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THE Catalyst

Superintendent/ Principal's Message

****NEWS FLASH****

The VAST majority of UPSM students did what they were supposed to do in February. They turned in homework, behaved in disciplined, civilized and orderly ways in and out of class.

As a result, they learned, they grew and they experienced the rewards of living A Disciplined Life.

Don't ever doubt that UPSM has awesome students who behave, who have great big dreams and who work hard every day to achieve them. They are our hope, our inspiration and our future.

Like any other school anywhere, we have a small handful who break the rules at times. As educators our job is to find a way to motivate them to behave appropriately and inspire them to engage in their education—whatever it takes. Sometimes it takes a LOT, and it feels like we take two steps forward and one step backward along the way—just like parenting.

There are times, however, student misbehavior crosses the line and it takes a zero tolerance approach. Such an incident happened at UPSM late last week.

By now you know we discovered a small amount of marijuana on a student. Thanks to the swift and expert work of Mr. Tucker, Mr. Bell and Mr. Barnes, we got to the bottom of the situation the same day. The students have been asked to leave UPSM for the remainder of the school year.

As I stated in my email to families last week, this is a great opportunity to engage in a discussion with your child about the dangers of drug abuse. I encourage you to open and maintain a dialog with your child on this topic. For help, check out the Web site Parents the Anti-Drug at <http://www.theantidrug.com/>.

While disappointing, we will grow as a school community if we seize the opportunity to educate our children and to offer our thoughts and prayers to the families whose children were involved.

Finally, please join me in praising and thanking all the UPSM students who do NOT succumb to peer pressure, who do the right thing and who make us proud of UPSM and optimistic about our future. They are our own Everyday Heroes!!

Educationally Yours,

Margaret Trimer-Hartley

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Welcome to March!

Parent to Parent

Welcome to March and the end of the second trimester. We have accomplished so much and I would like to thank all of you who have lent a hand to help make our children's learning environment better. I see parents in the hall every day helping advisors with ordinary or extraordinary issues. There are parents who help at lunch, in the parking lot, with after school clubs and in the classroom. You all are truly a blessing and we thank you so much!

As we roll out a new trimester let us remember to keep the momentum going. Spring has a funny way of taking all of us off task or switching our schedules. If you find yourself with an extra hour during the week please stop in to the Parent Power Center to see if you can help. There will be many new projects on the way, especially for the 8th graders.

We will be changing our Parents as Partners format starting this Thursday, March 4th. Our starting time is still 5:30 pm. Light refreshments will be served and as always there will be handouts from various clubs. This month we introduce a raffle that will be drawn at our final Parents as Partners meeting on Thursday, June 3rd. There are two prizes of \$250 and you will receive a ticket at every Parents as Partners meeting you attend. Please come early for our Meet and Greet and connect with other like-minded parents.

Our meeting schedule is as follows:

March, Thursday, March 4th, April, Tuesday, March 30th (this is due to the fact that Spring Break starts at 3:30 pm on Thursday, April 1st), May, Thursday May 6th, June Thursday, June 3rd.

We will have guest speakers each month for the rest of the year. Schedule of speakers coming soon!

Thank you for your dedication to UPSM. It has been wonderful getting to work with you to help bring our children the best education possible. Please feel free to contact me at any time to volunteer or offer your suggestions at ccampbell@uprepsm.com.

Thank you,

Carol Campbell

Volunteer Coordinator

ATTENTION*ATTENTION*ATTENTION

The Parent Power Center is offering basic computer training. We understand that not everyone has a computer, computer access or is computer savvy. UPSM wants to help. If you would like help logging onto PowerSchool, investigating your child's advisor's website, setting up an email account or other internet options that will help your child succeed in school, please contact me at ccampbell@uprepsm.com. It would be my pleasure to help you connect with your child's educational environment.

Have a great month!

Carol Campbell, Volunteer Coordinator

Marijuana is riskier than you think

Marijuana can hinder a teen's ability to learn. Heavy marijuana use impairs young people's ability to concentrate and retain information. This can be especially problematic during peak learning years.

Marijuana use is linked to poorer grades. A teen with a "D" average is four times more likely to have used marijuana than a teen with an "A" average.

Marijuana and underage drinking are linked to higher dropout rates. Students who drink or use drugs frequently are up to five times more likely than their peers to drop out of high school.

A teenage marijuana user's odds of dropping out are more than twice that of a non-user.

Enrollment update—please turns in your recommitment forms

UPSM held a public lottery for our 7th and 8th grade waiting lists February 19. We have several families who've signed up for seats in those grades, and they are eager to learn if they will get in.

We won't, however, know how many seats we have available until you tell us if your child is coming back to UPSM—and we hope each and every one is!!

If we do not receive your recommitment letter by **March 10**, we will assume your child is NOT returning to UPSM and we will begin enrolling students from the waiting list. Please don't delay.

Call or email me if you have questions or concerns about returning to UPSM mtrimer-hartley@uprepsm.com or 313-269-5627.

If you are a satisfied customer, please tell your friends, colleagues and family members that there are still seats available at UPSM in sixth and ninth grades. They are filling up fast, though. They can go to www.uprepsm.com and fill out an application.

Here's looking forward to our third year!

Seeking Job Shadow Hosts

Every 8th grader at University Prep Science and Math Middle School is preparing for her/his Job Shadow. What is a Job Shadow you ask? In short, a Job Shadow is an opportunity for a student, or a small group of students, to see adults in the world of work. Students will be able to get a look at the world of work and see firsthand the connection between what they are learning here at UPSM and what they need to know to build a career.

We need volunteers to host well-prepared students at their jobs, giving students real-life experience in the world of work. If you are willing to open your work place to a student, then please let me know at dneal@uprepsm.com. We welcome adults in all fields of work including full time students and stay at home parents.

UPSM High School Update

UPSM High School construction is on schedule and on budget. Equally exciting, we introduced and welcomed Dr. Gabriela Gui, our principal, and Grady Jones, the “Emperor of Rigor” or Engagement Specialist, to our school community early last month.

Mr. Jones is now spending time at UPSM Middle School every week. He’s getting to know throes of developing the curriculum and equipping the classrooms.

Dr. Gui joins us in full force July 1.

Here’s what the building looks like now:



High School Preparedness meetings—2nd WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

The first High School Preparedness meeting will be March 10 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The topic: **Managing a Year-Round Calendar:** *What to expect when summer comes and you’re still in school*

Guest speaker TBD.

Robert Bobb visits UPSM—reinforces competition, ponders collaboration

Detroit Public Schools’ high-profile Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb made a low key visit to UPSM Middle School February 17 and declared, “This year, I’m coming after your kids...and your staff.”

In what was his first visit to a Detroit charter school, Mr. Bobb toured classrooms and participated in a roundtable discussion with staff, students, parents and even a prospective parent whose child was spending the day testing out UPSM as an alternative to Farmington Public Schools.

Our students—Sydney Owens, Jason Young, Quentin Rodriguez, and Chante Campbell—answered questions about rigor, projects and relationships at UPSM. Our staff—about their ability to succeed because of UPSM’s small class sizes. They also praised the school’s efforts to differentiate/personalize learning.

Said Mr. Barnes, “I could not do in DPS what I’m doing here because I had 35-40 kids in a classroom...Small classes make so much more possible.”

Despite his tongue in cheek comments about the competition between charter schools and DPS, Mr. Bobb said he is looking for ways to bridge the divide. He said there are many partnership possibilities in extracurricular activities such as sports and music, though he did not offer any specifics.

We appreciate Mr. Bobb’s visit and his **promise** to improve DPS and to find ways to work with charters. For now, we will continue to focus on holding onto our students and staff through UPSM’s superior **performance**.

Super’s Heroes

Every month, I recognize students who exemplify UPSM’s Disciplined Life Values. I call them the “Super’s Heroes,” which is, of course, my way of saying they are the superintendent’s “best of” list.

I take the students out to lunch at the DIA and give the group an additional \$100 to spend however they like. So far, they have ALL given the money to charity. Here’s the list of winners to date—and the causes that have benefitted from their generosity:

October

Donovan Bowman

Justin Tilley

Jason Young

Gregory Frazier

Dominique Moch

Quentin Rodriguez

(½ to Make a Wish Foundation
½ to Ronald McDonald House)

November

Sabrina Minus

Arreal Blackmon

Nia Hightower

Kory Barksdale

Lauren Mosley

(\$100 to the “Hidden Heroes”
program—it’s a student driven
philanthropy right here at
UPSM)

December

Darrian Mason

Sierra Sibert

Joshua Hughes

Darnell Small

Chante' Campbell

Cherise McAdoo

Lexus Giddings

Ashanae Carson

(½ of the \$100 to Haiti and to
UPSM for needy families)

January

Brianna Jones

Sydney Owens

Henry Jones

Eddie Peterson

Samaj Peterson

Justin Tilley (second recognition)

Christian Thomas

And MR. MOORE

Travel Club – We Need Your Help

Our June UPSM environmental science/Spanish trip to Costa Rica is fast approaching, and we are coming up short in our fundraising efforts. UPSM parents and students set a goal of raising \$5000 with the understanding that UPSM will put in two dollars for every one dollar raised.

The Travel Club is only halfway there. Members have been working hard on bake sales, student activity nights and other organized fundraisers. But times are tough and they're looking for your help.

We know many families cannot afford to support the program this year. We also know that many families can offer help.

Please consider offering a contribution—anything from \$5 on up is welcome—to the Travel Club if you can afford it this year. Every student must experience international travel to graduate from UPSM. We will be raising money every year to make this happen.

Help a student this year, and I guarantee that someone will help send YOUR child out of the country to learn and grow in the future.

Please contact me or Ms. Sherman @uprepsm.com if you can help. Checks and/or money orders should be made to University Prep Science & Math.

THANK YOU!!!!

March is Reading Month

Every advisory will be focusing on literacy in one way or another this month. Our staff has some terrific plans. Please pay attention and PLEASE reinforce with your child that reading is the key to everything.

We have literacy challenges at UPSM and we WILL overcome them with a strong focus and a lot of enthusiasm.

Read with your child. Read to your child (YES, even to your middle schooler). Read around your child (modeling makes a difference).

Tardy Policy

We have so many students straggling into school late and/or loitering in the halls after school officially starts. It's time to remind everyone of UPSM's starting time and Tardy Policy. Please go over this with your child. We will NOT allow the current level of tardiness to continue.

School begins promptly at **8:00 am**. In order to be considered on time, students must be in their advisory seats at **8:00 am**. It is imperative that all students arrive to school on time for optimal learning. When students are late, they miss instruction which affects academic achievement. In addition the morning lessons are disrupted for all and routines cannot be established.

- Three (3) unexcused tardies = 1 absence. An adult must sign the student in at the front desk if the student is tardy. A written notification will be sent to parents after six (6) tardies which is equivalent to two (2) absences.
- After 15 tardies (equal to 5 absences): A parent conference will be held with the teacher and principal to create a contract about ways to increase the student's presence at school. (The contract may include after school study hall, Saturday school, or suspension from school activities)
- After 30 tardies (equal to 10 absences): The principal will require the parent and student to meet with the hearing committee to discuss the attendance contract, enrollment options and additional consequences for continued student absences

Welcome Mr. Jeffrey Chestnut - after school security

Sadly and surprisingly, we continue to experience problems with students loitering afterschool. We have hired Mr. Chestnut, to help us enforce the school policy.

Teachers and administrators conduct so much business once the teaching day is over that we cannot

Our policy is Out the Door by Four unless the student has a valid reason for staying after school. Valid reasons include participation in school-sponsored after school activities, detention and/or special meetings with teachers.

Students who must leave and then return to the building for activities will be given red admission tickets to re-enter the building. They can get them from their advisors and/or Mrs. Moon and Ms. Ruffin.

They may also re-enter UPSM if an adult is with them.

Otherwise, we **IMPLORE** you to make arrangements for your child to leave campus by 4 p.m. or enroll them in the YMCA's latchkey program. Scholarships are available if you need.

We must work together to overcome this problem. It is a safety and building security issue. **PLEASE** work with us.

End of Trimester—LTM's on

March 12th

We are fast approaching the third and final trimester of the year. That means your child should be putting together his/her Presentation of Learning (POL) and preparing for March 12 Learning Team Meetings. **PLEASE** notify your child's advisor if you have not signed up for a meeting on that day.

We're trying to pack all our LTM's into one day this trimester so that we do not lose time on task in the classroom. UPSM teachers gave up their Professional Development Day to try this. They will be coming in on Saturday, March 20 to do the training instead. I am proud of their willingness to give up part of their weekend to put students first.

Kudos colleagues!!

Office hours for MTH

In keeping with our push for more and more effective communication, please feel welcome to stop by my office any **Tuesday from 3:30-5 p.m.** to share your ideas, concerns and questions. It's a great time to get to know one another better and make sure we are all operating on the same page.