As we approach the end of our 14th year – amazing as that sounds – I would like to take a minute to reflect. As the landscape of education continues to change, MACS and our partners at MYDC stand as one constant – a place where your child will learn, have fun and be safe.

While many talk about closing the achievement gap, MACS delivers real results, consistently measuring up to the top schools around the city and state. Our students excel both individually and collectively, winning awards at the Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair, the Charles Drew Science Fair and the eCYBERMISSION competition, among others (see page 4). Although we don’t yet know our test scores from this year, MACS has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for nine years in a row, and we have every reason to believe our kids performed above and beyond this year, as well.

But it’s not just about academics and testing at MACS. While some schools narrow their focus to only math and reading test scores, we strive to develop the whole child. Over the past year, our athletic program has grown substantially, adding a girls’ elementary basketball team and a baseball club, with plans for a girls’ volleyball team next year. Our students participated in the NFL’s Play 60 Program and enjoyed fresh fruits and vegetables in their classroom. Elementary students put on winter and spring music concerts. This past year we also launched our Read Out of School Often (ROSO) Program in second, third and fifth grade – and thanks to the efforts of our parents and teachers, more kids are spending time reading at home (see page 3).

In middle school, students are learning to run their own businesses through the i-OWN program. They are participating in photography classes at the Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild and taking swimming lessons at the Sarah Heinz House, just to name a few special opportunities.

I share these highlights of our year to showcase how much our parents, staff and students have accomplished, and to thank you all for your support. Together we will continue to build programming and opportunities that make us all proud. As we enter into our 15th year, I look forward to our alumni parents and students returning to MACS for a visit and to participate in our 15th Anniversary Celebration next spring. Check the website for more details soon.

Vasilios Scoumis
CEO
**LETTER FROM MS. McCASKEY**

My, how time flies! I just want to take the time to thank the staff, students and families for another successful year at MACS. We had a fulfilling school year, from monthly Family Nights to a holiday concert to Avalon Park Day, and there is so much to be proud of – more than I can list here.

The 8th grade students persevered through their second year of the i-OWN program, committing themselves every Saturday morning to the pursuit of entrepreneurship. Elementary students learned to compost through the Pennsylvania Resource Council, and then activated their own compost bin in the school garden. The middle school students worked on the Future Cities project in conjunction with the Mascaro Group and won “Best City Layout and Design.”

Our partners deserve thanks as well. Students and staff were busy this year making connections with many community partners such as the Education Partnership and Donors Choose, who donated many supplies to the classroom. We also continued to receive books three times this year from Reading is Fundamental for preschool through sixth grade, and kindergarten got to visit the RIF Storymobile every other Friday.

Thanks again to everyone for your hard work this year and have a great summer!

Beth McCaskey  
Deputy CEO

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**POWER SCHOOL**

This year, MACS launched a new school management system called PowerSchool. PowerSchool is the fastest-growing, most widely used web-based student information system, supporting 10 million students in all 50 states and over 65 countries.

PowerSchool enables today’s educators to make timely decisions that impact student performance while creating a collaborative environment for parents, teachers and students to work together in preparing 21st century learners for the future.

One of the most exciting features of PowerSchool is that it gives parents and guardians access to real-time information about their child and school activities, including:

- Student assessments, report cards, progress reports
- Discipline tracking and management reporting
- Attendance tracking, comments, assignments and scores right from the teacher’s grade book
- Health and immunization screenings
- State reporting

If you lost your PowerSchool account information or can’t remember how to log in, just check with Ms. Johnson at the front desk to get log-in details.

By Mr. DiMucci, Technology Teacher

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**ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE BRINGS CREATIVE EXPERIENCES TO MACS**

This year, MACS received a grant through arts organization Gateway to the Arts to bring an artist-in-residence and a real work of art to the school for five weeks in the spring. Local artist Ms. Wendy Osher from Sharpsburg worked with Mrs. Robinson’s kindergarten, Mr. Kuban’s 2nd grade, and Ms. Jochum’s 4th grade classrooms. The program focused on an original Japanese woodblock print that Ms. Osher brought to MACS.

The students had open classroom discussions about the print, talked about local fish and wildlife in the rivers, and even made sketches of real fish in bowls that Ms. Osher brought to class. As a conclusion, students made a foam print of a fish and printed them on large murals, currently on display in the hallways at MACS.

Thanks to Ms. Osher and Gateway to the Arts!

By Ms. Frantz, Art Teacher

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**THE SECRET BUT GREAT POEM**

By Nya Seals

I look. I see a girl just like me.  
I look. I see her name is Bumblebee.  
I look. I hear a bear with lots of hair.  
I look. I see a giant with fleas.

A tortoise a hair in a race with a bear.  
They look. They hear a woman with despair.
I-OWN Entrepreneur Turns Creativity into Business Success

Eighth grader Nariah White has a lot to be proud of. Not only is she graduating from MACS with plans to attend City High in the fall, she is also the recipient of a special award recognizing her participation in the i-OWN Entrepreneurship program. According to her teacher, Dennis Henderson, “Nariah can be a bit soft-spoken but she is one of our most committed entrepreneurs and has accomplished so much over the past two years.”

Nariah started her company, a jewelry-making business that she says was inspired by her aunt and her own love of fashion, almost two years ago as one of the first i-OWN entrepreneurs. Her hand-made bracelets, necklaces, earrings and other accessories are sold at entrepreneur marketplaces, events at MACS and – by the end of this summer if everything goes correctly – on her own website. And where do her profits go? Right back into her business, she says, to help it grow.

It goes without saying that Nariah plans to continue operating her business in high school. She plans to expand it to include other lifestyle products including clothing and accessories. But Nariah doesn't want to work all alone. She says she has enjoyed collaborating with her fellow entrepreneurs in i-OWN and hopes to one day hire employees and train younger students to become entrepreneurs.

Congratulations and good luck Nariah!

Looking Back

From science fairs to fundraisers, MACS students and staff have a lot to be proud of over the past year. Here are some highlights of our 2011-2012 accomplishments.

Mock Trial’s Third Year a Success

On April 20th, MACS middle school students conducted a mock trial in the courtroom of Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Judge Joe Williams. Now in its third year, MACS Mock Trial uses high school-level materials to prepare students for a live trial in which they assume roles as witnesses and attorneys, re-enacting a real legal case. For three months, participants learned about courtroom procedure and studied this year’s case, The Wisawe Chapter of Friends of Bog Turtles v. ZenoPharma, Inc, which deals with land conservation and economic development. Judge Williams presided over the case.

ROSO

New to the elementary school this year was ROSO (Read Out of School Often), a unique reading program developed by Dr. Isabel Beck, a professor of education at the University of Pittsburgh specializing in literacy, and MACS teachers. Second, third and fifth grades participated on this year’s program.

Students are tasked with completing 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 with three levels of difficulty, check out books from the classroom library, and record their reading in their own ROSO reading log.

ROSO has been a great success - since October, students have logged over 1,500 hours of reading and more than 50 of them qualified to attend a Pirates game for their end-of-the-year celebration!

MACS SuperStars Make Their Mark

On April 23, 2012, the MACS Super Stars attended the Invention Convention held by the Western Area Gifted Consortium and Allegheny Intermediate Unit. This competition encouraged individual students to create a product after identifying a unique need. The display of inventions was a vast collection of clever ideas, ranging from diabetes on-the-go care backpacks to glow-in-the-dark drawer organizers. MACS students Noah Fitzpatrick, London Greer, and Michael Kisner participated, presenting their inventions, inventor’s log and advertising materials to three judges. Way to go!

Last fall, the SuperStars also participated in the History Bowl at the Heinz History Center. Working as a team in competition with other schools, they searched for answers to questions and solved problems in four areas - sports reporting, history timeline, empires and artifacts. Congrats to the following participants for their stellar performance: London Greer, Noah Fitzpatrick, Michael Kisner, and Daesiah Latimer.

MACS Students Shine in STEM Competitions

This spring, MACS middle school students won recognition in four competitions focusing on science, technology, engineering and math education, or STEM, taking home a total of six awards for projects focusing on sustainable energy, city planning, transportation and other topics.

Curt Tomco, Jason Bottoms and Reonna Durham won second prize in Pennsylvania for their submission to eCYBERMISSION, a free online STEM competition for students in grades six through nine sponsored by the U.S. Army. Their team, 7th Grade Allstars, developed a solution to the challenge of producing renewable energy in Pittsburgh. It is the school’s second year participating in the contest.

(Continued on Page 4)
At the Pittsburgh Regional Future Cities Competition, MACS students won an award for Best Housing Development and Layout for their design of a sustainable city of the future. The students showcased their project with a virtual rendering, a physical model made with recycled materials, a report and a presentation to judges.

Five MACS students also received recognition at the 30th Annual Charles Drew Science Fair, which took place at Carnegie Mellon University on Saturday, March 10, 2012. Seventh grader Noah Fitzpatrick won first place in his grade. Noah also received two awards at the Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair on March 30, 2012.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR:
On November 18, 2011, a group of third through eighth grade girls attended a University of Pittsburgh women’s basketball game at the Peterson Event Center organized by Ms. Patria Davenport, girls’ basketball coach and 4th grade TA.

MACS celebrated Black History Month with a door-decorating contest, a quiz bowl, a daily trivia competition and a surprise visit from Pittsburgh Steeler Max Starks! Especially impressive were Ms. Sampson’s first grade class, who won the door decorating contest with their door featuring Firsts in African-American History, and 6th grader Michael Kisner, whose exceptional knowledge and smart strategizing led him to victory in the Quiz Bowl.

At various times, certain groups of second through fourth grade students read “Weird School Daze” books with me. As most students know, Weird School Daze involves a third grade student, A.J., his know-it-all friend, Andrea, and their friends Emily, Michael, Ryan and Neil.

In one story, Mr. Tony is Full of Baloney, the after-school teacher, Tony, helps the students to make the world’s largest pizza on the playground. They used a blow-torch to cook it. Fortunately, the principal, Mr. Granite, promised the students that if they raised money for a good cause, he would sky-dive onto the school and he accidentally lands on Mr. Tony’s giant pizza, thinking it was the target.

Working in reading groups, students first read the book as it was printed. Then, they went back and re-read a script of the book in Reader’s Theater format, which allows kids to act out the parts of the book. Engagement was high and the students truly enjoyed reading them. There must be at least 50 books in the popular series by Dan Gutman, and they are recommended reading for the summer.

By Mr. Beck, Elementary Reading Specialist

Reading Groups Master Book Series

Music Program

It was a big year for the music program at MACS!

In December, we had our first annual Winter Music Concert and Art Show in addition to our Spring Concert and Art Show. Fourth grade also performed for seniors at West Park Court Inc. before Christmas, bringing holiday joy through Christmas carols!

In class, the second grade studied “A Christmas Carol” and then went to see the musical the week before Christmas. The first grade studied the instruments of the orchestra. We did a webinar with the Cleveland Institute of Music this winter where the students got to see each instrument performed and learn fun facts about them.

By Mrs. Rodack, Music Teacher

Board of Trustees:
Letter from the Chairman

By design and practice, MACS emphasizes family involvement in all we do. During the course of each school year, there are numerous opportunities -- formal and less so -- to take an active role in the education and development of your child or children and his or her classmates. Whether attending a school event, serving on the Board of Trustees Parent/Volunteer Committee, or helping during a school field trip, there is a role for you to play at MACS. Your involvement is critical to our continued success as one of the nation’s prestigious Blue Ribbon schools.

A great way to keep in touch with all things MACS is our website at www.macsk8.org. Enhanced significantly over the past year, you’ll find photos from events you may have missed or that may include your child. Browsing through the website also can help you think about areas where you can help as well as look forward to things your child may be doing as he or she moves through MACS. As you likely know, children are very aware of what adults choose to focus on and often set their own priorities based on those of their parents. Your active involvement in your child’s education signals its importance in a dramatic way.

As the 2011–2012 school year draws to a close, the Board of Trustees expresses our deep appreciation and admiration of the students, teachers, staff, administration, parents, families, caregivers and community partners that help ensure that our children will continue to flourish during their time at MACS and throughout the rest of their lives. We are fortunate to have a school community of people from many walks of life who are bound by the powerful mission of preparing our children for a bright future.

My sincere thanks to all,
Larry Berger
Chair, Board of Trustees
Every month MACS hosts a Family Night at school that promotes a specific academic area. The purpose of Family Night is to give MACS families and friends a time to have fun while also keeping abreast of what is happening in our classrooms. During each family night, our staff works hard to showcase our curriculum through games and hands-on activities for students and parents. Family Night is also a time for parents to conduct fundraisers to support MACS activities.

We also invite lots of special guests who bring cool games, demonstrations and prizes with them. This year’s special guests included the Carnegie Library, Museum and Science Center. Also Ms. Robin James-Walton from State Farm, The National Aviary, Mr. Young – our chess instructor, Alocsan, TECH Girls, the Scholastic Book Fairs, Reading is Fundamental, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Humane Society, and the Advancement of Minorities through Education - just to name a few!

Thank you to all our wonderful MACS families and our great staff for making this year’s family nights such a huge success, and a special thank you to our great maintenance staff for all their hard work during these nights!

See what people have to say about Family Night!

Family night is a great way for the teachers and children to bond outside of school and for the kids to show off their stuff. It also provides a positive atmosphere for teachers and adults to communicate positively with and about the child. It is also a great way to meet the parents of other students.

- Meghann Brown, Parent

I love to play games at family night! I love it when my mom comes and we play games together. Family night is fun.

- Carl Tomco, 2nd grade

I liked planting seeds at science night.

- Taylor Bey, Kindergarten

I liked the family night where me and my mom and my brother played a math game and I won!

- Khalil Collins, 1st grade

By Stacy McCandless, Special Ed Teacher

Do you have an iPad at home and are looking for some great educational apps to use? Here are a few of our favorites:

**Starfall ABCs** - Reviews all the letters and their sounds.

**Don’t Let the Pigeon Run This App!** – In this app, created by award-winning children’s author Mo Willems, kids get to create their own Pigeon story.

**Discovery Kids Sharks** - Discovery Kids created an app that shows videos and allows children to play games while learning about many different types of sharks and other sea life.

**Google Earth** - Students can explore faraway places as well as their own neighborhood by using this app.

**Garage Band** - Allows students to create their own music using many different instruments.

**Faces iMake** - Students are given fruit and many other objects to create their face.

**iMovie** - Students are able to film and edit a video created using the camera on the iPads

By Ms. Stout, Librarian and Ms. Wunderlich
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.