



# News



Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

## For Immediate Release

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## Metro Nashville's public high schools on a path toward excellence

**NASHVILLE, TN (June 18, 2010)**– Metro Nashville's public high schools are on a path toward excellence. Today, district administrators and officials with Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies (Ford PAS) announced Nashville will be a Leadership Level Next Generation Learning Community. Key to this designation is Nashville's commitment to align community resources and business organizations in development of a long-term master plan to transform public education. This announcement puts Nashville in a league with just six other cities nationwide.

“Our founder Henry Ford built an entire industry from his relentless focus on innovation,” said Cheryl Carrier, program director, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Programs, Ford Motor Company Fund. “Today communities are looking for innovative ways to leverage their resources to develop systems that provide students with the skills needed for success in a global economy. We are excited to expand our partnership with Nashville and provide these innovative tools here and across the country.”

Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies is recognized for its unique approach that brings together educators, business and the community to transform education through career academies within existing public high schools. At its core is a framework that provides best practices for a community to scale up and sustain career academy networks that provide student learning through the lens of a career. The framework includes the Ford PAS curriculum – a series of 20 educational modules that develop critical thinking, team building and other career-relevant skills and use real-world problems from fields such as environmental sustainability, business, economics and engineering.

“Ford PAS is a nationally recognized curriculum that engages students in inquiry-based activities promoting higher levels of understanding,” said MNPS Associate Superintendent of High Schools Jay Steele. “This district has worked with Ford PAS curriculum for many years, but to be put in this type of leadership role with such a quality program is a great testament to the work that is happening in our high schools.”

Ford PAS Next Generation Learning Communities are regional alliances of K–12 schools, businesspeople, post-secondary educators, and community leaders mobilized to reform education and stimulate local economic development. As part of this recognition, Nashville will:

- Receive technical assistance from the Ford PAS Advisory Team to help the community redesign its high school education for future workforce needs of local employers and industry.
- Have access to on-going professional development for educators and continued access to the award-winning Ford PAS curriculum, an academically rigorous curriculum that engages students in an interdisciplinary and interactive method for learning.

- Become members of the Ford PAS Next Generation Learning Community national network, which will allow Nashville to serve as a model to other Ford PAS Next Generation Learning Communities.

The successful implementation of the best practices outlined by Ford PAS has been key to the city’s new recognition. Of particular importance is the increase in business and community support. With the help of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, PENCIL Foundation, numerous local business leaders and the **CEO Champions\***, MNPS has begun to build a network of support for students, parents, and staff that stretches clear across the county.

“The success of Nashville’s public school system will affect the future prosperity of not only the city, but our region,” said Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Ralph Schulz. “Academies create a connection with area businesses and students that will bring real-world relevance and inspiration to the next generation of our workforce.”

**Other Ford PAS Next Generation Learning Communities:**

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| • St. Johns County Schools, St. Augustine, Fla.               | January 2009   |
| • Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, Pensacola, Fla.           | January 2009   |
| • Philadelphia Academies, Inc., Philadelphia, Penn.           | April 2008     |
| • Volusia County, Daytona Beach, Fla.                         | December 2007  |
| • Sacramento City Unified School District, Sacramento, Calif. | October 2007   |
| • Lee County, Ft. Myers, Fla.                                 | September 2007 |

**About The Academies of Nashville**

Since the awarding of a \$6.5 million smaller learning communities (SLC) grant in 2006, MNPS has been redesigning high schools into SLCs. These come in the form of freshman academies, career and theme-based academies, and some smaller, non-traditional schools. Currently, 12 MNPS high schools are in the process of establishing career and theme-based academies – Antioch, Cane Ridge, Glencliff, Hillsboro, Hillwood, Hunters Lane, Maplewood, McGavock, Overton, Pearl-Cohn, Stratford and Whites Creek. All schools are not at the same level of implementation as this process takes careful planning and preparation; all schools are expected to be wall-to-wall, meaning all students will be enrolled in an academy with a set team of teachers, within the next three years.

At the start of the 2009-10 school year, a new wave of support was generated for this initiative when the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce formed the **CEO Champions\***, a group of local executives committed to supporting Metro’s high school reform efforts. This group, in partnership with the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, PENCIL Foundation and numerous local businesses and organizations, have been instrumental in helping establish solid relationships between local organizations and individual schools and academies. These partnerships are critical in developing and maintaining quality academies.

The purpose of the academies are to prepare Nashville students for college and career; to provide relevant, rigorous, and engaging coursework; to understand the relevance of the material they are asked to learn; and to help students explore various careers, learn critical 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and graduate from high school better prepared for college, career and life.

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**About Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools**

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools serve more than 76,000 students with the goal of being the first choice for families 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).

**About Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services**

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services works to strengthen families and communities through programs that foster auto-related safety, education and American heritage. Made possible by funding from Ford Motor Company, Ford Motor Company Fund celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009. National programs include Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies, which provides high school students with academically rigorous, real world learning experiences, and Ford Driving Skills for Life, which teaches safe driving skills to teenagers through interactive web-based learning and hands-on driving clinics. Each year the Ford Volunteer Corps provides more than 100,000 hours of volunteer support from 20,000 Ford employees for community projects in more than 40 countries. For more information, visit [www.community.ford.com](http://www.community.ford.com).