

The Learning Curve

This page was written and designed by Education First in cooperation with the Bibb County Board of Education, the Peyton Anderson Foundation, and The Telegraph.



Your weekly guide to students, schools, teachers and triumphs in Bibb County's Public Schools

Teen Parent Center Fundraiser



Teen Parent Center teachers prepare to sell hot dogs and snacks to students.

"We're the best deal on the block," says one teacher as she serves up a one-dollar hot dog and a fifty-cent drink to one of the students at Bibb County's Teen Parent Center.

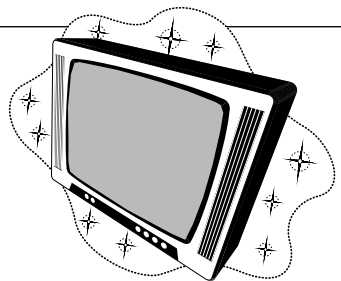
The school has signed on for a two-year fundraiser to help purchase an echo cardiograph machine for the Medical Center of Central Georgia. Pediatric echo cardiography is an ultrasound of the heart, using sound waves to show the heart of an unborn fetus. It can detect turbulent blood flows (heart murmurs), can detect a hole in the heart, can rule out abnormalities, can explain why a child may experience fainting spells, and can investigate numerous lung diseases.

"The fact that it will be at the Medical Center, and most of our girls give birth there, makes it easier for the doctor," says Principal Dr. Cindy Gibson.

The school has signed on to raise \$500 through various fundraisers, including weekly hot dog sales. She says the faculty there is willing to do anything to help these expectant mothers in their time of need. "We can do so much for these young mothers."

The fundraiser is being operated through the Medcen Community Health Foundation and is a five-year fundraiser. Dr. Gibson hopes other groups and organizations continue to sign on to the project, saying it will help many people within the community begin caring for their children even before they're born.

"Regardless of what you have or think you have, you definitely have something to give back to the community."



For up-to-date information and events concerning Bibb County Public Schools, tune in to Cox Cable Channel 17!

We want your feedback! Please e-mail your comments and suggestions for "The Learning Curve" or information about events in the Bibb County school system to: chris@education-first.org or call 743-0023

Bruce Elementary students, faculty start year on a different campus

Administration doing everything to make the school the best environment for learning

It's been a bumpy ride for students, teachers, and faculty of Bruce and Weir Elementary Schools these past few years. Last year, everyone at Weir packed up and moved over to the Bruce campus, changing their name to Bruce-Weir Elementary. Weir has been sitting boarded up this year, waiting on its next purpose. At the end of the year, everyone at Bruce-Weir began moving back into the Weir campus so Bruce could be torn down and completely rebuilt. Next year, everyone on the Weir campus will be moving into the new Bruce Elementary campus.

"It's depressing for the students and teachers to move again," says Principal Dr. Gloria McSwain. Even though Bruce will be housed on the Weir campus, she and her faculty have spent the entire summer making sure the school looks and feels like a permanent place of learning. "I wanted to do something that would make it student and teacher friendly so it would be enjoyable to learn again."

It has been a labor of love this summer to get the school ready. When the boards were torn off the doors and windows this summer, "it was in a sad condition," explains McSwain. The whole front hallway didn't have a remaining ceiling tile, vandals had stolen all the copper wires, and windows had been broken. Before teachers could move in, maintenance had a good bit of repairing to do just to make the school workable.

"We've got to turn [the school] around, and the first thing was to change the atmosphere in the building," she explains.

To begin the process, McSwain hired recent Westside High School graduate Kenneth Shearer to liven up the atmosphere by painting murals around the entire school. "He's amazingly talented," commended McSwain as he works on the entry-way to the library.

"They wanted kids' characters, so we went into the library and picked some out," Shearer explains as he points out Raggedy



Kenneth Shearer works on the entryway to the school's library.

Ann & Andy, the Cat in the Hat, Peter Pan, Clifford the Big Red Dog, and several others nearing completion. For two months, Shearer has been at the school every weekday, eight hours a day working to brighten up the school.

But why stop at just the library and characters? Murals adorn all the main hallways, inspirational quotes are painted above the doors, the entrance to the cafeteria is painted as columns, ramp railings are painted match the murals, and panels along the bottom of the wall are even painted a solid color where students will be able to paint.

"We're going to use as much wall as possible," explains Shearer.

"We're trying to make this look like a school," says McSwain. "We want them to walk in with the right attitude, keep the right attitude, and strive for the highest

educational goals."

At a recent meeting held at the school, children were excited to see they were not moving back into the same school they left. "We've had some real nice comments from parents and students," says Title I Home-School Facilitator Elaine Moore.

"As well as the board members," adds McSwain, saying how pleased they seemed not only with the murals but with the brand new bulletin boards, display cases, and classroom identifications.

As part of a new Behavioral Incentive Program the school will be implementing this year, the murals are for more than just viewing: they're interactive. The hallway murals depicting ocean, forest, and medieval scenes will be used to reward students with good behavior. They will be able to write their name on a cutout fitting the mural (fish, snake, bird, etc.) and place it on the wall. "Students love seeing their names posted around the school," explains McSwain.

Even though they are there for only one year, McSwain is very pleased with the efforts her staff is putting into making the school a great place to learn. When the new building is opened, she is planning on starting all of these projects over there as well.

"There's a lot to love about Bruce," announces one bulletin board.

"Life is full of ups and downs," reads one painted quote over a display case. "Fortitude is the capacity to face misfortune with BRAVERY!"

The students, faculty, and administration are doing their best in the face of so many moves, making the best of their situation, all for the children. In the end, they will have a new, permanent, up-to-date school to teach and learn in.

According to McSwain, she wants "to make this a place for learning."

2005 New Teacher Banquet

School is back in session very soon, and with a new school year comes brand new teachers. Many of these teachers are coming from outside of Macon-Bibb County, and many are coming here for their first job out of college.

To help welcome them to the community and honor them for their commitment to the children here, Education First is hosting the 2005 New Teacher Banquet at the Macon Centreplex on August 9 at 6:00 p.m. Local business and community leaders will be on hand to personally thank them,

dinner will be served, door prizes will be raffled off, and each teacher will go home with a tote bag full of donations from area businesses.

"This is a wonderful way for our new teachers to be welcomed into our community," says Education First Executive Director Julie Pennybacker. "Not only will they be meeting the people they will be doing business with, the business leaders will be meeting the outstanding teachers who will be educating their children."

Many decisions will confront these newcomers such as finding doctors, dentists, and other services. Eventually, they will buy automobiles, major appliances, furniture, and, some day, even a home. The economic impact, coupled with their impact on our young people will be substantial; an excellent reason for the business people to get involved.

For any businesses or organizations wanting to be involved in this celebration, there are several ways in which they can participate. A new teacher can be 'spon-

sored' by purchasing their ticket for them. Items can be donated which will be included in a goody bag handed out to all the new teachers, and there will be door prizes raffled off at the end of the evening. "And of course, the business community is invited to attend as well," adds Pennybacker.

Tickets for this celebration are \$35. Anyone interested in attending, donating items, or sponsoring a teacher can contact Chris Floore at the Education First offices. (478)743-0023.