



Springfield Middle School  
Robertson County Innovation Academy



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Dr. Grant Bell, Principal ♦ Ms. Amanda Mounts, Asst. Principal ♦ Mr. Patrick Carneal, Asst. Principal

**“We are EPIC!”**

*The Jacket's Buzz*

October 22, 2018

*“Providing a well-lit path in the pursuit of purpose and happiness.”*

*“Every single day, we will strive to ensure that everyone is safe and respected; and that ALL scholars are responsible for working to master ALL standards.”*



*“There is nothing on this earth more to be prized than true friendship.”*

**Thomas Aquinas**

<b>Monday:</b>	<b>Report Cards Issued</b>
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Fall Picture Day & Fall Sports RED Ribbon Week: Sports Shirts
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Title I Meeting 7:30 AM RED Ribbon Week: Twin Day Bringing Back Tap Pledge Day
<b>Thursday:</b>	RED Ribbon Week: Neon Colors Basketball Jamboree
<b>Friday:</b>	RED Ribbon Week: Camo/Army Mr. Bond Visit 9:00 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Marching Band Night 5:30

**Bus Duty:**

<u>Monday</u> Language Arts	<u>Tuesday</u> Related Arts	<u>Wednesday</u> Math	<u>Thursday</u> Social Studies	<u>Friday</u> Science
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# We're Kicking Off

## Red Ribbon Week

Love Yourself. Be Drug Free.™

Tuesday, October 23rd- My Team is Drug-Free  
(Wear sports shirts)

Wednesday, October 24- Pair Up Against Drug  
(Twin Day)

Thursday, October 25th-Too Bright for Drug  
(Wear Neon Colors)

Friday, October 26th- Stay Strong against Drugs  
(Wear Camo/ Army Clothes)

Monday, October 29th-PINK OUT  
(Wear PINK to support Breast cancer)

Tuesday, October 30th- Sock it to Drugs  
(Wear Crazy Socks)

Wednesday, October 31st-**WE ARE DRUG-FREE**  
**(WEAR RED TO SUPPORT RED RIBBON WEEK)**

Thank you for all your support for Red Ribbon!!!!

*Ms. Kathie Williams*

# Principal Choice Awards

“Recognizing Quality and Meaningful Scholar Work”



Hunter Primm- Perfect Score on Social Studies Benchmark  
Ms. Owensby- 6<sup>th</sup> grade REACH



Aricka McFadden and Haylee Martindale  
EPIC Fall Artwork- Ms. Jernigan Art



Nancy Mendez Mejia and McKenzie Saultz  
Extraordinary Positive Attitudes



# ***Special Olympics*** *Tennessee*



Springfield Middle School scholars competed in the Special Olympics last week, giving their best at bowling! Director of Schools Dr. Chris Causey even visited with our scholars. There were lots of smiles shared!









# Choir Trip to APSU



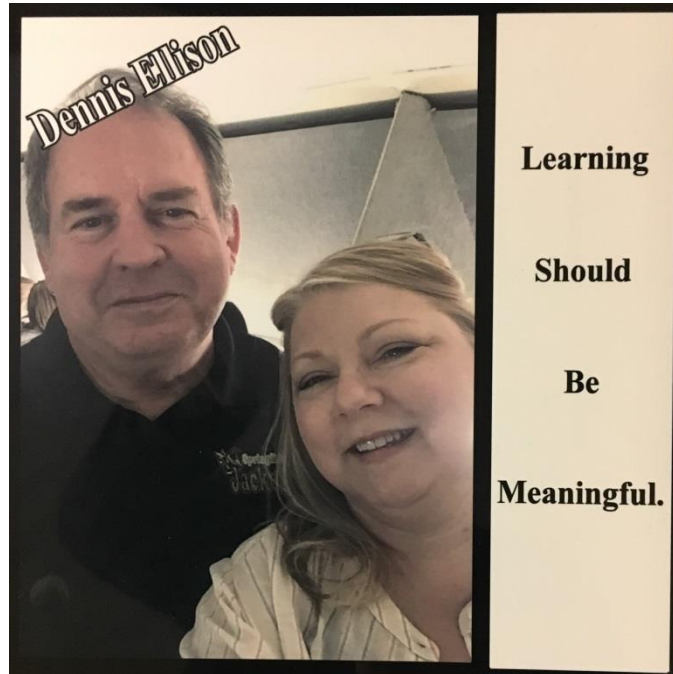
“Last Thursday, members of the SMS Choir traveled to Austin Peay State University for the Middle School ChoirFest! These scholars joined about 300 others as they rehearsed and performed songs under the direction of experienced college professors of music. Great job to everyone who was a part of the day!!!”

Mr. McGehee- SMS Choir Director





# Staff Member of the Week



**Name:** Dennis Ellison      **Grade :** 7th      **Subject:** STEM

**Hometown:** Clarksville, Tennessee

**Family:** Deborah wife, Michelle daughter, Richard son, Will son, Kaitlyn grand-daughter, Abby grand-daughter

**Education:** (MaED) Curriculum and Instructions in Mathematics, Bachelor of Science (BS) Interdisciplinary Studies 4-8 Mathematics, Bachelor of Science (BSPS) Professional Studies, (AAS) Automotive Technology

**How did your career lead you to Springfield Middle School?** After being a soldier for 25 years, I still wanted to help by teaching and training so instead of soldiers I thought students would be an ideal situation.

**What do you love about our school and children?** The atmosphere, teamwork, collaboration between teachers, parent involvement and the display of respect and commitment from the Innovation Academy Scholars.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your responsibilities?** Developing a balanced lesson plan so scholars can learn, gain mastery, and meet the future challenges of college.

**Personal Philosophy of Education:** Every scholar deserves an education and therefore it is up to us as teachers to provide that education. I believe scholars learn at different paces and have different learning styles, so I try a variety of different strategies in the classroom to benefit all scholars

# Lagniappe

## Cult of Pedagogy

### Open Your Door: Why We Need to See Each Other Teach

JENNIFER GONZALEZ

I have always taught with my classroom door closed. Officially, it's because I have trouble with distractions, which is not a lie: Just ask my family how often I yell for quiet when I'm trying to figure out my next Quirkle move.

The unofficial reason is that I don't really want other people watching me teach. Alone with my students, I'm a different person: I let my guard down in a way that I never do with co-workers, even people I'm comfortable with. My students get the most relaxed, funniest side of me, the side I'm not sure my colleagues would appreciate or approve of. It's not that I do anything inappropriate – not really, anyway – but I am definitely more likely to say “booger” and “crap” when my door is closed. For that reason, I'd rather not have guests in my room. Apparently I'm not alone. In my sixth year of teaching, our principal wanted us to learn strategies that were just being introduced by Marzano and company. Everyone got a copy of the book, we had meetings where the strategies were explored, and we collaborated on how to implement them into our lessons. Oh, and he also wanted us to observe each other using the strategies in our teaching.

People FREAKED OUT. Not about having to read another book or try new strategies. It was the peer observation. Lost their ever-loving minds. “I don't want someone else in my room looking for mistakes!” They said, all in a tizzy. “And I don't want to be the observer either! Who am I to tell someone else what they're doing wrong?” Eventually, because it was mandated, they had to get over it. But their initial response showed a lack of understanding for how truly amazing peer

observation can be. If we can get past the discomfort, opening our doors to other teachers can be a fantastic source of professional development.

Here are some reasons why: Because teaching is such a complex act, the variations in how we do it are endless. We disciplined differently. We set up our space differently. We perform strategies in different ways. It's highly likely that someone else in your building is better at something than you are. By watching the way our colleagues teach, we pick up tricks and techniques that we can take into our own rooms. On the receiving end, there's something really satisfying about having a peer notice something you're doing right. In our work, we rarely get positive feedback on the things we try so hard to perfect. I have definitely never had a student approach me after class and say, "Girl, that anticipatory set was off the hook!" The teachers in my school asked, "Who am I to tell someone else what they're doing wrong?" And here's my answer: You are experts. You are experts because you have been there, tried that, had the same struggles. So many people don't understand what it's really like to be a teacher. But you do. That's your expertise. Put a state senator in my class, have him compliment me on incorporating the Common Core in my lesson. Nice, but doesn't mean a whole lot. Now, a compliment from you? You know. You tell me you liked the gesture I used to illustrate a difficult concept? That's gold to me. Your feedback means more. So how about we all start holding our own opinions in higher esteem, okay? Finally, there's the bonding: Watching another person deeply involved in the work they're trained for helps you get to know them on a completely different level. And though we work together, we usually follow parallel, rather than intersecting lines. We rarely ever actually see each other teach. And it's a shame, because every time I've observed a colleague, my admiration for them has grown, and each time, I felt a little closer to them. This is something we could use more of in every workplace — educational or not.

How can seeing each other fail be a positive? To start with, we return to the subject of bonding. The hardest part of letting other people watch you teach is the possibility that you'll screw up. Then you'll be embarrassed. Because of this fear, we think we should postpone observations until we are super-prepared, until we have the perfect lesson ready to go. Here's the irony in that: You being perfect makes other people hate you a little, and themselves a lot. Or maybe it's the reverse. Anyway, achieving something close to perfection is pretty damaging in a lot of ways. Conversely, letting people see some of your flaws creates greater intimacy. It makes them realize that their own flaws are not so weird. When I go over to

someone's house and it's spotlessly clean, I feel kind of jealous and insecure. But crumbs on the counter and shoes in the hallway? On a gut level, I'm more comfortable. In this place, my psyche tells me, I won't be judged. The same goes for your teaching: If you let someone else see you screw up, they will probably be more comfortable having you observe them. What happens next is you both start to take more risks, try new things. You cultivate a spirit of experimentation and learning together, rather than struggling to out-perfect each other. Apart from the bonding aspect, failure can lead to constructive criticism, which will help you grow. Someone once said that the real benefit of marriage is having someone in your life who will regularly call you on your crap, who will hold up a mirror so you can face your flaws and outgrow them. In our work, we can do for each other what spouses do on their good days: Gently point out areas for improvement and support each other through the growing pains. Every time I observe another teacher, I discover something I'm not even looking for. In my first year, I spent one class period observing Sue, another 6th grade language arts teacher. I was there to see how she conducted a writer's workshop, but something else she did made a much bigger impression on me. That first month, I obsessed about establishing order in my classroom: I thought I had to have them all in their seats when the bell rang, pencils sharpened, quiet, ready to learn. If I told them to take out their writing folders, they should have them out and ready in less than 20 seconds. But every time, three or four kids would just drag through the process, or they'd get off-task, or they wouldn't hear me at all, lost in daydreams. None of the precision I was hoping for. And I got tense about it. I scolded and nagged. And I felt insecure, like less of a teacher, the only one the kids didn't respect. So there I was in Sue's class, and the first thing I noticed was that when she told them to get their writing folders out, they moved slowly, too. And one kid got up and sharpened his pencil, even though they should have already done that. And another one walked up to Sue to ask her something privately – another aberration in the plan! – and through it all, she just sat on her stool at the front of the room, mellowed out, waiting. For me, this was nothing short of a miracle. I had never considered not freaking out to be an option. So much of what we gain from watching each other teach falls into this “intangible” category: attitudes, pacing, small calibrations that make things work a little better. And it happens especially when you observe people who teach the same students you teach. If you are in elementary, go along with your students to specials every now and then and see how that teacher deals with them. In middle school, arrange to have your class covered on a test day so you can observe someone else on your team. Seeing your students with another person gives you ideas you never would have come up with on your own. Lastly, there's one more beneficial side-effect that comes from peer observation: having your students see you together. Something

powerful happens when students see their teachers together. You become larger than the sum of your parts, stronger not only in number, but because this simple show of cooperation tells them you are united, which is an important message to send to kids. In the same way that children feel more secure when their parents are getting along, students feel something similar when they see us support each other.

This principle applies all the way through college, and could be more significant at that level. Adult students may be more likely to challenge their instructors, perhaps because there's less of an age difference, or because their life and work experience could result in a lack of innate respect for your position. The occasional presence of another professor or instructor in the room reminds students you are part of a larger group that has some authority, that others have your back.

## **GETTING STARTED**

You don't have to wait for your school to set up a formal system of peer observation to start watching other teachers. In fact, the more spontaneous visits often yield the most interesting insights. Ask another teacher if you can grade papers in the back of his room during your planning period. Or if time is short, just come in for the first fifteen minutes. And let your peers know your door is open.

Some schools have instituted a "pineapple welcome" program, encouraging teachers to occasionally hang a picture of a pineapple — a traditional symbol of welcome — outside their doors, to let peers know it's a good time to drop in.

To make observations go more smoothly, consider these tips: Decide ahead of time if feedback will be given. Some people are more likely to let you observe if you've agreed in advance that you won't offer any commentary on what you see. Sure, they won't grow from that arrangement, but it's a step some people need to get more comfortable with the process. If you have agreed to provide feedback, always start with positives. When you do offer criticism, just point out one or two very specific things, and be descriptive rather than judgmental: When you did \_\_\_\_\_, these students did \_\_\_\_\_.

And be cautious about participating. It's tempting sometimes to pipe up with a comment — after all, you're likely one of the most engaged people in the room — but resist that urge and wait to be invited. I've seen teachers who overdo this and end up hogging all the airtime to the detriment of the students. I still prefer to teach with the door closed, because cutting out distractions is high on my list of needs. And if it's important to you, by all means keep yours closed too, but close them

only in the literal sense. You can have an open-door policy and still have a closed classroom door: Just let your peers know when they are welcome. Ours is a delicate, nuanced art, and though books and workshops offer all kinds of interesting ideas for how we can improve that art, the resources that lie behind every door in your school can offer something even richer, if you're brave enough to let each other in. ♥





## Tips for Parents: Your Role in School Success

Studies show that a child's academic achievement is directly influenced by their parents' involvement in their education. Learn how you can bolster your student for success in this Tips for Parents.

### **A Teacher's Expectation of Parents**

Students, teachers, and parents all share responsibility in the education of a child. As a parent, here's a minimum level of involvement most teachers expect:

- Help your student by developing a routine or specific time for homework where you are available to help or listen if needed. You are vital to their success.
- Ensure your child is at school, on time, every day possible. Arrange for vacations, trips, etc. during days off school.
- Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast each morning so they can function in class.
- Make sure your student is getting adequate sleep at night to support their growing body and mind.
- Be a positive role model in your child's eyes who shows interest in reading and learning new things.
- Notify the teacher of any concerns or questions you have regarding their learning or treatment in school.

### **Tips for Parents: Questions to Ask Your Child about Their Day**

Get a sense of your child's life at school by asking questions that elicit more than a one-word response. Try one of these conversation starters:

- Tell me about the best part of your day.
- What was the hardest thing you had to do today?
- Did any of your classmates do anything funny? Tell me about what you read in class.

- Who did you play with/hang out with today? What did you do? Do you think \_\_\_\_\_(insert subject here) is too hard?
- What's the biggest difference between this year and last year?
- What rules are different at school than at home? Do you think they're fair?
- Who did you sit with at lunch?
- Can you show me something you learned or did today?

## **The Do's and Don't of Homework**

Follow these Do's and Don'ts of homework with your kids to make the most of their learning time at home:

### **Do:**

- Provide quiet study time in a well-lit place.
- Be available to encourage, praise, advise, and supervise.
- Monitor your child's understanding of concepts and skills.
- Check work for accuracy, neatness, and completeness.
- Provide related home-learning experiences to reinforce concepts learned at school.
- Cooperate with and be supportive of the child's teacher.
- Help your child make education a top priority during his/her school years. Show by example that learning can be exciting and fulfilling.

### **Don't:**

- Do the child's homework for him/her.
- Make excuses or allow the child to make excuses for incomplete or sloppy work.
- Change, criticize, or belittle a teacher's assignments. If there's a problem, talk to the teacher.
- Allow the child to skip an assignment he/she doesn't like.
- Fill the child's life with so many non-school activities there is no time left for homework or play. Relieve the child of responsibility for getting homework back to school on time.

## **A Winning Team**

Team with your child and your child's teacher to work together for your child's academic success. It's a winning team.

*(Special thanks to teacher Susan Bulloch and retired teacher Donna Moyer for contributing these great parent involvement tips.)*

You may also find these Tips for Parents helpful:

[Tips for Parents: Visiting the Classroom](#)

[Tips for Parents: Parent Involvement](#)

[Tips for Parents: Homework](#)

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