



# McKean High School News

# Principally Speaking...

Sherry L. Gross

Dear Highlander Families:

Happy October! We hope everyone is getting the school year off to a great start. This newsletter contains a wealth of information and celebrations about our school. I want to focus on two items for my cover letter: introductions of two new assistant principals and our PTSO.

I have had the great pleasure of working with Lisa Ueltzhoffer, Steve Schmidt and Mike Simmonds over the past two years. This summer, both Steve and Mike accepted new positions. Mike is the principal at Central School, and Steve teaches Health and Physical Education at AI High School. McKean now welcomes two new assistant principals: Brian Mattix and Eric Stancell. Many of you may already know Mr. Mattix, who has been with McKean for quite some time as a special education teacher and academy coordinator, as well as a member of our coaching staff for football and wrestling. Mr. Stancell comes to us from AI High School where he taught business education and served as a part of the football staff.

On September 24, during our first PTSO meeting of the school year, we covered many topics; however, the two items that resonated the most with me

as needs for our organization are increasing membership/participation and making McKean the school of choice within our school district.

I beg you to reflect on your involvement with our school. Our PTSO organization needs your support. We are working on many projects to improve our school and cannot make our dreams a reality without you. We have made so many improvements over the past two years to improve our school's image and pride; we need to keep up our momentum because we still have work to do.

Please complete the membership form on the next page and turn it in at school today. Better yet, come to our next meeting on **Wednesday, October 29th at 7pm in our library**. Learn more about the organization and how you can help.

Be a part of the change that you want to see for our school and our students. The more minds we have working on this, the better.

As always, thank you for sending us your very best!

Sherry L. Gross  
Proud Principal of McKean High School

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# PTSO Membership Form

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## MCKEAN HIGHLANDER PTSO MEMBERSHIP/DIRECTORY FORM

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Class of \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Optional:

I/We wish to sign the “Parents’ Pledge” which is as follows:

“As a responsible member of the McKean High School community, I will neither serve nor knowingly permit alcohol or other drug consumption during any student gathering in my home, nor at student activities outside my home. I also pledge not to permit any unchaperoned student party to take place in my home.”

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

If you chose to sign the Pledge, an asterisk will be placed next to your name in the directory.

Please return completed form with a check for \$10.00 per family made out to: McKean PTSO to the school office or mail to :

McKean High School PTSO  
301 McKennan’s Church Road  
Wilmington, DE 19808

**THIS IS YOUR SCHOOL—JOIN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

# Celebrations and Accomplishments

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## Student Advisory Leads to Student Success

Submitted by: Brian Budd

McKean is at it again. Through our school-wide advisory program, McKean High School will be implementing the state mandated Student Success Plans, but taking them to a whole other level. This school year, the state is mandating that students in high school in grades 8 through 10 must complete their SSP's. McKean is implementing them school wide, for all students in grades 8 through 12. McKean introduced SSPs and Career Cruising through their ninth grade advisory program last year and saw much success. This year, Katie Kravitz, Brian Budd, and Sandra Daly will administer the programs and collect data on McKean students as they begin to complete their SSPs.

Throughout the year, we will be asking our students and our

faculty to complete lessons on [www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com). Career cruising has lessons that help students find abilities and interests, schools and careers of interest, activities and classes to take in school, as well as helps set up short-term and long-term goals.



The students' advisory teachers learn to help their students navigate through the website. They will also brainstorm for ideas and questions to help the students by probing for more information.

Every parent will be given a log-on to access their child's SSP. We hope that the advisory teacher and the parent can partner so that the parent and student can work on the SSP at home and the parents can review the work that is done at school. Even though the state is mandating that we do this with our students, we here at McKean find value in this program and hope you and your child find that same value. Career Cruising is a great online tool that can help with making your child's dreams and ambitions into reality. We look forward to working with you this year.

## Delaware Drop-out Prevention Summit

Submitted by: Katie Kravitz

On October 28, 2008, America's Promise Alliance is sponsoring the Delaware Drop-out Prevention Summit in Dover, Delaware. A portion of the Summit will include pre-recorded interviews of students across Delaware who have thought about dropping out of school or who have dropped out and then later returned to school or an alternative program.

On Friday, September 19th, Communities In Schools of Delaware partnered with the Governor's Office and the

Department of Education to create a student forum at the Wallace Wallin Center in New Castle, DE. Two students from McKean High School joined over twenty students from William Penn High School to share their experiences about why they thought about leaving school but chose not to or why they decided to return to school after initially dropping out. Students were interviewed in group

and individual settings and their messages will be aired during the Drop-out Prevention Summit in October.



# Celebrations and Accomplishments

## Blue and Green... and Pink!

Submitted by: Cindy LaRock

On October 15, 2008 the McKean High School FCCLA will be sponsoring the "Passionately Pink for the Cure" fundraiser.

For a donation of \$2.00 McKean staffers will be helping in the fight against breast cancer and showing their support by wear-

ing jeans and pink clothing or McKean wear. Students can participate by purchasing a pink ribbon for 50¢.

Everyone who participates will also receive a pin commemorating the event.

"Imagine a world without breast cancer...." Nancy G. Brinker, founder Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation



## Students to Direct One-Act Plays

Submitted by: Connie Regan

This November, McKean will present our first student-directed one-act plays. McKean students have selected and cast their productions and are now busily rehearsing. The shows will be performed on the evenings of Thursday, November 13th and Friday, November 14th in the Audion. Stay tuned for more information!

### Trifles

Directed by Amanda Swift and Jennifer Mays

Sheriff ..... Elizabeth Steward  
Attorney ..... Milan Reid  
Mrs. Peters ..... Cache Shaw  
Mr. Hale ..... Reid Savage  
Mrs. Hale..... Savannah Lawrence

### Scheme of the Driftless Shifter

Directed by Vivien McIndoe and Jasmarie Preston

Pompington ..... Keiwoun Brown  
Petunia..... Shawnta Pulliam  
Marigold ..... Kristen Swift  
Gladys ..... Heather Gollie  
Victor ..... Jibri Hollis  
Rex..... Zak Jones  
Director ..... Carlos Rivera  
Scrub Woman..... Amanda Grooms  
Stage Manager..... Selena Brown  
Lady in Hat ..... Shayla Smallwood  
Man Behind Lady in Hat..... Xavier Dennis  
Prompter ..... Amanda Swift



# Highlander News

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## Testing Update

Submitted by: Brian Mattix

McKean 9th and 10th grade students completed MAP testing on September 12. The Measures of Academic Progress test is a nationally norm-referenced test providing feedback in order to enhance instruction. The testing process was smooth due to the efforts of everyone involved. Specific thanks to Brian Budd, McKean's Building Testing Coordinator for his leadership and problem-solving. Also, Troy Yeager, District Tech Support, deserves special thanks for dealing with all of our technical difficulties.

On Wednesday, October 15, our 10th and 11th grade students will take the PSAT exam. These scores can qualify students for scholarship programs and indicate whether a student is ready for Advanced Placement courses in high school – with an opportunity to earn college credits.

## McKean Advisory

Submitted by: Katie Kravitz

McKean is starting a new initiative this year – School Wide Advisory. The program is an extension of our 9th grade advisory that was introduced three years ago. Every 10th – 12th grade student meets with a club on Wednesday mornings. Students get a chance to work with other students and a club advisor on topics that interest them, like yearbook or fitness. During club time, students also set goals and take a look at educational topics that will help them succeed in high school and beyond. Club advisors help promote the club activity and help mentor their advisees. They will check on progress of goals set by their advisees as well as grades and school life. The key ideas behind the School Wide Advisory system is for students to feel connected to McKean and to have an Advisor in the school that they can relate to through an activity that both enjoy.

Parents and guardians can help us with this new initiative. Please take time to ask what happened in advisory every Wednesday night. Talk to your child about the club activity as well as the educational topics. Please stress the importance of being a Highlander and high school activities help make your high school experience better.

Topics for October include:

- ✎ Making Banners to promote your club activity and showing so Highlander Spirit!
- ✎ PSAT or SAT preparation
- ✎ Writing letters to people in students' lives who inspire them to succeed.

## Common Quarterly Assessments

Submitted by: Lisa Ueltzhoffer

Students in the 9th and 10th grade core subjects (English, Math, Science and Social Studies) will be given Common Quarterly Assessments. These assessments have been designed by McKean teachers with the support of curriculum specialists. They are aligned with the Delaware Recommended Curriculum, focus on higher order questioning and are formatted like the DSTP.

Students will be given these assessments at the end of each marking period. Teachers will analyze the students' performance and determine each student's specific areas of need. Teachers will work together to determine interventions to support students with building the skills necessary for success. These interventions may vary from providing additional opportunity to build a skill within daily instruction to more fo-

cused and individualized supports within the classroom.

Assessing our students on a quarterly basis will give teachers feedback on where students are doing well and where more attention needs to be given. It will provide us with a clear timeline to introduce interventions to students and will afford us the opportunity to re-teach concepts so that students in need to not fall further behind.

# Highlander News

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## Leading the Way News from our small learning communities

Submitted by: Brian Budd

The 2008-09 school year at McKean is off to a busy and exciting start! With many new initiatives beginning this year, we are continuing our successful growth. This will be the fourth year of the 9th grade academy and the second year of the 10th grade academy. Both academies are made up of two teams, the Blue and Green team. The majority of the students on each team will have the same teachers in each of the four core content areas: English, Math, Social Studies, and Science.

The academies are seeing some new faces this year. The 9th grade academy's assistant principal is Mrs. Lisa Ueltzhoffer, while Mr. Brian Mattix, our previous 9th grade academy coordinator, is now the new assistant principal in charge of the 10th grade academy. Mrs. Ashley Miller is starting her second year as 10th grade academy coordinator, and Mr. Brian Budd, a fourth-year McKean teacher, is now the 9th grade coordinator. Brian and Ashley look forward to a great year working together to promote and strengthen both academies.

We also find new teachers within the two academies. In the 9th grade academy, McKean welcomes Mr. George Hantzopolous, who teaches US History, Mr. Robert Hess, who teaches Algebra I, and Ms. Debra Dixon, who teaches Physical/Earth Science.

The 9th grade academy also welcomes Mrs. Sandra Daly, who taught Geometry and Algebra II last year at McKean and will be teaching Algebra I this school year. In the 10th grade academy, we have Mr. Nick Lenhard, who teaches World History, and Ms. Megan McGovern, who teaches English 10. Both of these teachers new to McKean High School. We are really excited about all our new staff and our opportunities to do great things in both academies.

Both the 9th and 10th grade academies' staff are looking forward to growing professionally and as a cohesive team. With block scheduling, the academies will meet as a cross-curricular team every other day and with their content counterpart on the other day. This 90 minutes of planning, growing, and creating a professional community allows our teachers to create the best lessons and use the best teaching practices to allow your children to learn and grow themselves. Here at McKean, we pride ourselves on our staff, and within the 9th and 10th grade academies, we hold true to that notion with some of the best staff in the building. We look forward to a successful year here at McKean, especially within the academies.

## Professional Development Supports Teachers with Block Instruction

Submitted by: Lisa Ueltzhoffer

The 90-minute block schedule provides students with opportunities to focus on only four classes per day, to gain more credits toward graduation, and, most importantly, to engage in in-depth learning in the classroom. Instruction in a 90-minute class period has different curricular and instructional demands than a traditional 50-minute class period.

To support McKean teachers with this transition, we have developed a partnership with Dr. Allen Queen. Dr. Queen has vast experience with block scheduling as a teacher, principal, district administrator and as a consultant and researcher. He has supported numerous schools across the nation with moving to a block schedule resulting in improved student achievement.

Since May, McKean staff have been working with Dr. Queen to align their curriculum, pacing and instructional strategies to meet the demands of the 90-minute block. Dr. Queen will be visiting classrooms and facilitating small group sessions with instructional staff twice a month for the 2008-2009 school year. We are excited about this ongoing opportunity for professional growth.

# Highlander News

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## Communities in Schools is On Track!

Submitted by: Katie Kravitz

Communities In Schools (CIS) staff has hit the ground running this 2008-2009 school year. Site Director Katie Kravitz has been busy coordinating the 9th Grade Advisory Program, teaching two periods of Student Leaders and sitting on numerous committees throughout the McKean community as well as the Red Clay community. Meanwhile, Project Coordinator Trish Ragan has been busy organizing the On Track program for the New Castle County CIS schools. On Track is a unique opportunity for McKean students to receive college credits in conjunction with attending four sessions at Delaware Technical and Community College. Currently, there are 14 seniors and 14 juniors attending On Track 3 and On Track 1, respectively.

The On Track program begins with juniors as they navigate through SSS105: A College and Life Skills Course. This course centers on discussions, group work, reading journals and other open forums. Students discuss post-secondary exploration, school environment and safety issues, decisions making and problem solving skills, learning styles, career, job and interview skills, and leadership development. In order for a student to receive a college credit, they must complete the Self Directed Search Project, read Making Your Mark, complete a book review, homework assignments and other interactive group activities.

Students find this program engaging because it teaches proper procedures for college and how to succeed in a college setting. Students often look forward to the second session because they participate in group activities that foster team building and self evaluation. One particular activity allows students to build their ideal schools using household and food items. At the 4th and final session the students will complete a written exam and participate in the On Track Graduation where they receive a certificate, gifts and their college credit. Upon successful completion, the juniors will go on to participate in On Track 2: SSS106: Becoming a Peer Helper in Spring 2008 and eventually On Track 3 in Fall 2009.

The seniors who are currently participating in On Track: SSS 101: Mastering College Life are learning about different educational opportunities beyond the high school realm. The course teaches students the college admittance process, administers the application and College Placement Test for Delaware Technical and Community College. The course allows students to register for classes and talk with admissions counselors as well as gives students college survival and success tips. Students discuss what they want to major in and what type of college is most appropriate for their background and learning styles. According to former On Track

students, the most helpful part of the course are when they were able to talk to Financial Aid officers and discuss scholarship and SEED opportunities.

Students who have participated in On Track courses in the past have been rewarded with a sense of accomplishment and completion. These courses help foster academic achievement for high school while planning for life beyond. Students are also presented with the opportunity to become an Educational Talent Search (ETS) student which means that the student can take advantage of free summer college tours, tutoring and counseling.

Please help support the following students in their On Track endeavor: Juniors: **Rebekka Alejandro, Jose Baez, Jeff Caputo, Kenny Carter, Mark Flakes, Ashley Giofre, Freddie Gray, Indy Henderson, Michael Hopkins, Kelliann Manning, Yolanda Pennewell, Jaz-Minik Porter, Tim Roy & Darrius Rush.** Seniors: **Emily Andrus, Durrell Brady, Raven Brown, David Bourdon, Stephon Cope-land, Darryl Driver, Lois Johnson, Quaneesha Knotts, Laura Layne, Rasaan Lyle-Butcher, Stephanie Lolley, Shanta Pulliam & Ar'brea Skinner.**

# Highlander News

## Jack Markell Visits McKean

Submitted by: Katie Kravitz

On September 24th Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jack Markell visited McKean High School to discuss his Making Schools Safer Plan with the Student Leaders. McKean's Student Leaders comprise of 33 juniors and seniors who facilitate weekly advisory sessions with freshman students throughout the year.

In his plan, Markell discussed four major areas that he would like to implement if elected Governor: establishing a Student Bill of Rights, establishing



Student leaders share ideas with gubernatorial hopeful Jack Markell.

### A Note from the Nurse

Submitted by: Heidi Sharpe, RN

Welcome back! Students, parents, and teachers are all trying to get back into the school groove. Hopefully by now, you have established a routine that is working well for you and your student. Listed below are a few ideas for parents that may help students achieve academic success this year:

- Encourage your student to be physically active for at least one hour every day. A nice walk on a sunny day can relieve stress and provide a break between school and homework.
- Be sure your student has school supplies, adequate lighting, and a quiet place to study at home. iPods, cell phones and computers can be a distraction during homework time. Allow them to decide on their homework time and keep it consistent. Most high school students have homework every night.
- Limit sleepovers to weekends. Teenagers require at least 8 hours of sleep per day.
- Eating breakfast will help your teenager to concentrate during their morning classes and decrease headaches and stomachaches.
- Show an interest in your child's education by attending PTSO Meetings, Open House, concerts, plays, and sporting events.
- Be aware of bullying/cyberbullying and contact the school immediately if your child is having a problem.
- Communicate with school personnel if your student has an academic or health issue that may interfere with his/her learning. Know the name and # of your student's Advisory Leader and Guidance Counselor.

Have a great year!!

consequences for unsafe behavior, giving students guidance on proper behavior, and expanding alternative education schools for at-risk students. The Student Leaders were very interested in hearing what Markell had to say, especially his stance on a Student Bill of Rights and his views on giving students guidance, since this has been their focus over the past year.

Last school year, McKean implemented the Student Leadership Program and Freshman Advisory Program to offer incoming freshmen extra support and guidance as they transitioned into high school. As only a few schools across the State have implemented similar programs, Markell was extremely interested in experiences and successes of our Student Leaders. Junior **CJ Perez** thought that the discussion was reassuring and validated the work and effort the students have put into their program. Other students also felt inspired and hopeful that positive change is taking place.

# Highlander News

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## The McKean High School Discipline Team

Submitted by Eric Stancell

Hello Highlander families! This is Eric Stancell, the assistant principal in charge of discipline. It is with great pleasure that I submit my first article for our newsletter. I am excited about being at McKean and looking forward to a successful school year.

First and foremost, I would like to introduce you to the members of our discipline team for the 2008-09 school year. They are as follows:

Brian McArdle – 9th and 10th grade disciplinarian;  
Late Center Coordinator

Rhonda Janeka – 11th, 12th, and Special Education  
disciplinarian; Behavior Interventionist

Corporal Michael Smith – Student Resource Officer

Stephen Wasylyszyn – Disciplinarian

One of my major roles is to help provide a safe and secure environment where all students can receive a quality education. We have set forth behavior expectations for this school year which students are expected to follow. To increase student awareness of the behavior expectations, we held grade level assemblies during the first two days of school. Some highlights of the presentation are as follows:

### LATE POLICY

All students are expected to arrive to school and to class on time each day. Any student that has accumulated three unexcused lates to school and/or class will receive one day of after-school detention. On the fourth unexcused late, the student will receive a one-day suspension from school, and a parent must meet with a disciplinarian prior to the student's return to school. The goal of this meeting is to devise a plan to prevent any further problems from occurring.

We have added a late policy that specifically pertains to our student drivers. Any student driver that has accumulated five unexcused lates to school will have driving privileges suspended in addition to the detentions and suspensions.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY (BLOCK SCHEDULING)

We are excited about the introduction of block scheduling here at Thomas McKean High School. Block scheduling offers an opportunity for students to take eight classes instead of seven as in a traditional format. This gives our students an opportunity to receive a more diverse and well-rounded education. There are four periods in each school day for 90 minutes each. Due to the amount of time in each class, it is imperative that every student attend school each day and arrive on time.

If a student misses a day of school or is more than 45 minutes late to class, the time and the work missed will need to be made up in our Attendance Work Recovery (AWR) Program. This program is held after school on Wednesdays in our library. The student will need to coordinate with their teachers to insure that all missed work is given to the AWR coordinator. This program is vital in assisting students in making up the time and the work that was missed during an absence. Keep in mind; any student who misses 12 days or more of any class will not receive any academic credit due to the amount of time missed.

### FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

We are asking that all students assist us in helping to keep our school clean. It is our expectation that students refrain from having food and drinks in the hallways. All items are to be kept away and are not to be in the open. Any violation of this policy will lead to disciplinary action.

### CONCLUSION

The doors of the discipline team are always open to assist students in making good decisions. Our job is to enforce the rules and expectations of the school, but we are still educators first. It is our goal to help all students to be successful at Thomas McKean High School and to create a solid foundation for their future endeavors. Please help us in maintaining our great school environment.

**GO HIGHLANDERS!!!**

# Highlander Athletics

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## Highlander Homecoming 2008!

Submitted by Eric Stancell

The Highlanders will face Pencader Charter at our annual homecoming football game on Friday, October 3, 2008. Reunite with members of the Thomas McKean family and help us cheer on our football team as we hope to make dwarfs of the Titans from Pencader Charter. Kickoff is at 7PM.



The celebration continues through Saturday, culminating with our annual homecoming dance in the gymnasium from

7-11PM on October 4, 2008. Students may purchase tickets during lunch for \$9.00 per person or \$17.00 per couple. All school dues and emergency cards must be turned in in order to attend the dance. The rules for our homecoming dance are as follows:

- All students must enter the dance before 8PM. No students will be admitted after this time and no refund will be given.
- All students must dress in a semi-formal fashion. Boys are expected to wear a button-up dress shirt. No jeans, sneakers, or work boots (Timberlands) are to be worn.
- If you leave the dance, you will not be allowed to re-enter.

- All guest forms must be turned in by September 30th to the main office. Each form should include a photo identification of the guest. All guests must be under the age of 20.
- If you are being picked up after the dance, your ride should arrive promptly at 11PM.
- Please keep your shoes on during the dance. Flip-flops that match your dress may be worn, if needed.

- Anyone deemed to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs will be removed from the dance and will be subject to further disciplinary action.

I encourage all students to take pride in being a Highlander by presenting themselves in a respectable manner during our Homecoming festivities. Have fun... and GO HIGHLANDERS!!!

## Support our Athletes!

Submitted by: Brian Mattix

The Sportsmanship Committee has re-formed and is seeking greater participation, especially by parents. The focus of the committee is to support our athletic programs in terms of education and enhancement of sportsmanship within each program. Besides improving sportsmanship across our school community, we hope to earn this year's annual DIAA Sportsmanship Award. McKean earned the state-issued Sportsmanship Award for school years 2003-04 and 2004-05. Currently, the committee has more than ten coaches, our Athletic Director, and an Assistant Principal. We hope to involve both parents and student-athletes in our committee. In mid-August, we held a pre-season Sportsmanship

Meeting for Fall Coaches. We focused our discussion around team rules, expectations of athletes, coaches, and parents.

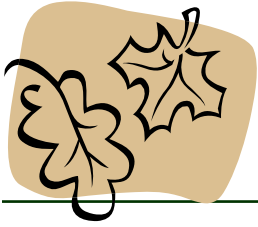
The fall sports season is underway. Our student-athletes have been working hard both in their classrooms and on the athletic fields. Please come out to support them.

For more information regarding McKean's athletic programs or a calendar of events, go to either our school's website:

[www.mckeanhs.com](http://www.mckeanhs.com)

or our athletic website:

[www.highlandersSports.com](http://www.highlandersSports.com)



# October 2008

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1	2	3	4 Class of 1988 20-year reunion
5	6 Interims mailed	7	8	9	10 In-service (No school)	11
12	13	14	15 PSAT: Grades 9-11 Board Mtg Brandywine Springs	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29 MPI Ends PTSO Meeting: 7pm	30	31 <b>Happy Halloween</b>	

## Of Note...

☞ The Class of 1988 20-year reunion will be held on October 4th. For more information, visit [www.mckeanalum1988.com](http://www.mckeanalum1988.com) or contact Mr. Michael Ryan at 992-5527.