



# MACS NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2011

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## WELCOME FROM MR. SCOUMIS

Happy school year everyone!

I am looking forward to another great year at MACS filled with lots of learning and excitement. As many of you know, MACS is growing. We added a second 1st grade classroom this year and will continue expanding each year until we have two classes in every grade. We also recently had our charter renewal approved by the Pittsburgh Board of Education.

### We have many other reasons to pat ourselves on the back:

- In the 2010-2011 school year, MACS' achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) our PSSA test scores for the ninth year in a row!
- We are in our fourth year as a federal Blue Ribbon School.
- MACS Athletics is beginning its second year as a member of the Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic League (WPIAL) – Go Mustangs!

One of the things that makes MACS special is our exceptional level of parental involvement. Learning starts at home and we could not succeed without the efforts of our students' parents, grandparents and other family members. So please continue to remain an active part of your child's education. Here are some great ways for parents to get involved:

- **Attend Family Nights.** Family Nights are the third Thursday of every month from 6:00PM to 7:30PM. September's Family Night will be "Meet the Teacher Night" on September 8th. Siblings and other family members are always welcome at Family Night. Please see Ms. McCandless's article to find out the themes of this year's Family Nights.
- **Join the PTO.** The PTO is always looking for new members. The PTO President will be at Meet the Teacher Night to answer any questions and sign up parents.
- **Volunteer in your child's classroom or for a special event.** Ask your child's teacher how you can help out or contact Dennis Henderson (dhenderson@macsk8.org or 412-322-0585) to find out about school-wide volunteer opportunities.
- **Talk to your children** about what they are doing at school and where they need help. Keeping the lines of communication open is very important!

Communication between home and school is also important. My office is always open if you have any concerns, questions or comments. Please feel free to stop by anytime to speak with me. You can also reach me on my cell phone (412-996-6505) or via email (vscoumis@macsk8.org).

**GO PITT!**

### FEATURE STORY:

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL GUIDED READING



One of the many reasons I love working at MACS is how seriously we take issues involving reading.

Research shows that children who read often become better readers – and better readers are often better students. Research also shows that important reading skills – such as decoding, fluency, and comprehension – are increased by a reading strategy known as oral guided reading, small group reading overseen by a trained educator. *(Continued on Page 3)*

## FAMILY NIGHTS

### Back to school means time for Family Night!

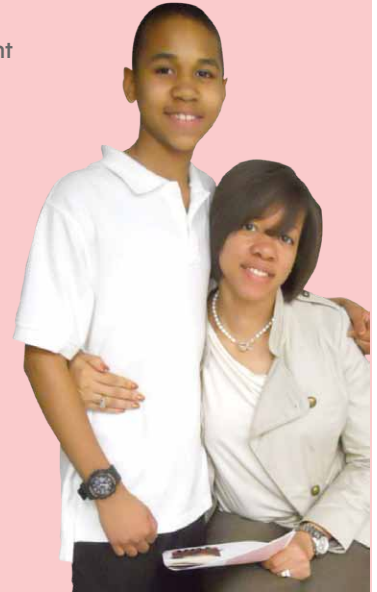
Family Night is an exciting way for MACS students to share with their families what they are learning during the school day. Each Family Night is focused on a different theme from our curriculum and includes activities for kids and adults as well as information on related community resources.

Family Nights are normally held on the third Thursday of every month from 6:00PM to 7:30PM. Dates can change, so check the website or ask someone at school. There is no Family Night in December.

**By Stacy McCandless,**  
Special Education Teacher

### 2011-2012 Family Nights:

September 8	Meet the Teacher Night
October 20	Math Night
November 17	Reading Night
December	NO FAMILY NIGHT
January 19	Science Night
February 16	PSSA Night
March 15	TBA
April 19	Social Studies Night
May 17	What I Learned Night



## NEW TEACHER PROFILE: BRITNI SAMPSON, 1ST GRADE TEACHER



Greetings families, and welcome back to another school year at MACS! My name is Britni Sampson and I have the pleasure of teaching the school's new first grade classroom this year.

While a second first grade classroom may be a new addition to MACS, I am not so new to the school. Some of you may remember me from last school year, when I was a teaching assistant in kindergarten alongside Mrs. Robinson. You may even remember my pregnant belly – I gave birth to a healthy baby boy in January.

Prior to working at MACS, I received a Masters degree in teaching from the University of Pittsburgh. Following my graduate studies, I worked in the Wilkinsburg School District as a substitute teacher for grades K - 6 and as a first grade summer school teacher.

I look forward to an exciting new year, not only working with the first grade but all of the students and families here at MACS.

## MACS ATHLETICS

It's almost time for fall athletics to begin – and the Mustangs need your support!

Boys and girls basketball schedules will be coming out soon and I hope you will consider attending our games. Final schedules will be posted on the website and

The Athletic Department is also starting a fundraising campaign to upgrade our sports equipment and get supplies for new athletic activities. Our goal is \$5,000 by the end of 2011 – please consider making a small donation. Donations can be mailed in to the school or dropped off at the front desk. All donations are tax-deductible.

**By Philip Braxton,** Athletic Director



RADICAL DAYS:

## FREE ADMISSION TO THE PITTSBURGH ZOO & PPG AQUARIUM AND OTHER CULTURAL EVENTS

The Allegheny Region Assets District (ARAD) provides financial support to cultural and recreational institutions in Allegheny County – libraries, parks, stadiums and much more. In the past 15 years, they've given out over \$2.3 billion to important organizations using just a small portion of our sales tax.

Many of the RAD-funded organizations are kid-friendly, and every fall, they each offer one day of free admission and special programming as a thank-you to the public for their support.

Here is one RADical Day I am looking forward to attending: The Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium will have free admission all day on Sunday, October 9th. I hope you will consider visiting too!

For a list of all the other upcoming RADical Days go to [www.radworkshere.org](http://www.radworkshere.org) and click on RADical Days under the What's Happening menu.

By Adina Castillo, Spanish Teacher

## NEW READING PROGRAM FOR GRADES 2 AND 5

**Reading Out of School Often (ROSO)** is a new reading program that MACS is launching this fall in grades 2 and 5 and expanding later to all elementary grades. ROSO was developed with the help of Dr. Isabel Beck, a professor of education at the University of Pittsburgh specializing in literacy.

ROSO emphasizes reading outside of school. Students will be asked to complete at least 20 minutes of reading a day, 5 days a week (including weekends). They can choose which books they want to read from a school reading list. Each grade will have its own reading list with 3-4 levels of difficulty. Students will be evaluated by participation.

By Dan Kuban, 2nd Grade Teacher

FEATURE STORY:

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL GUIDED READING

*(Continued from Page 1)*

Researchers have found that this kind of group reading is much more likely to help students learn because an adult is present to facilitate, encourage and assist yet students still drive the reading process. In so many schools, reading time involves completing worksheets or independent reading with no teacher present. This may be useful for advanced readers, but we know that struggling readers don't benefit much from it.

MACS is unique among schools because we use oral guided reading with all students in grades 2 through 5. For 20 minutes a day, four days a week, students engage in group reading in small groups of five readers at a similar level. Every group has an adult with them who guides the reading process, corrects mistakes and asks appropriate questions while the students read

together. We use reading material from the Harcourt Storytown series used in other classroom reading lessons, but often move on to chapter books at some point during the year.

I am looking forward to another year of using this proven tool to help our students excel at reading along with Lynne Baldwin, our new reading specialist teaching assistant. I am also excited about another reading program, called ROSO, that we are starting at MACS this year (see Mr. Kuban's article right next to mine). If you have any question about oral guided reading, or any other reading issues, please do not hesitate to contact me: **(412) 956-5707 or [mullenbeck@verizon.net](mailto:mullenbeck@verizon.net)**.

Thanks and happy reading!

By Mark Beck,  
Elementary Reading Specialist

## NEW STAFF

MACS is excited to welcome the following new teachers and staff members:

Kevin Boden	Teaching Assistant	Angelina Lavrinc	Teaching Assistant
Ronald Coursey	Teaching Assistant	Lafayette Moran	Elem. Special Education
Jessica Jochum	4th Grade	Charis Rose	Middle School Math
Trudy Johnson	Receptionist	Jamila Pugh	Enrichment/Data Specialist
Emelda Jones	Teaching Assistant		

We are also pleased to congratulate the following staff who have moved to new positions:

Tiffany Crumby	Teaching Assistant	Annamaria Rainey	Social Worker
Sara Evans	School Psychology Intern	Britni Sampson	1st Grade

MACS also welcomes Jocelyn Horner, External Affairs and Fundraising Consultant.

## GET CONNECTED

Visit us at the MACS website: [www.macsk8.org](http://www.macsk8.org)

Or on Facebook: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) – search for **MACS Pittsburgh**

Or YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/MACSCharterSchool](http://www.youtube.com/user/MACSCharterSchool)



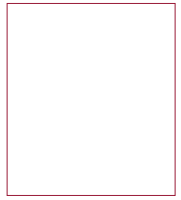
## MANCHESTER ACADEMIC CHARTER SCHOOL

1214 Liverpool Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15233

412.322.0585 (Phone)

412.322.2176 (Fax)

[www.macsck8.org](http://www.macsck8.org)



### OUR MISSION:

We foster the dreams of all children by providing an outstanding and dynamic education in a nurturing environment.

### OUR VISION:

We will continue to be an educational center of excellence and become a community pillar of support where students excel, families are engaged, teachers are empowered, and alumni flourish.

### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Vasilios Scoumis - Chief Executive Officer  
Beth McCaskey - Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
George Edmunds - Director of Student Affairs  
Jahmal Sanders - Business Manager  
Mary Fitzpatrick - Sr. Administrative Assistant

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Larry Berger, BSCE/E & PP.  
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Betty H. Robinson, Ph.D.  
Carlton Watson, BS Elem. Ed.

### Administrators & Other Board Participants:

John H. Rushford, Esq., Legal Counsel  
Virginia Crawford, Ph.D., Pro Tem Secretary

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