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**Jefferson
County
Public
Schools**

Parent Connection eNews

News from Jefferson County Public Schools

January 2012

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Jefferson County
Public Schools
Shaping the Future

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Board approves new student assignment plan

The Jefferson County Board of Education has approved a new elementary student assignment plan for the 2012-13 school year.

The plan benefits parents and students in many ways, says Jack Jacobs, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) executive director of Student Assignment. Because the plan revises diversity guidelines and uses 2009 census information as well as smaller census areas, the district will be able to recognize and more accurately pinpoint diversity that already exists in Louisville's neighborhoods. This means the plan will allow more students to be assigned to schools closer to their homes, potentially reducing their bus ride times. Highlights of the plan include the following:

- About 2,000 elementary students will be able to attend a school closer to their home because of the revised diversity guidelines.
- The new guidelines classify the district's 570 census areas into categories based on income, percentage of nonwhite population, and average level of adult education attainment.
- [English as a Second Language \(ESL\)](#) students will be included in the diversity index for the first time.
- Kindergarten students will not have to reapply to the same school for first grade.
- Most elementary schools will continue to be grouped into one of the six clusters that have been used for the past several years.
- Bus routes to day-care centers will remain the same.

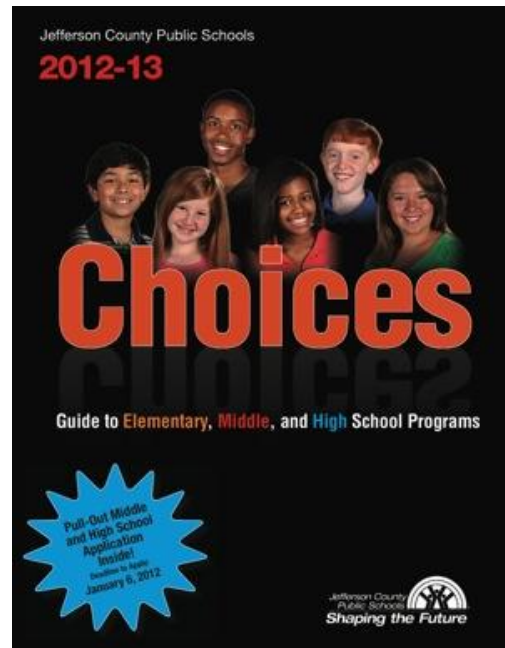
Visit the elementary Showcase of Schools

The elementary school showcase will be held at the Kentucky International Convention Center on **Sat., Jan. 28**, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Representatives from every elementary school and from many JCPS offices will be available to answer your questions.

The elementary application period for the 2012-13 school year will be **Wed., Feb. 1**, through **Thurs., Mar. 1**. Application forms will be available at elementary schools.

Information on schools and programs is available in *Choices*, the district guidebook.

Digital versions of the book are available on the JCPS [Showcase of Schools Web page](#).



District offers parent info sessions

JCPS will offer information sessions to help parents of elementary students understand their school and program options. All sessions will begin at 7 p.m.

Mon., Jan. 30

- JCPS Gheens Academy (4425 Preston Highway)
- Lincoln Elementary Performing Arts School (930 East Main Street)
- St. Stephen Family Life Center, Multipurpose Room 2 (1018 South 15th Street)

Tues., Jan. 31

- Middletown Methodist Church (11902 Shelbyville Road)
- Sanders Elementary (8408 Terry Road)
- Hill Street Baptist Church (2203 Dixie Highway)

Wed., Feb. 1

- Jeffersontown High (9600 Old Six Mile Lane)
- Okolona Elementary (7606 Preston Highway)
- Carter Elementary (3600 Bohne Avenue)

Thurs., Feb. 2

- Roosevelt-Perry Elementary (1606 Magazine Street) -- Enter the parking lot from Broadway near 16th Street.
- African-American Heritage Center (1701 West Muhammad Ali Boulevard)
- Newburg Middle School (4901 Exeter Avenue)

Tues., Feb. 7

- Gheens Academy (4425 Preston Hwy) -- This session is for international families. Translators will be available. For more information, call the JCPS Parent Assistance Center at **485-6250**.



JCPS Superintendent Donna Hargens talks about the benefits of Blessings in a Backpack.

Blessings in a Backpack expands to all elementary schools

The Blessings in a Backpack Program, which has served about 3,900 JCPS students, expanded this month to serve students at all district elementary schools.

Through the program, students who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals can take home a backpack full of food on weekends during the school year. The backpacks include juice boxes, granola bars, oatmeal, macaroni and cheese, and other nonperishable food items.

Administered by Kentucky Harvest, Blessings in a Backpack began in 2005 at Roosevelt-Perry Elementary. The expansion is important because "in some cases, school lunch on Friday is the last time some of our young people have a decent meal until they return to school on Monday," says JCPS Superintendent Donna Hargens. "Children simply are not going to learn if they are hungry."

Companies, charitable foundations, church groups, school organizations, and individuals have donated about \$8.5 million to fund the program for the next three years. To find out how you can help, call **894-9999**. The program seeks not only food and monetary donations but also volunteers to help pack the backpacks.

[Click here](#) to watch a short video about the Blessings in a Backpack expansion.

New form lets high school students declare major

JCPS 5-Star High Schools -- schools that offer one of the district's five Professional Career Themes -- have developed a new form for students to declare their major. The form was created specifically for students who go to the school that serves their attendance area.

For example, a student who goes to Fairdale and lives in its attendance area can use the form to apply to any of Fairdale's majors, including the ones in its Human Services, Education, and International Studies Professional Career Theme or its Heavy Equipment Science Program. Students who apply to schools outside their attendance area will continue to use the magnet program application form that is available during the annual middle and high school application period (November through early January).

Most students who use the new form will submit it during the spring before their sophomore year, but schools also may accept it at the beginning of the school year or, for new students, any other time during the year.

The new form benefits students because it allows them to commit to a particular path for advanced college and career preparation. "We want every student on a pathway that leads to a credentialed diploma," says Dr. Brian Shumate, JCPS high school liaison. The district's diplomas are credential by the many dual or articulated credit courses and industry certifications available to JCPS high school students.

The new form also allows students to automatically continue to receive transportation to their school if they move out of its attendance area but remain in its network. For more information on high school networks and magnet programs, see *Choices*, the JCPS guidebook. Digital versions are available on the [Showcase of Schools page](#).



Barret counselor Omar Morris and librarian Hope Cooke pose with Shoni and Jude Shimmel, the first Native Americans to receive a full scholarship to a Division One university.

Shimmel sisters talked to students about Native-American culture

Shoni and Jude Shimmel, two University of Louisville (UofL) Lady Card basketball players, visited Barret Traditional Middle in the fall to share their Native-American culture and participate in a question-and-answer session.

Barret librarian Hope Cooke, who planned and coordinated the visit, said it gave the school's eighth graders a chance to write papers comparing the Shimmel

sisters' answers to their questions with the students' reading assignment from last summer, which was *My Indian Boyhood* by Luther Standing Bear.

Board seeks comments on school calendars and district direction

The Jefferson County Board of Education is considering calendars for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. [Click here](#) to view the proposed calendars and comment on them.

The board also is soliciting feedback on drafts of its vision, mission, values, and focus area statements. JCBE wants to know if you think the statements, developed during a planning session in October and refined at a December work session, reflect your opinion of what JCPS should be. Each statement has a unique purpose. The vision statement identifies what the district intends to create or what is to be achieved. The mission statement explains why the organization exists, the functions it performs, and for whom it performs those functions. The values are the deeply held driving forces for the district's actions and conduct. The focus areas identify where the district will concentrate its attention.

You can [review the statements](#) and [send a comment](#) to tell the board if you think the statements reflect your opinion of what JCPS should be.

Our success is public knowledge

Invention Convention gets national attention

The annual Invention Convention at Crosby Middle has been featured on the National Science Teachers Association Web site. The convention lets Crosby sixth graders display their own inventions during a day-long event that "draws members of the media, students' families and friends, the district superintendent, other community members, and students and teachers from nearby schools," says the article.

It includes several comments from Brian Dunkley, the science teacher who spearheads the event. "You've got to set your expectations high," Dunkley says. "The kids will rise to them. And you can't write a kid off because [he or she] doesn't like science." [Click here](#) for the full story.

Environmental teacher featured on international blog

Renee Blodgett, editor of an international blog called [weblogtheworld](#), just happened to drive by Fern Creek High teacher Joe Franzen's yard in the Germantown neighborhood in the fall when she was in town for the IdeaFestival. Intrigued by the garden in Franzen's front yard, Blodgett stopped and talked to him about his efforts to create a sustainable urban farm.



At Fern Creek, he teaches a class called Global Issues and sponsors an after-school cooking club. He frequently talks to his students about global food processing and the importance of local food sources. [Click here](#) to read the blog entry and watch Blodgett's video interview with Franzen.

College Goal Sunday helps students file for financial aid

College Goal Sunday will be held at 2 p.m. on **Sun., Jan. 29**, at 22 sites across the state. ([Click here for a list.](#)) Most sites will close at 4 p.m.

During College Goal Sunday, financial aid professionals help students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the form that students must submit to receive federal and state aid. Students who file the FAFSA early have the best chance of receiving funds that are limited and may not be available later in the year.

Students are encouraged to attend College Goal Sunday with a parent. The students should bring their and their parents' completed 2011 tax return and any other 2011 income and benefits information. Families that haven't completed their taxes may bring their 2010 tax forms and their last paycheck stubs from 2011 so a financial aid professional can show them how to use estimated information and then update it when their taxes are complete. For more information on College Goal Sunday, [click here](#).

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