

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF UNIVERSITY CITY

# CONNECTIONS

## DEDICATED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

A publication connecting the School District of University City and Parents in the University City Community

March 2008

### *Parent/Teacher Conference Tips*

Parent-teacher conferences provide an opportunity for one-on-one conversation between parents and teachers. Here are some general hints to make the most of the meeting:

#### Before the meeting:

1. Ask your child if there is anything specific for you to discuss with the teacher.
2. Prepare by writing down questions and topics you want to talk about during the conference.
3. Arrive promptly or a few minutes early.

#### During the meeting:

4. Begin with positive comments.
5. Stay on topic - discussing current concerns relevant to your child.
6. Listen and be open minded to suggestions from the teacher.
7. Keep your emotions under control.
8. Maintain poise, discussing issues in a respectful and professional manner.
9. Take notes to help remember high points to share with your child and behaviors that need improvement.
10. Express appreciation to teacher for both the conference and working with your child.
11. Set opportunity for follow-up and feedback if needed.
12. Do not stay beyond your allotted time. Other parents are anxious to speak with the teacher as well.

Dear Parent:

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held on Monday, March 17 and Wednesday, March 19, in your child's school. I encourage your participation in this important meeting with your child's teacher and to become a partner with their school. Strong parental involvement encourages students to succeed, as well as increasing their academic achievement.

In May, you will have an opportunity to observe work your child has created at the annual Celebration of Learning. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,



Jaylynn L. Wilson, Superintendent of Schools

### *Summer school begins June 16*

The School District of University City will again offer a Summer Learning Academy beginning June 16 for all grade levels. Prekindergarten through eighth grades will attend Monday through Thursday and conclude on July 17. High school students will attend Monday through Friday, with sessions ending July 25. Schools and offices will be closed July 4 for Independence Day.

The early childhood program will be held at the Julia Goldstein ECEC. The elementary (K-5) program will be hosted at Jackson Park Elementary School for Barbara C. Jordan, Flynn Park and Jackson Park students. Pershing will be the site for Delmar-Harvard, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Pershing students. Preschool and elementary breakfast will be served at 8 a.m. with class beginning at 8:30 a.m., and student dismissal at 1 p.m. Lunch will be served for PreK-5 students only beginning at 11 a.m.

Brittany Woods Middle School will host sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Their breakfast begins at 7:30 a.m. with classes beginning at 8 a.m. Student dismissal is at 12:30 p.m. with no lunch served.

Ninth through twelfth grades will attend University City High School. Breakfast will be served at 7 a.m. Class begins at 7:30 a.m. Student dismissal at 12 p.m. No lunch is served.

Bus service will be provided for all students who qualify. Parents of students who are required to attend 2008 SLA will be notified in the spring with applications accepted in April and May.

For more information or general questions about University City's Summer Learning Academy, contact the office of Curriculum and Instruction at 314/290-4020.

### *February 21 school board meeting rescheduled*

The February 21 Board of Education meeting was postponed due to inclement weather. Agenda items slated for February 21 were added and discussed during the regularly scheduled March 6 meeting of the school board. The board meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the McNair Administration Building, located at 8136 Groby Road in University City. For a schedule of meeting dates, agendas and board summaries, visit [www.ucityschools.org](http://www.ucityschools.org) or call 314/290-4003.

### *Bad weather results in school year extension*

As a result of inclement weather forcing the School District of University City to shut its doors on February 1, 21 and 22 as well as March 4 and 5, the 2007-2008 school calendar has been adjusted. Although the current calendar allows for the school year to be extended based upon the number of snow days used, many within the University City community voiced concerns regarding the additional days. As a result, March 14 was designated as an early release attendance day for students and a record keeping day for teachers.

The extended revised calendar also calls for Thursday, June 5 and Friday, June 6 to be full attendance make-up days. Additionally, Monday, June 9 and Tuesday, June 10 will be early release attendance days. June 10 is also the last day of school for students and the last contract day for teachers.

A downloadable version of the revised 2007-2008 District calendar is available at [www.ucityschools.org](http://www.ucityschools.org). The current 2007-08 school district calendar could be amended again in the event of future inclement-weather related closings.

## *Meet candidates for the April 8 school board elections*

Candidates vying for the three vacant seats on the University City Board of Education on April 8 have been invited to participate in "Meet the Candidate" forums, sponsored by school PTOs.

Jackson Park Elementary School and PTO will host school board candidates at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25.

The University City League of Women Voters' candidates forum for both school board and city council is set for 7-9:30 p.m. on Wednesday March 26, in the University City Public Library.

Pershing Elementary School and PTO have rescheduled their March 4 event at the school to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1.

The entire University City community is invited to attend all of the above events that are free and open to the public.

## *Educator George M. McKenna visits University City School District*

Noted national educator Dr. George McKenna was the featured guest speaker during the February 4 Professional Development Day for staff and held a community discussion during the evening on "Culturally Relevant Education." McKenna shared that the three Rs in today's educational experience are rigor, relevance and relationships. He believes that educators can be more effective teachers if they understand the culture of their students. He also said that strong parental involvement can lead to better academic performance in children and encouraged parents of children who do well in school to serve as mentors to parents who have little or no involvement with their children's education. McKenna currently serves as the assistant superintendent of secondary schools in Pasadena, California.

## *District welcomes legislative leaders*

Several members of the School District of University City administrative team, led by Superintendent Joylynn Wilson, met with members and representatives of Missouri's legislative delegation on February 8. Additional meetings are planned for the future.

The gathering provided an opportunity for school officials and lawmakers to update one another and exchange information on various programs, funding issues and initiatives as well as overall District operations.

Attending the meeting were State Sen. Joan Bray, State Rep. Jake Zimmerman, Bob Burns an aide to U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill and Peggy Barnhardt an aide to U.S. Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond.

## *U. City Day at Busch Stadium, May 4*

The School District of University City's PTO Council is organizing "U. City Day" at Busch Stadium for the 7:05 p.m. Cardinals vs Cubs game on Sunday, May 4, 2008. Come and watch Superintendent Joylynn Wilson throw the first pitch.

Check with your school PTO about special-priced tickets and student participation incentive. Flyers with reservation request forms should be available through your school office.

## *"The Wizard of Oz," April 11 & 12*

The annual spring musical at is a University City High School tradition dating back to 1928 and believe it or not, this is the FIRST time that the school has ever presented "The Wizard of Oz."

Mark your calendar for the April 11 or 12 presentation, featuring more than 50 students, including elementary munchkins.

## *Celebration of Learning, May 7*

The School District of University City has rescheduled Celebration of Learning 2008 to Wednesday, May 7, at Brittany Woods Middle School. The districtwide Arts Night will still be held on Wednesday, April 16.

## *Consultant begins work at UCHS*

Recently, the Board of Education hired Dr. George White to work as an administrative consultant at University City High School (UCHS). White is meeting with UCHS staff and administrators to help determine and identify future short and long range objectives for the school. He will advise the administration on building positive working relationships with students, parents, staff and the community. He will also work with District administration to help prepare for the 2008-09 school year.

A 20-year veteran educator, White formerly worked as an assistant principal of Webster Groves High School and held teaching positions in the Normandy and Kirkwood school districts. He is currently an adjunct professor at Webster University.

## *Important questions to ask during Parent-Teacher Conferences*

In order to help children succeed, parents need to know what is expected. Here are some suggested questions to help during Parent/Teacher Conferences:

1. What skills and knowledge will my child be expected to master this year? How do teachers inform students about these academic standards?
2. How is my child be evaluated? How are grades determined?
3. How can I best support the teacher's efforts in implementing higher academic standards? What can I do to stay involved in my child's academic progress, help with homework or give additional support?
4. How does the teacher accommodate differences in learning, a slow learner who is falling behind or fast learner who is bored? Are additional supports available such as summer school, tutors, etc.?
5. How are students preparing for post-high school career or college through academic courses?  
Don't forget to take notes!

**Connections** is a publication of the School District of University City. Published monthly throughout the school year, containing information of interest to parents of children throughout the school district.

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Please send suggestions or comments to: School District of University City, Communications and Media Services, 8136 Groby Road, University City, Missouri 63130; call: (314) 290-4019 or e-mail ccole@u-city.k12.mo.us.