

What's New? Week of March 5, 2007

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Five Citizens Have Applied for the School Board Appointment - *posted 03/02/07*

Thank you to the Hoover citizens who have applied for the Board of Education appointment.

[School Board Seat Has 5 Candidates - March 2, Birmingham News](#)

The News reports that interviews will begin no earlier than March 26. These interviews will be public.

To view more information on becoming a School Board Member, visit the [Links](#) section of our [Board of Education](#) page. To visit the Hoover City Council's official page on the Board of Education, click [here](#).

Board President Bill Veitch has asked for reappointment to the Board of Education. When considering Mr. Veitch's request, please avail yourself of the [Alabama Association of School Board's School Board Academy](#) records. A Board member's past performance as a School Board member should be carefully considered when that member asks for reappointment.

School Cast Emergency Notification System - *posted 03/03/07*

When Hoover City Schools closed early on Thursday due to the threat of severe weather, many of you received notification through School Cast, the emergency notification system for Hoover City Schools. The [Birmingham News reported](#) that there were some problems with the system, and School Cast officials are working to resolve that.

However, *the system is only as good as the information a family provides*. That means **updating phone numbers and e-mail addresses as they change**.

To do that, go to <https://myschoolcast.com>. Log in using the login information given to you by your child's school. When you get to the Dashboard page, you are provided a list of contact information originally programmed along with any changes you have made. Please check those numbers to make certain they are current numbers.

If you need to **edit** any of the information you've already provided, click the Pencil icon, and make the necessary changes. Click the Floppy Disc icon to save the changes.

You may also **add e-mail addresses** to allow for e-mail notification. In the blank boxes below the last contact information provided, enter the name of the contact, e.g., "Home E-mail", then use the pull-down menu to indicate "Email", type in the e-mail address, and click on "Add".

You also may indicate **which contact is made first** by dragging the icon (the phone or the e-mail icon) into position, then dropping it. Make certain the contacts are listed in the priority you want each contact notified.

If you have questions about School Cast, contact your child's principal.

Advanced Placement (AP) Information - *posted 03/01/07*

A [Birmingham News article](#) on Wednesday reported that Hoover and Spain Park high school students are currently taking a large number of AP exams. The article also reported that the Hoover School system is considering mandating AP exams for students who take AP classes.

We thought you might be interested in learning more about the AP program. What follows is an excerpt from the GreatSchools.net MySchoolStats March 2007 Newsletter:

About AP Exams

- The AP program is run by the College Board, which develops the curriculum, creates and administers the exams, and provides support for teachers.
- The AP program gives students the opportunity to take one or more college-level courses while they are still in high school, and to receive college credit if they receive a score of 3, 4 or 5 on the AP test.
- The AP program offers **37 courses** and exams across 22 subject areas. Schools vary in which AP courses they offer.
- **Students are required to pay \$83 per exam.** For those who demonstrate need, financial aid is available from the College Board, as well as from some states, cities and school districts.
- Many schools offer college-level AP classes to prepare students for the AP exams, but students can take exams without completing a specific course.
- When an exam is listed on a GreatSchools school profile it means at least one student at the school took the exam.
- Taking AP courses helps students develop the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for a successful transition to college, and increases a student's likelihood of graduating on time.

Issues to Consider

- Students who receive good grades on AP tests can bypass introductory courses and enter with college credit at many colleges and universities. Each college sets its own policy on college credit and advancement to high level courses for successfully completing AP exams. To find specific credit information for colleges you are interested in, check the [College Board's AP Credit Policy Information](#).
- Although there has been a national debate over whether high school students are feeling pressured to take too many AP courses, several studies have shown that good grades (3, 4 or 5) on AP exams correlate with better grades and graduation rates in college.
- A recent University of Texas study found that students in 10 subjects who used their AP credits to take more advanced courses in college had better grades in the advanced courses than students who took the introductory courses in college instead of AP courses in high school.
- Some critics argue that high school AP courses cannot match the depth and rigor of courses offered by colleges. But others counter that students are more likely to get attention in a smaller high school AP course than in a large lecture college introductory course.
- Many selective colleges and universities look for students who have successfully completed the most challenging courses offered at their high school. That means AP or International Baccalaureate (IB). (IB is an international diploma program with high academic standards offered at some high schools where students take a prescribed course of study for two years in high school. Then, if they pass the IB exams, students receive an IB diploma.)

Questions Parents Should Ask:

- Find out what AP courses are offered at your high school. Ask what prerequisites are required to take these courses.
- Ask what scores students have received on particular tests, and if the same teachers are teaching these AP courses. Beware of a large number of low scores on a particular test. It may indicate that students are not being sufficiently prepared to pass the AP exam.
- If your child is interested in a particular course, have her talk to the teacher ahead of time to find out what the workload is and what preparation will be necessary to take the course. Some teachers require that students complete work (summer reading, for example) prior to taking the course.
- If your child is interested in a subject offered by the AP program but the course is not offered at your school, find out what support he can expect to receive at the school to prepare for the test. Some states also offer online AP courses.

To sign up for Greatschools.net Newsletters, click [here](#).

Links

[Bulletin for AP Students and Parents](#) - From the College Board, the institution that oversees AP classes and exams. Great place to start to learn more.

[About AP](#) - From the College Board.

[List of AP Offerings from the College Board](#) (note: not all are offered by our Hoover City Schools).

[Hoover High School AP Offerings](#) - from Greatschools.net. Scroll down towards the bottom of the page to see in which AP classes Hoover High's students took exams.

[Spain Park High School AP Offerings](#) - from Greatschools.net. Scroll down towards the bottom of the page to see in which AP classes Spain Park High's students took exams.

Mobile Math Initiative (MMI) - *posted 03/01/07*

The Hoover City Schools Board of Education voted in February to fully fund the Mobile Math Initiative (MMI) for Hoover City Schools. MMI is a system of instructional strategies for the teaching of mathematics, supported by intensive summer professional development for teachers, with additional support and training during the school year. MMI is being phased in over a number of years in the Hoover elementary schools. Before now, principals had to allocate funding out of their schools' budgets for this, and/or seek funding from other sources, such as donations, PTO allocations, and corporate sponsorships.

We are working to put together a full explanation of MMI and how it is being implemented in Hoover City Schools. If you have any information to contribute, please send it to HSCIN@HSCIN.org.

[Information on MMI from the Alabama Best Practices Center.](#)

Standardized Testing Time Again.....*posted 03/01/07*

The ACCESS exam for English Language Learners (ELL) will be administered throughout the month of March for students in Hoover City Schools.

The Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) will be administered to high school students beginning next Monday, March 6. Click [here](#) to view the AHSGE testing schedule for Hoover City Schools.

Standardized testing for Grades 3 through 8 will begin on April 3rd. Click [here](#) to view that testing schedule for Hoover City Schools.

Check out our [Accountability Page](#) for more specific information about these tests and how they are used.

Certainly you will see information coming home from your child's school about how best to prepare your children to perform well on these tests. We have provided a few links for you to learn more:

[Last Minute Tips.](#) From myschoolonline.

[Standardized Tests.](#) From Scholastic.com.

[Help Your Tween or Teen Get Smart About Tests.](#) From Greatschools.net.

[Techniques to Improve Your Child's Standardized Test Scores.](#) Article from Sylvan Learning Center.

[Tis the Season for Standardized Testing.](#) From Tidewater Parent, a Virginia group.

[Exam Day: I Will Survive. From the College Board.](#) Written for older students, but helpful for parents to share with their younger students as well.

New Blogs on Family Involvement

You'll find these blog under the Quick Link section on our Home Page.

[Family Friendly Schools Blog](#) - *posted 03/03/07*

Dr. Steve Constantino, of Family Friendly Schools, is way ahead of the rest of us in working towards more Family Involvement. His blog is entertaining and thought-provoking.

[Parent Institute Blog](#) - *posted 03/03/07*

Check out this blog, intended for educators, but community members participate as well. The [Parent Institute](#) provides materials to encourage Parent and Family Involvement in our schools. The [most recent posting](#) illustrates educators' frustration with engaging families in their children's education.

[Survey News](#) - *posted 03/03/07*

A BIG THANK YOU to those of you who have completed the [survey](#). Mr. Craig is aware of this survey and is looking forward to seeing the results. If you have not yet completed the survey, you have until Thursday to do so. If you have problems completing the survey, please [e-mail us](#).

[Results from Parent-Teacher Relationships Survey](#) - *posted 03/03/07*

This survey was conducted by the Capital Survey Research Center (CSRC), the research arm of the Alabama Education Association (AEA) back in 2000. The director of the CSRC, called it the "most important research" they had ever conducted with regard to the relationships between parents and teachers, yet nothing was ever done with the results.

The results are eye-opening, especially when you view the results of the questions posed to teachers--- "what do you wish parents would do" compared with what parents claim they do, and then the question to parents--- "what do you wish teachers would do" compared to what teachers claim they do.

The HSCIN is considering conducting an offshoot of this survey here in Hoover City Schools, to gather information and to make a comparison of Hoover City Schools and the larger Alabama school community. Stay tuned.

[Family Engagement Survey from Family Friendly Schools](#)

- *posted 03/03/07*

Take a moment to complete this survey from [Family Friendly Schools](#). When you complete it, a report will be generated to let you know how much, if any, work needs to be done to make your child's school more family-friendly. We encourage you to share the results with your school's principal and teachers.

[Family Involvement Poster Contest - from the Alabama State Department of Education](#) - *posted 03/01/07*

The Alabama State Department of Education is holding its Third Annual Statewide Family Poster Contest on Parental Involvement. One statewide winner will be awarded a \$500 gift card, with 11 other winners each receiving a gift card for \$100. The winning posters will become a part of the 2007-2008 Alabama Parent and Family Involvement Calendar.

Beginning in September, and running through October, the statewide winning poster will be displayed on billboards across the state encouraging parents to visit their child's school.

[Click here for the official notification.](#) If you're not certain whether your school is participating, please contact your school's principal and/or art teacher. According to Karen Boyd, Federal Programs Specialist for Hoover City Schools, all principals were given this notification.

Shades Mountain Community Meeting - March 1

The Birmingham News reported on Wednesday that the Shades Mountain community scheduled a town hall meeting for Thursday night at 6:30 p.m. to address issues in their community, including schools and progress on a community center and park. Mayor Petelos, along with Board of Education and City Council members, are expected to be in attendance.

[From our Transitions Page:](#)

On to High School

[How to Stay Involved in Middle and High School.](#) From Greatschools.net.

[Countdown to College.](#) From Greatschools.net. Excellent resources including an action plan for each year of high school to follow in preparation for college.

College and Beyond

[Countdown to College.](#) From Greatschools.net. Excellent resources including an action plan for each year of high school to follow in preparation for college.

[From our Internet Safety Page:](#)

[2 SMRT 4 U](#) - Excellent resource for students who use the Internet as a social network

[A+ Education Foundation Newsletter](#) - *posted 03/03/07*

The A+ Education Foundation does an excellent job of gathering education news about our school communities in Alabama. Please take a moment to look over this very informative newsletter.

News Articles and Newsletters

[ASCD High School Reform Proposal](#) - Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), posted 03/03/07.

[Later Spring Break Not Working for Some - March 4, Birmingham News](#)

[Avoiding Business as Usual - March 4, Birmingham News](#), regarding the upcoming education budget discussions in the Legislature

[Making Students Safer - March 4, Huntsville Times Editorial](#)

[Delays Beset Swamped Emergency Alert System - March 2, Birmingham News](#)

[School Board Seat Has 5 Candidates - March 2, Birmingham News](#)
[Parent Challenges Son's Discipline - March 1, Birmingham News](#)
[Formal-Wear Sale to Benefit Hoover High Scholarships - February 28, Birmingham News](#)
[Hoover Students Filling Up More Advanced Classes - February 28, Birmingham News](#)
[Hoover High Freshman Center Raises Questions - February 28, Birmingham News](#)
[Schools Warned Annual Appraisals Likely Will End - February 28, Birmingham News](#)
[Spain Park Tournament Honors Johnson - February 28, Birmingham News](#)
[Superintendent Planning to Learn and to Delegate - February 25, Birmingham News](#)
[Andy Craig on the Issues - February 25, Birmingham News](#)
[Hoover's Student Journalists to Present at U.S. Convention - February 21, Birmingham News](#)
[Former Hoover Teacher to Leave Post at White House - February 21, Birmingham News](#)