



# Principally Speaking...

Sherry L. Gross

Dear Parents/Guardians!

Thank you for your continued support. We hope you are finding our monthly newsletters useful and informative, and we appreciate your comments and suggestions. As we approach the month of February and reflect on the school year thus far, we are proud of our many accomplishments.

Our winter MAP assessment is now complete, mid-term exams have passed us by, and report cards have been distributed (January 31). If you would like a conference with your child's teachers regarding academic performance, please contact your child's guidance counselor.

As mentioned in previous newsletters, we are continuing monthly school-wide writing prompts to further reinforce writing skills. On Friday, January 5, I held a special luncheon with some of our students who did an exceptional job on our December writing prompt, "Write a letter to the principal that presents your ideas and suggestions for improving McKean High School."

Students were encouraged to present ideas for minor or major changes that were focused on one issue or broad-reaching school-wide initiatives. We had a wonderful dialogue about our school and needed improvements, and this provided our students with a voice in our school's ongoing improvement efforts. I truly enjoyed our luncheon and know the students did as well. Congratulations to the following students who were

selected to participate in the luncheon: **Alexis Annone, Mansi Bhatt, Katrina Compello, Vik Dasgupta, Jessica Drevas, Dan Goerlitz, John Gravatt, James Graves, Erika Grobes, Melissa Hawkins, Matt Heckle, Megan Hernandez, Kelli Johnson, Logan Kane, Anthony Marion, Esteban Martinez, Avkash Patel, CJ Perez, Matavia Porter, Michael Riley, Ryan Smith, Kim Stagitis, Amanda Swift, Kelly Thomas, Alissa Werzen, and James Wilson.**

As I close, I want to take a moment to reiterate a statement I shared in my first letter to you in August:

*At McKean High School, we will focus our efforts on student achievement as we prepare our loved ones for a successful life after high school. Our collective success is predicated on an enthusiastic, dedicated faculty and well-informed, supportive parents. I am committed to creating a collaborative environment where we continuously improve and benefit from our diverse experiences.*

This statement still holds true as we continue to improve our school. Please stay tuned for upcoming information sessions to review our school improvement efforts.

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

Sherry L. Gross  
Principal

**Inside this issue:**

DSTP News, McKean Quilt, Academic Bowl, Mock Trial, Stage Crew, and Blue-Gold	2
Testing Achievement	3
Achievements and Celebrations, Important Survey Information	4
McKean Subscribes to Turnitin.com, Wellness Center—Women's Health Alert	5
PSAT Information	6
McKean Students Go To College	7
MHS Calendar: February 2007, Of Note	8



# DSTP News

Submitted by: Steven Schmidt

In January 2006, the Red Clay School District introduced an incentive program to improve student performance on the 10th grade DSTP in both Math and ELA. Students who scored a PL 3 or higher in both areas were exempt from taking a final exam in that subject. After extensive data analysis and discussion, district administrators determined that there was no overwhelming evidence to support that the incentive program made a significant difference in the overall performance of Red Clay 10th grade students in the most recent testing period. As a result of the data analysis, the incentive program is no longer being offered.

# Quilt Donations Needed

Submitted by: Cynthia LaRock



Mrs. Cynthia LaRock is currently making a quilt celebrating McKean High School. She is asking for donations of t-shirts from any past or present McKean activity, including athletics or any other extracurricular club or event. Please bring all donations to her room or drop them off in the office. Donations will become a part of the finished quilt. Thank you for your support.

# Stage Crew

Submitted by: Ashley Miller

Stage Crew sessions have started for this year's school play, "Fiddler on the Roof." Students involved will build sets, work with costumes, manage props, and change sets the night of the show. The stage crew is always working on challenging and exciting projects; last year, for the production of "Grease," they helped a cast member fly. If any parents think their students might be interested, they can contact Mrs. Miller or Mr. Burgess.

# Blue-Gold

Submitted by: Michael Ryan

The 52nd Annual DFRC Blue Gold All-Star Game is on its way! Senior JJ Parramore will play in the game, Senior Adrian Conway will be a cheerleader, and Senior Greg Troxell will participate in the band. The senior ambassadors are Lexi Bennett and Tori Hoover, and the junior ambassadors are Deasha Barrett and Samantha Harvey. The game will take place on Saturday, June 23rd, 2007 at the University of Delaware. Blue Gold Week will be held at McKean in the spring.

# Academic Bowl

Submitted by: Adam Baer

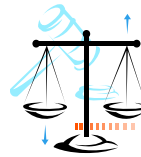


Alissa Werzen, Zach Gordon, Wuming Xie, and Jessica Schulte are members of the McKean Highlander

Academic Bowl Club. These students have been practicing weekly in preparation to compete in several Academic Bowl competitions. The students are scheduled to participate in the Comcast Academic Bowl Challenge, which begins on Saturday, February 3rd. The club also plans to compete in the University of Delaware Blue Hen Challenge, which is traditionally held in March. Mr. Baer advises the club.

# Mock Trial

Submitted by: Adam Baer



Zach Gordon, Neerav Dhanawade, Angie Karduss, Eddie Diaz, Omar Jones, Denny Choe, Moiez Masood,

Alissa Werzen, Michael Werzen, Rachel Meholic, Mansi Bhatt, and Tori Gomba-Netta are members of the McKean Mock Trial Team. These students will compete in the annual State of Delaware Mock Trial Competition held at the end of February at the New Castle County Courthouse in downtown Wilmington. Students will play the roles of attorney and witness while acting out the steps of a civil trial dealing with discrimination and wrongful termination. This competition is sponsored by the Delaware Law Related Education Center. The students are working with Mr. Baer to prepare for the competition.

# Testing Achievement

Submitted by: Michael Simmonds

---

<b>Goal:</b>	The end towards which effort is directed
<b>Achievement:</b>	The act of achieving: successful completion
<b>Gain:</b>	Increase or improvement
<b>Success:</b>	Degree or measure of succeeding
<b>Reward:</b>	Something that is given in return for good performance

**Okay, now read it again.**

<b>Goal:</b>	The end towards which effort is directed
<b>Achievement:</b>	The act of achieving: successful completion
<b>Gain:</b>	Increase or improvement
<b>Success:</b>	Degree or measure of succeeding
<b>Reward:</b>	Something that is given in return for good performance



Why are these words so important? These are words that all students at McKean High School should live by. With upcoming testing, it is especially important for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students to live by and focus on these words. The administrative team at McKean is more focused than ever on raising test scores and improving student achievement. One incentive that we have implemented this year is a celebration of hard work and dedication for students who increase their test scores. In January, students in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades took an assessment called MAP (Measures of Academic Progress). Students took the MAP assessment in the Fall and were challenged to meet a new target in the Winter to show growth in Reading and Mathematics.

The NWEA (the Northwest Evaluation Association) recently completed a preliminary study connecting the scale of the DSTP with NWEA'S RIT scale. Five Delaware school systems participated in the study, using test information from a group of more than 17,000 students enrolled in grades 3-10 who took both the spring 2006 DSTP Reading and Mathematics assessment, along with spring 2006 NWEA tests in reading and mathematics. Information from these tests was used to determine the capacity of the RIT scale to predict

*The administrative team at McKean is more focused than ever on raising test scores and improving student achievement.*

success on the DSTP. By examining student growth from the fall test to the spring, we will identify students' needs and improve their proficiency level and their DSTP scores as well.

To help promote better test scores, we are rewarding the students in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade who achieve gains across the board. Not just one or two students, but **any** student who shows gains on their January MAP test scores will be invited to a pizza party, with a drawing for two students to receive an iPod, students will also be entered into a drawing for: iTunes certificates, movie tickets, gift cards to McDonald's, gift cards to Borders, various prizes from local establishments and achievement certificates for all. This celebration will take place in the Month of February, so PLEASE STAY TUNED!!!!!!!!!!!!

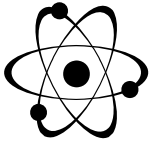
The administrative team at McKean believes in promoting success and rewarding positive accomplishments. So, parents, guardians, and family members, we are asking you to help us in achieving our goals of improving test scores and helping McKean become the school of choice. Ask your children what are they doing to prepare for these assessments and push them to work hard on their DSTPs. We can't do this alone, but with parental support, students' hard work, and a dedicated staff, we can make it happen.

# Achievements and Celebrations

---

## Liu Named Outstanding Teacher

Submitted by: Sherry Gross



Congratulations to Mr. Richard Liu as he has been inducted into the National Honor Roll's Outstanding American Teachers! Mr. Liu has been identified by his students as having had a great influence on them and they sent his name into the organization for recognition. Mr. Liu teaches mathematics and physics. Thank you Mr. Liu for all you do for the McKean community!

## Dise Builds Shed as Part of Service Project

Submitted by: Lisa Ueltzhoffer

Joey Dise, Class of 2009, recently completed his Eagle Scout Service Project at the McKean Football Field. Joey led a team of Boy Scouts and Adults to construct a Shed to be used to store extra concession stand items as well as football field equipment during the football season. The project will benefit both the Football Team and the Marching Band Concession Stand. Materials for the shed were donated by Shone Lumber of Stanton, and the Red Clay School District.

## Hayes Wins Red Clay Music Contest

Submitted by: Sherry Gross



Congratulations to Dustin Hayes as his music entry selection will be used as the new jingle on the "This Week in Red Clay" television show. All students were eligible to submit entries and were heard by a committee of three experienced music instructors. Dustin's entry stood out from the others and was exceptionally well received. Dustin will not only receive the recognition he deserves on the "This Week in Red Clay" show but, he will also be awarded \$100 for materials and supplies for the McKean High School music program, a pizza party for the music students and a \$50 gift certificate to Borders Book store. Dustin will be appearing on the show, along with Mr. Adkins to perform and discuss the development of the jingle. Tune in to the show to see Dustin!



---

## Important Survey Information

Submitted by: Steven Schmidt

On Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> The University of Delaware will come to McKean and conduct two surveys. The first survey will include all 11<sup>th</sup> graders and take place in their English classes. The survey is part of a study of student experiences, including the use of cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs. The survey is anonymous and uses a form that can be completed in no more than one class period. University of Delaware personnel conduct the classroom administrations rather than by teachers to reduce teacher burden and to help assure confidentiality. The second survey, which will be administered to a random sample of English classes in grades 6-12, will be coordinated with the administration of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Survey. This survey is about general health behavior. A copy of each survey is available on file at McKean if you would like to preview either before administration. Please contact Mr. Schmidt to set up an appointment at (302) 992-5520.

# Take Credit for What You've Done

Submitted by: Terri Pruitt

Plagiarism? What's plagiarism? So glad you asked...basically, plagiarism is stealing. If someone stole your iPod, would you sit back and take it? How about your phone? How about your car? All of those items belong to you, and most likely you worked hard to get them. If someone steals something of yours, you want to know who it is and make him/her pay the price, right? Well, your teachers agree with you; therefore, we decided to initiate a plan to educate students about plagiarism and prevent them from cheating. It's quite simple, actually.

The English Department has purchased the world's most used plagiarism protection system. The subscription to this online company allows students or teachers to submit papers to the site. Within seconds, the paper is scanned - searching the Internet and multiple databases of papers - in order to detect plagiarism. On the screen appears a report with any string of words the search found that matches a string of words in the scanned paper. If the paper is cited correctly, then it's not a problem; however, if the paper is plagiarized, the computer will prove it

by outlining the sites from where the lines came. With a click, the teacher can see the information from its original source.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and it will have both academic and disciplinary consequences. So, do your own work, and take credit for what you've done.



## Wellness Center—Women's Health Alert

Submitted by: Jill Jensen



HPV. It is the abbreviation for a common virus-human papillomavirus. In 2005, an estimated 20 million people in the

United States carried this virus. Many people contract HPV during their teenage years. While some kinds of HPV are harmless, others are not. For most people, the virus goes away on its own, but when it does not go away, it can become cancer or genital warts.

There are a few types of HPV that you need to know about. About 30 types of HPV affect the genital area in both men and women. Some are high-risk types that can cause cancer in cervical cells. These include Types 16 and 18. 75% of all cervical cancers are caused by these two viruses. Others have a lower risk of causing cervical cancer but

cause genital warts. These include Types 6 and 11.

HPV is easily transmitted, so any exposure puts a person at risk-Many people get HPV within their first 2 to 3 years of becoming sexually active. Because this virus is so widespread and easy to catch, we can prevent many illnesses and deaths by being protected against it. Of course, the best way to avoid this or any other sexually transmitted disease is not to have sex. But now we have another way of protecting against this killer. For the first time in history, we have available to us a vaccine that prevents certain kinds of cancer: the HPV Vaccine, also known as Gardasil.

This vaccine is available for young women between the ages of 11 and 26. The State of Delaware is making it available through the Wellness Center for women who meet certain eligibil-

ity requirements. For others, it is now available through your health care provided and other health centers in the state. The vaccine is a total of three shots given over a 6-month period. Many insurance companies are covering the cost of the vaccine because they realize how much illness can be prevented this way.

If you have questions about HPV, or about the vaccine, you can visit your health care provider, the Wellness Center, [http://www.gardasil.com/questions-about-gardasil\\_print.html](http://www.gardasil.com/questions-about-gardasil_print.html), or the CDC website. Now is the time to get your daughters the vaccine.

Imagine a way to prevent cervical cancer. This exciting news is a major leap forward for women's health. **The vaccine is here, so get immunized — the sooner, the better!**

# PSAT Information

Submitted by: Deborah Minchini

---

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child's PSAT scores were given out on Friday, January 12th. The College Board is giving all students who took the test FREE access to My College QuickStart™, a free online personalized planning kit based on their test results. Students are able to take the next steps towards college with these unique features:

- An online score report, including projected SAT score ranges, state percentiles, and the power to sort answer explanations by difficulty and by question type
- A customized SAT study plan
- Personalized lists of colleges, majors, and careers
- Access to MyRoad™ - a college, majors, and careers exploration tool

Students will have online access to My College QuickStart until they graduates high school. Please encourage your students to take advantage of this exciting tool to help them explore college and career opportunities after high school.

Also, as part of My College QuickStart, students get access to MyRoad to help them plan their futures in a productive and engaging way:

- **I.D. Me** offers students the opportunity to take interest assessments and a personality-type assessment to learn more about themselves, their interests and strengths, and the college majors and careers that may suit them.
- **Explore Majors** contains in-depth profiles of 67 academic fields, representing 175 instructional programs. Each profile offers an overview of the major, areas of study, an outline of the typical academic path to fulfilling the major, popular careers related to that major, and perspectives from real students studying in their respective fields.
- **Find a College** offers comprehensive college search tools which students can use to search for colleges and universities.
- **Research Careers** consists of an array of career articles--covering over 450 occupations-- arranged by industry. Each article provides detailed information about the requirements for working in that career, the typical compensation, possibilities for advancement, and perspectives from real people working in that career.
- **My Plan** is a personalized area for students to record, track, and manage their information --such as courses taken, jobs held, and activities in which they have participated. Students can also track their interests and goals and keep a journal that chronicles their progress during this exciting time.
- **Insights** is an online magazine with rotating content bringing to life the educational and career paths that individuals choose and the subjects currently debated across the disciplines.

Students register for My College QuickStart by visiting [www.collegeboard.com/psatextra](http://www.collegeboard.com/psatextra) and entering the access code printed on their official PSAT/NMSQT paper score report along with some identifying information. If you or your student needs assistance with registration, please contact your child's guidance counselor.

Sincerely,

The McKean High School Guidance Department

# McKean Students Go To College

Submitted by: Katie Kravitz



Sixteen sophomores, juniors, and seniors attended four sessions of the College & Life Skills 101 course at Del Tech this past fall to earn one credit towards college.

In addition to experiencing a real college-level course, students learned critical thinking skills, study skills, and team building. They also took a self-inventory to determine their learning styles and to explore possible career paths.


As part of their final exam, these McKean students worked together to develop 50 suggestions on how to be successful in college. The following are the top 25 suggestions that they have for prospective college students:

1. Look for scholarships.
2. Take responsibility for your own actions.
3. Be an active listener.
4. Understand study skills.
5. Have realistic goals.
6. Set priorities for yourself.
7. Seek help and advice.
8. Be committed to learning.
9. Have personal satisfaction.
10. Learn how to work with others.
11. Never give up.
12. Know what kind of learner you are.
13. Learn from your peers.
14. Use critical thinking.
15. Focus on school.
16. Be motivated to learn.
17. Be willing to work.
18. Identify strengths and weaknesses.
19. Have a plan of action.
20. Remain in school.
21. Do not be a procrastinator.
22. Do not plagiarize.
23. Enjoy your life.
24. Set goals for yourself.

## **25. WORK HARD IN HIGH SCHOOL!!**

*Created by: Stephon Copeland, DJ Lewis, Shawnta Pulliam, Sholanda Berry, Thelia DuPont, Stephanie Lolley, Lois Johnson, Rae Johnson, Omar Jones, Allison August, Emily Andrus, Tania Vazquez, Brittany Dulin, Brittany Saunders*

# MHS Calendar: February 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Inservice	3
4	5 Inservice	6	7	8 BloodDrive	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 President's Day— No School	20 Jazz Night, 6 p.,m.	21	22 Interim Period Ends	23	24
25	26	27	28	1	2 Interims Mailed	

## *Of Note...*

\* The Future Career and Community Leaders of America officers were recently named. The president is senior Antinette Watson, Vice President sophomore Sarah Bartell, Treasurer junior Lisandra Clarke, Secretary junior Ashley Reams, and Historian junior Erin Lindell. FCCLA is directed by Mrs. Cynthia LaRock.

\* On Tuesday, February 20 at 6pm, the McKean Music Dept. will perform 70's songs for their annual Jazz night concert..

### \* **A Note from the CAC:**

There will be no CAC meeting in February. **Our Wednesday, 28 March 07 meeting topic will be "The School Improvement Plan Explained."** (7:00 in the library). Don't just dismiss this as irrelevant to you and your children! The Improvement Plan is being formed to make positive changes that will make a difference in our school. A group of at least 25 administrators, teachers, parents and students has been working on this plan for several months. Come out and find out what they are proposing, and give your input. You can have a voice! Despite the very modest dues you pay to join the CAC, those dollars add up! This month **the CAC has given away over \$2,000 to 11 teachers here at McKean**, for such items as maps, books, tape recorders, individual white boards, and a DVD recording machine.

-Kathleen Morrison, CAC President  
Kathleen.greg@verizon.net