia is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Coretta Scott King Award, National Book Award Finalists, Newbery Honor Book, Junior Library Guild and the Scott O'Dell Prize for Historical Fiction. Her book, *One Crazy Summer*, was read by STEAM Academy's 5th and 6th grade students.

"We are beyond grateful Ms. Williams-Garcia visited our school to share her insight about her book and writing process with our scholars. Her book sparked interest in our history and led to thought-provoking conversations," explained Lisa Finn-Bruce, STEAM Academy's Principal.

On March 1st, Read Across America Day was celebrated at our elementary Academies. Members of the Divine Nine, historically African American, international Greek lettered fraternities and sororities, read to scholars at STEAM Academy. Our PAC Academy scholars participated in creative interactive activities and were read to by special guests and parents.

A Village-wide Literacy Task Force was formed to insure our English Language Arts teachers are implementing research-based best practices. Dr. Shavon Chambers, Director of Curriculum, is spearheading this effort. In the coming months, both staff and families will find out how they can support this important initiative.



Award-winning author Rita Williams-Garcia kicked-off STEAM Academy's Black History Month activities (Williams-Garcia is 3rd person on the left)



Superintendent Gregory discusses the Village-wide Literacy Task Force with MPTCS English Language Arts teachers

Dean McGee Selected as “2018-2019 Coach of the Year” MPTCHS Scholars receive recognition for an outstanding season

MPTCHS’ Lead Dean, Samuel McGee – who also serves as the High School Boys’ Basketball Coach – was recently selected as New Jersey Charter Athletic Association’s Coach of the Year for the 2018-19 School year.

“We won the regular league championship and they said from this year compared to last year it was a big turnaround in terms of wins,” said Coach McGee. “We only won five games last year; this year we won 14 and had a 9-1 record in the charter league!”

“I attribute the recognition I have received to the players, who brought into vision, culture and standards we set for our players,” added McGee. “This award is their award – for the hard work and dedication they put forth.”



Anthony Williams received NJCSAL’s First Team Boys’ basketball honors

Aziz Todd received NJCSAL’s Second Team Boys’ basketball honors

Ashely Evans received NJCSAL’s First Team Girls’ basketball honors

Jordan Reddick-Green received NJCSAL’s Second Team Girls’ basketball honors

EdCampMPTCS:

Voice & Choice for MPTCS Staffers

“In response to the positive impact and feedback from our teachers who attended an EdcampNewark event, we knew we had to join the Edcamp movement. EdcampMPTCS was unique because it was hosted internally by our Academic Leadership Team and embedded into our professional learning schedule. EdcampMPTCS reignited our village-wide passion for educating our Scholars. The MPTCS professional learning network was not only revitalized but empowered by voice and choice. Teachers and Staff collaborated to engage one another in educational topics to revolutionize their practice, across all grade-levels and departments. It was truly electrifying to witness the depth of educational experience in our village!”

~Dr. Melinda Johnson, Director of Teacher and Scholar Effectiveness



Dr. Melinda Johnson (center) with EdCampMPTCS participants.

PAC Academy (28 Burnet St.) will host Edcamp Newark 3.0. PAC’s Dean of Academics, Ms. Benjamin is keeping the registration open for MPTCS villagers and only a few slots remain. To register visit <https://www.smores.com/gp82n>