



Springfield Middle School
Robertson County Innovation Academy



715 5th Avenue West ♦ Springfield, TN 37172 ♦ Phone (615) 384-4821
Dr. Grant Bell, Principal ♦ Ms. Amanda Mounts, Asst. Principal ♦ Mr. Patrick Carneal, Asst. Principal

“We are EPIC!”

The Jacket's Buzz

December 3, 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.”



“The aim of education is the knowledge, not of facts, but of values.”

William S. Burroughs

Monday:	Johnson Electric iA Tour 10:30 Band Rehearsal 3:30 Basketball @ East Robertson 4:30
Tuesday:	Wrestling @ Harpeth 5:30 Winter Band Concert 6:00
Wednesday:	Wonderful Wednesday
Thursday:	Fall Picture Retakes and Winter Sports Pictures Basketball @ Greenbrier 4:30
Friday:	Drama Club Costume and Sets 3:30
Saturday:	Elf Jr. Dress Rehearsal (Parents only) 1:30

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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Highland Crest College



The 6th grade scholars took a campus tour of the Highland Crest College campus and facility on Friday as part of our “building a college-going culture” here at SMS.



EPIC Players Production of



Historic Springfield Middle School Theatre

December 14 @ 7:00 PM

December 15 @ 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM

K-12 Scholar Tickets \$3.00 Adults \$5.00

SMS Choir



“Great job to members of the SMS Choir who performed (out in the rain!) as part of a mass choir in the Nashville Christmas Parade on Saturday morning!”

- Mr. McGehee



Bruise Brothers Wrestling



The Bruise Brothers beat Charlotte last week, and... GREENBRIER!!!! Beat them by 3 points. The gym was rocking and everyone was SO LOUD. It was amazing! We lost to Greenbrier big time three weeks ago. 8th graders recognized were Connor McClelland and Jay Patterson. I will never forget the match!

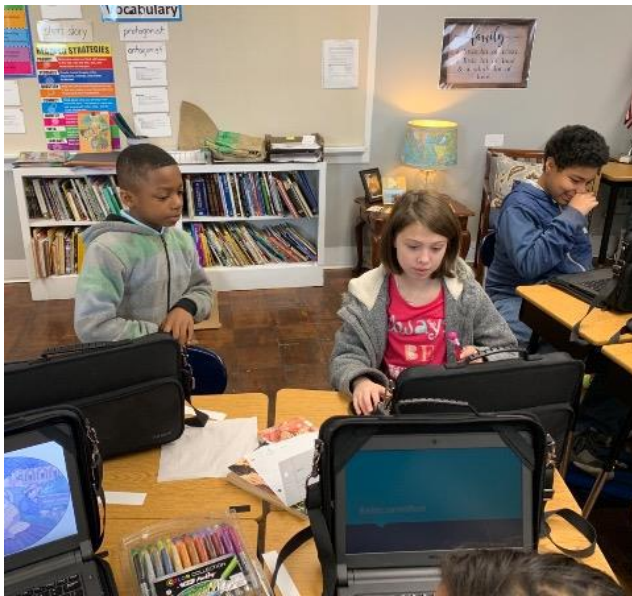
Coach Jill Reeves



Happening Around SMS



Three-Dimensional Maps of China



Scholars in Ms Owensby's class creating Ppt's on the Caste System



The SMS Jr. Beta Club under the leadership of Denise Richards and Dennis Ellison took part in the National Beta Convention last week.



Staff Member of the Week



Name: Kelli Bush

Grade: 6

Subject: Reading/Language Arts

Hometown: Lawrenceburg, Tennessee

Family: Married: Jerry Bush; 3 children: Patrick (age 20)- Full time college student and real estate school Currently at VSCC will transfer to APSU this fall (junior after 6 hrs. this summer), Carter (age 14)- 9th grade at SHS, and Maddie Bush (age 12)- 6th grader at SMS

Education: Tennessee State University; Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies, K-6 (B.S.)

How did your career lead you to Springfield Middle School?

Ironically, Springfield Middle School is where I began my journey as an anxious 8th grader many years ago. I was a kid in this very same building who had recently transitioned into a new town as a result of my step-father's job. I was beginning a brand-new school, learning how to make all new friends, and had just moved away from most of my family. Amidst all the unhappiness I felt during the time, that new chapter ended up being a great new beginning for me. Yet even back then, SMS had an environment that gave people a sense of comfort; teachers and staff showed love, care, and compassion for others. Coach Holman and Coach Holland were my teachers and helped me adjust quite well! Coach Holman picked on me for being short back then, just as he does today...some things never change! ;) Fast forward several years later after graduating college, it was time to begin seeking a teaching position. SMS was my second school to interview in within a week. I truly desired the 6th grade position at SMS because I felt it was simply where I belonged, it just "felt right." I was hired within that week and have taught

sixth grade since then. I believed in SMS and children long before I ever began teaching here. I was raised from an early age that in spite of what anyone might say about inner-city schools in our area, that it was important to know those statements were false and to simply avoid the negativity. My parents always supported my brother and I as kids while we attended Springfield schools, believed in the teachers, and kids (and would tell anyone else that might need a friendly reminder or tried to differ). My brother and I both attended and graduated from Springfield High and my children attended or currently attend Springfield schools. I am grateful that Dr. Mike Morris gave me the opportunity to begin my journey at SMS. I am also grateful to Dr. Bell, Ms. Mounts, and Mr. Kilkenny for allowing me the opportunity to mission with them each day. Springfield Middle School will always be dear to my heart. It is an amazing place to work that is filled with wonderful people that sincerely care for others.

What is the most challenging aspect of your responsibilities?

The most challenging aspect of my responsibilities is to meet the needs of each individual child. All children have different needs. There are days that some kids might not even be emotionally ready to start attempting to conquer their academic goals due various situations that they are toiling with at home (poverty, custody, hunger, etc.). On the other hand, others might be excelling academically and emotionally because of their circumstances being more stable and more positive (parental support, warm meals each night, someone cheering them on and being their advocate, etc.). Some of these types of scenarios are unfortunately uncontrollable for both the scholar and teacher and they create challenges for learning. It is also not uncommon for scholars to be on various academic levels within one classroom, which at times can create hardships. These various levels create challenges for grouping activities, individualizing lessons, and the ability to work exclusively with each child as much as they need so that they can achieve their goals. All children are unique and obtain knowledge in their own special way.

We must also remember that they learn, respond, comprehend, and behave in their own preferential way as well. These ideas do not make a teacher's job any easier; however, on a positive note... thank goodness that children are given their own uniqueness and individuality! It would be a very boring world if we were alike, so as challenging as the above situations can be at times, I try to always remember that we never know another person's story or what they are dealing with, so just show kindness.

Personal Philosophy of Education:

I believe that children must have an environment where they feel loved and safe. When a child feels comfortable, accepted for who they are, loved, respected, and genuinely cared about, only then can any learning begin. If these things do not exist, then academics will not be any nature of priority to a child. Everyone wants to be wanted, loved, and have a sense of security. These qualities are essential in establishing a successful learning environment.



Parents & Teachers: 6 Ways to Inspire the Teen Brain

The teen brain is at a crossroad; unlock its potential with 6 strategies.

The teen brain is in a vulnerable state. It is primed to fall into addiction, delve deeply into depression and seek out risky situations. However, the teen years are also a prime time for developing long-term, necessary strategic thinking skills, the foundation for advanced reasoning that should continue to be refined in complexity and maturity throughout adulthood.

The brain undergoes more change during the teenage years than any other time except for the first two months of life. The changes are most dramatic in the frontal lobe networks, the brain's command control center. The frontal lobe networks are responsible for reasoning, planning, decision-making, judgment, inhibiting bad choices, and other high-level cognitive functions. Providing necessary challenges to support development of the frontal lobe networks is key to your teen's ability to achieve future life success.



Source:

For years parents and educators have preached, “the more you know, the better.” Teens are being trained to stuff facts and regurgitate information, leading to rote memorization and stymied creativity. Such robotic use of the brain is leaving the teen brain uninspired. A time of extraordinary promise and susceptibility, this vital adolescent brain stage merits larger-than-life attention from parents and teachers. The teen brain is primed to create and innovate new ideas.

Elevating brainpower during this impressionable life stage of adolescents is imperative to promoting independent life success. Follow the below tips to inspire the best and brightest brain performance and to enhance vital frontal lobe development of your teenager.

- Teach your teen to conceive many unique interpretations of movies, books, political discussions, unsettling school or peer issues, or works of art.
- Encourage your youth to be a problem finder and solution setter for issues that arise daily and discuss how academic content supports this expertise.
- Ask your teenager to give you a “message” from a book or movie or hurtful experience rather than a long-winded retell without reflection.
- Have your adolescent interpret the lyrics of their favorite song from positive and negative perspectives and do the same for your song with them.
- Watch their favorite TV show with them and share different take-home messages for the different characters.
- Push for a multitude of answers to a question or problem versus seeking the “right” answer.

Our brains are wired to be inspired – especially during teen years. Fostering creativity and innovation to tackle difficult and multifaceted problems – in and out of school – will drive successful futures of our youth for generations to come. As Einstein once said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world.”

Lagniappe

New Study Finds 1 in 4 Teachers Chronically Absent From Classrooms; Problem Is Three Times Worse in Traditional Schools



TALKING POINTS

- 28.3% of teachers in traditional schools miss more than 10 days, vs. 10.3% in charters
@educationgadfly
- Schools with collectively bargained contracts, including unionized charters, have more teacher absences

Teachers in traditional district schools are three times as likely to be chronically absent from the classroom as those in charter schools, meaning they are gone for more than 10 days in a typical 180-day school year, a new research paper has found.

In all, 28.3 percent of teachers in traditional schools, compared with 10.3 percent in charters, miss that much time, according to the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a right-leaning education-focused think tank, in a study on teacher absenteeism nationwide released Wednesday. The totals include both sick and personal days.

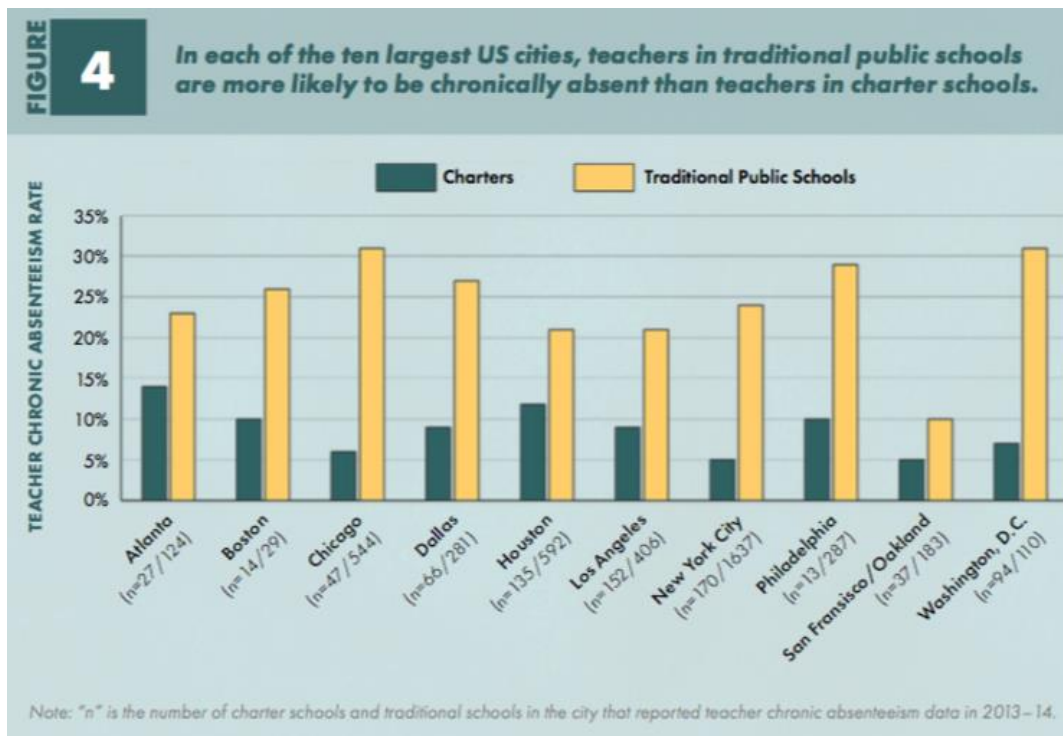
“If you look at the gap between the two sectors,” said David Griffith, the report’s author, “there’s a very clear link between state collective bargaining laws and the number of days teachers are entitled to, and teacher chronic absenteeism.”

Given the threat posed to unionized schools in many cities by charters, which are often staffed by uncertified and non-unionized teachers, the report’s sometimes eye-popping comparisons seem likely to further divide education advocates.

Drawing from federal sources as well as databases maintained by charter and teacher groups, Fordham identified a wide range in chronic absenteeism rates — from 15 percent of teachers in Utah’s traditional schools to 79 percent in Hawaii. But in 34 of 35 states with at least 10 charter schools, and in the nation’s 10 largest cities, traditional schools employ a higher percentage of chronically absent teachers than charters do.

Sometimes much higher. In 12 states, teachers in traditional schools are twice as likely as those in charters to be chronically absent; they are four times as likely in another seven states, including New York and Florida, five times as likely in New Hampshire, and six times as likely in Nevada.

The gap in cities is much the same, with chronic absenteeism four times as likely among teachers in traditional schools in Washington, D.C., and New York City, with 1.1 million students, the country’s largest public school district, and five times as likely in Chicago.



(Courtesy of Fordham Institute, “Teacher Absenteeism in Charter and Traditional Public Schools”)

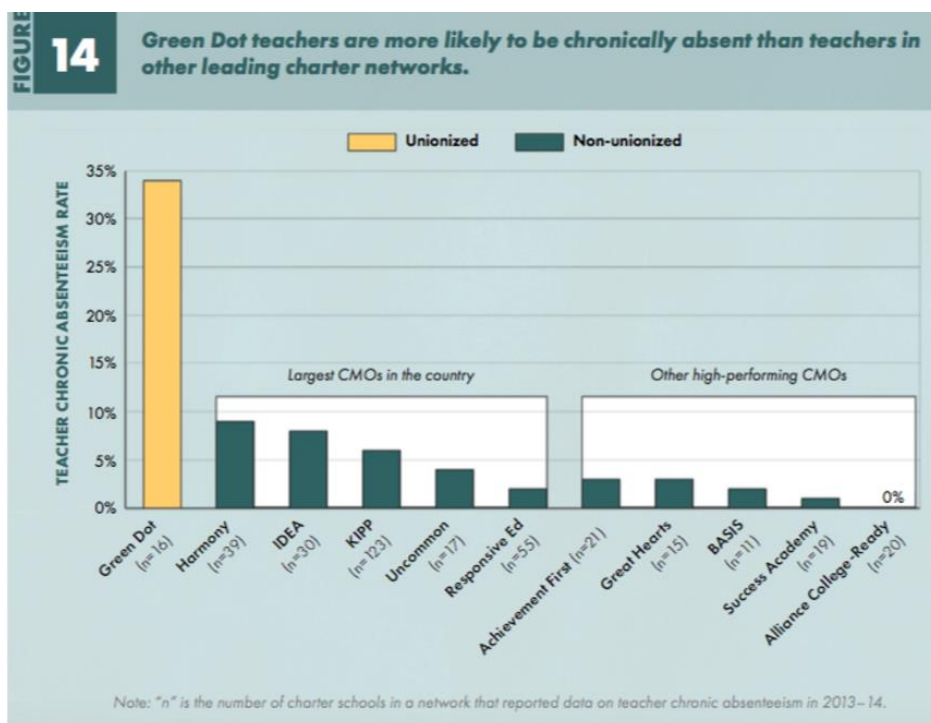
Teacher absenteeism lowers student achievement and the motivation to attend and participate in school, researchers have found. One study estimated the effects of having a substitute to be equivalent to replacing an average teacher with one in the 10th to 20th percentile of productivity, with larger effects in the days before exams.

Teacher absence also incurs billions in costs for substitutes, disrupts common planning time, and, in often forcing other teachers to cover for absent colleagues, detracts from those teachers’ preparation for their own classes.

The contrasts in absenteeism are particularly provocative when focused on teachers governed by union-negotiated contracts. There is no demonstrated connection between collective bargaining and chronic absenteeism, Fordham notes, but gaps between traditional and charter schools are smallest in right-to-work states like Georgia and Texas that prohibit teacher unions from negotiating agreements.

In Alaska, the only state where there’s more chronic absenteeism in charters (33 percent, compared with 30 percent among traditional schools), charters are governed by the same collectively bargained contracts as their districts.

Perhaps more dramatically, teachers in the small fraction of unionized charters nationwide were twice as likely to be chronically absent as their peers in non-unionized charters, 17.9 percent to 9.1 percent. The study reported that teachers in Green Dot charter schools, probably the country’s best-regarded unionized network, have a 34 percent chronic absenteeism rate. That’s higher than the traditional schools in Los Angeles (21 percent), where most Green Dot schools are located, almost seven times as high as the city’s other charters (which are at 5 percent), and between four to 17 times as high as the largest and highest-achieving charter management organizations nationally.



(Courtesy of Fordham Institute, “Teacher Absenteeism in Charter and Traditional Public Schools”)

On Wednesday, Green Dot provided more recent records, from the 2015-16 school year, that it said reflected lower rates than those reported by Fordham. “Green Dot California has a chronic teacher absenteeism rate of 6% which is comparable with other CMOs in California and across the country,” CEO Christina de Jesus and Angel Maldonado, head of its teachers union, said in a statement. “We are of course, committed to further reducing chronic absenteeism in all of our schools.”

Sick and personal day policies vary considerably, from a total of five in Texas to 25 in Hartford, Connecticut. While the report can’t make causal connections, Griffith suggested that teachers in schools with better sick and personal day benefits may have incentives to miss more time. Studies have found that “absenteeism is influenced by prevailing group absence behavior at the school,” and teachers who come into high-absenteeism schools are likelier to have more absences.

“Teachers are human, they’re going to respond to incentives like anyone else does,” Griffith said. “If you give them more days, it’s logical to expect they will take more days, even if they don’t take all of them.”

By contrast, the Fordham analysis suggests that in schools like higher-achieving charters, which have closely prescribed behavioral codes, deep commitment to the school’s philosophy, and no tenure protection, teachers will be less likely to miss school.

Researchers have also found teacher absenteeism to be greater in schools with concentrations of poor students; surprisingly, Griffith found that demographic factors had only marginal effects on absence rates at the state and national levels.

While suggestive, the report’s findings aren’t definitive. Available data didn’t allow Fordham to measure chronic absenteeism among non-tenured traditional school teachers, who are younger and probably closer in age to many charter teachers and who also lack job security. Fordham can’t disaggregate among teachers by age at all or by school grade taught, so we don’t know whether high school teachers miss more days than kindergarten teachers. (Better data might provide some solace to Green Dot, whose schools are all middle and high schools.)

Nor do we know the actual number of days absent teachers missed, which is important because, as the report mentions, the distribution of chronic absences — whether the typical chronically absent teacher is out for 12 days, for instance, or more — would enable more accurate distinctions between schools and the types of schools. That, in turn, might dull the report’s traditional-versus-charter gloss.

A 2014 National Council on Teacher Quality study of teacher attendance in 40 urban districts, cited in the Fordham report, found that 16 percent of teachers who’d been absent for 18 school days or more accounted for a third of all absences in the districts. Another 16 percent who were out for three days or less accounted for just 2 percent of absences.

In addition, it’s true that the average teacher misses about eight days a year while the average American worker misses 3.5 days, despite having 20 percent to 25 percent more workdays. And it’s also true that only 7.7 percent of workers in other industries who have access to paid sick leave are absent for more than 10 days. But comparing teachers with other unionized workers would be more helpful, as would comparisons with those in other high-stress occupations: police and firefighters, or perhaps nurses, rather than accountants and lawyers.

The problem of students chronically missing school has historically drawn more attention than teacher absenteeism: Fordham observes that a dozen states made reducing student absence a measure of school quality in accountability plans required under the Every Student Succeeds Act, with many more considering it. For good reason: a 2012 analysis by Johns Hopkins University and the National Governors Association found chronic absenteeism to be among the strongest predictors to identify future high school dropouts — stronger even than suspensions and test scores.

Fordham points out, however, that it will be difficult to fix student absenteeism without ensuring their teachers are regularly in class. “State leaders, why not pay as much attention to *teacher* absenteeism in your ESSA plans as you do to *student* absenteeism?” Fordham asks. “How far can we get by fixing the second problem if we don’t fix the first?”

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