



The Herald

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Summertime Changes at MCA

As always, the summer is a very busy time at Millennium Charter Academy. Rooms are cleaned, floors are polished, new families are toured, along with many, many more activities, as the school readies itself for the coming year. Here are a few of the changes you'll see this fall.



Left to right: Karen Fritz, Deana Harrison, Paul Rezzo, Autumn Davidson

New Teaching Staff

The MCA teaching staff has four new members for this coming year!

In the elementary school, Karen Fritz will be the teaching assistant in Mrs. McMillian's first grade class. She holds an Associates degree from Surry Community College, and she received her Teaching Assistant Certificate in 2005. She comes to MCA with twelve years of experience.

Deana Harrison joins our 5th grade team as Teaching Assistant. Mrs. Harrison holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Emmanuel College, and she is also an MCA parent.

In our middle school, Paul Rezzo joins us as an 8th grade English teacher. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Speech and Rhetoric, with a minor in Theatre, from Hillsdale College. He is a native of Los Angeles, California. Mrs. Autumn Davidson comes to MCA as a 7th grade English and Science teacher. A native of Bristol, Tennessee, she graduated from East Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Arts in English Education

All four new members say they are very excited about the opportunity to work at MCA, and all four have expressed their love for teaching and working with children.

Room Changes

This school year reflects a ten percent increase in total enrollment from the previous school year. How wonderful to have more families at our great school! As a result, two rooms that were community areas now have to serve other purposes. The "wireless lab," or the middle school wing computer lab, will be Mrs. Davidson's classroom. The multi-purpose room is now a room for technology staging, computer set-up and maintenance, development activities, and is home to Mrs. Dean and Mrs. Browne.

Tax Holiday in August

Although the tax-free weekend for back-to-school shopping isn't just something for MCA families, there is a change involved. Under new North Carolina policies, this is the final year that the back-to-school tax free weekend is scheduled. You may take advantage of this last tax holiday from August 2 through August 4.

For more information, you may visit
<http://www.dornc.com/press/2013/salestaxholiday.html>

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Security Enhancements for MCA

The safety of our children is always our most important consideration at MCA. While it is most desirable for the school to have a warm, open, and inviting atmosphere, it does need to be as safe as possible without feeling like a fortress. Existing procedures have always been thoughtful and sound, but as with most things, there is always room for improvement. After careful consideration and consultation with experts like Tyco Security Systems and the Mount Airy Police Department, several new mechanisms and methods are now in place to enhance the safety of our school.

One of the most visible enhancements is security cameras. Cameras will cover all external entrances and parking areas, with video files being saved for a determined period of time. Although cameras do not prevent any inappropriate activities, they do act as a deterrent.



The security camera over the main front door captures images of persons approaching the door and traffic in the main parking lot.



This is a nighttime view from the camera over the main elementary entrance.



This is a daytime view from the camera over the main middle school entrance. On monitor views of this shot, it is possible to read the engraving on the bench at the left.

The lockdown alarm system has a single, solid tone with flashes from blue strobe lights to indicate that emergency lockdown procedures should be implemented immediately.



Additional hardware type installations include new panic buttons and a lockdown event alarm. Although the school has had a traditional safety alarm system for years, intruder type calls to the system resulted with validation calls from the alarm company. With the installation and use of the panic buttons, emergency personnel will be dispatched immediately, without time being spent on validation. When the panic buttons are engaged, an alarm will sound and blue strobe lights will flash in the hallways to indicate the emergency is of a lockdown nature, and that lockdown procedures are to be implemented immediately. The new system will ensure all persons in the school or on the playgrounds are aware of the lockdown at once, and that no one is unaware of the event because of being out of earshot of a public address speaker. The lockdown alarms and lights are very different from the fire alarm system, so there will be no confusion between the two events.

Other measures being implemented include ensuring that all substitute teachers are thoroughly trained in standard MCA security procedures so they know what to do in the event of a drill or actual emergency. All classrooms, meeting rooms, and labs have been equipped with emergency information and maps indicating what to do and where to go in an emergency. This information is near the door at each room, readily apparent for students, teachers, and visitors to the room. Additionally, stanchions have been installed at the main elementary and middle school entrances, which are the only two entrances not continually locked, to funnel visitors through the office areas.

It would be impossible to cover and predict every type of emergency situation that might arise at a public facility like MCA. However, with good judgment, available technology, and mostly with concern and love for our students, MCA will remain a warm, welcoming, inviting place for a stellar education, while keeping our students as safe as possible.