



# BLAKE BLUE NOTE

June 2015

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## PTSA President’s Remarks

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Paul Girolami

Congratulations to next year’s PTSA officers, who were elected at our May 2015 general meeting:

President: Daniela Wiggins

Executive Vice President: Abby Sandler

Vice President, Communications: Sharon Mosley Ramsey

Secretary: Betsy Sirk

Treasurer: Jamila Mathis

This wonderful team of experienced, dedicated volunteers will ensure a most successful Parent Teacher Student Association program year in 2015-2016.

Thank you to the many families, students, faculty, and alumni who joined our PTSA this year. A successful PTSA is not possible without the support of many individuals. Our faculty membership increased greatly this year. Through your membership dues and financial support, we were able to contribute more than \$12,000 to programs and activities including those that recognized scholastic achievement, student development, educational training, and staff recognition, as well as to Blake programs including We the People, High School 101, College Literacy Preparation, and much more. Additionally, with your help, PTSA members raised more than \$16,000 to sponsor a most successful After Prom.

On a personal note, I thank this year's team of officers and volunteer leaders who worked tirelessly to make this a most productive year: officers Abby Sandler, Betsy Sirk, Jamila Mathis, and Sharon Mosley-Ramsey; Executive Board members Sheila Holmes and Crystal Lee, co-chairs of one of MCPS's finest NAACP Parents' Councils; After Prom Chair Lisa Hedgepeth; Back to School Night chair Karen Kowenski; Staff Appreciation Chair Jackie Stock; Book Sale organizers Ann King and Barbara Girolami (with a special shout-out to Orit Chicherio, who makes things happen behind the scenes); Graduation bus coordinator Donna Howell; peer-parent leaders Melvin Moore (12<sup>th</sup> grade), Abby Sandler and Sue Present (11<sup>th</sup> grade), Sheila Holmes and Betsy Sirk (10<sup>th</sup> grade), and Lori Goodwin (9<sup>th</sup> grade); and our many other volunteers. Thank you to everyone who attended a PTSA meeting this year. Thank you, Mr. Berry and staff, who helped make things happen. A special thank you goes to Najma Khan who, as treasurer for the 2013-2014 school year, brought Blake back into financial compliance with IRS and the State of Maryland. It's because of the dedication of these individuals that our programs run effectively and seamlessly.

It's been a most rewarding two years serving the Blake PTSA and I leave it in better hands. Please congratulate these individuals and do your part to guarantee continued success of the PTSA—join as a family, encourage your children and extended family to join, and volunteer to assist with at least one program, even if it's only two hours over the course of the year.

Excellent schools are much more than a good faculty and solid walls. It's the strength of a dynamic parent-teacher-student association that pulls it all together.

Someone asked why I joined Blake's PTSA. My answer—to make a difference in the lives of our students, parents, and teachers. Blake's PTSA definitely accomplished this goal this year and surpassed our expectations.

Best wishes for a most successful 2015-2016 school year.

Sincerely,

Paul Girolami

## Principal's Perspective

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Christopher Berry

This month's Blue Note is traditionally the transitional one. For parents of graduating seniors, it will be one of the last communications mailed to you from Blake; while for parents of in-coming ninth graders, it is one of the very first.

Saying good-bye to the senior class is always difficult for us at Blake. As I plan to say to them in my remarks at our Graduation Ceremony on June 10, the Class of 2015 has been a good group for four years; well represented with smart, talented, focused and unique students. As they move ahead with their plans for the future, our very best wishes go with them for success in the world of post-secondary education, the military, and the world of work. One senior I spoke with recently put it better: "I'm ready to get out of here, but I also know how lucky I've been to be at Blake for the past four years. There's no way I am where I am today without this school." Our hope is that all of the members of this class has had many of the same experiences, and remembers Blake equally as fondly.

There is another group graduating this June, as well. Many parents of seniors will also be transitioning from Blake. There are so many people who have given freely of their time over the years, many going back over several years, to shortly after the school was even opened. I thank the outstanding parents who truly have made a difference by their unwavering support for our school community. If I were to name names in this article, I would surely leave out the contribution of many. The PTSA, Booster Club, various other clubs and organization have been bolstered for many years by the volunteerism and leadership of this parent class—so many have been pillars of support through the years. While the direct tie may be gone, I hope our alumni parents will come to school events, and you should get a bit nostalgic and are missing high school, you are always welcome.

Blake is ending this year on a high a couple of high data notes as we head into the summer. First, Blake administered a record number of Advanced Placement examinations this spring, with 1,026 exams administered to 537 students. This stands as a great testament to students meeting the challenge of taking and succeeding in college-level classes. We look forward to equally high performance data, which has led the Northeast Consortium High School for 13 consecutive years.

And at the risk of thinking ahead to next year before this one is completely over, I want to put some information on your radar that all Blake families need to think about. The SAT is changing. Dramatically. And while not every student considers a four-year college right out of high school, it points to a trend in post-secondary planning, namely the structure and style of admissions testing. This is not your father's SAT. Gone is the vocabulary and analogies in the reading section. In its place will be college level passage, lots of tables, charts and graphs to interpret, analysis questions, and a command of how to analyze evidence. The writing section, introduced only a few years ago, will become optional. The math section will not permit a calculator, present lots of real world scenario word problems, and ask for geometry proof-like analysis. In short, the new SAT is going to be harder! When next year's freshmen, sophomores, and juniors take the PSAT in October, it will reflect these changes, and the new SAT will be

introduced next winter. I would encourage all parents and students to pay close attention to these coming changes and plan well in advance in terms of your preparation and what colleges will require with this new test. The ACT or Accuplacer test for placement in most Maryland community colleges may become a more desirable option. And we at Blake will work to schedule information nights so that you might be informed about your choices, pros and cons of each test and how best to prepare. Stay tuned!

While students are on vacation in the summer, we do offer a special program to help our incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade become acquainted with Blake before the new school year begins. 9th grade is an important year because a smooth transition to high school starts a student on the path to academic success and positive social experiences. Incoming Blake students can get a running start on being ready for the challenges of high school by enrolling in our unique summer program.

**High School 101** eases the transition from middle school and builds connections to Blake that will be in place when the academic year begins. New ninth grade “Bengals” will be ready to learn from the first day of school, bolstered by the academic support and activities in **High School 101**.

**High School 101** is a week filled with useful information, self-discovery, skill-building and new friends—all delivered in a fun atmosphere of hands-on activities. The program features:

- Opportunities to make new friends
- Academic support for REQUIRED summer reading and math assignments
- Orientation to the Blake HS building and staff
- Strategies for academic success
- Sports activities and teambuilding

I strongly encourage incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders to participate in the program, particularly those coming from private schools, who may not know as many of their incoming classmates. There will be two, one-week sessions: July 13-17 and July 27-31. The program cost is nominal (\$120.00), but enrollment will be capped at 75 students for each session. Additional information can be found on our website at: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/blakehs/students/hs101.aspx>

Fall sports practices begin for most sports on Wednesday, August 12, 2015. For sports specific information, please be sure to visit our tryout page at: <http://blakeathletics.org/index.cfm?action=main.otherad&contentid=219155>

Orientation for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders is Thursday, August 27, 2015. Students will board the buses and participate in a half-day program where they will go through their actual schedule, learn about activities and get a feel for high school. There is also an informational meeting for 9<sup>th</sup> grade parents that same evening at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium. The first day of school for students is August 31, 2015.

Summer reading information is also available on our website; I strongly urge students to begin this important process early in the summer and not put it off until the last minute. Summer reading is an MCPS requirement and a way to reinforce the importance of reading to our students.

A few reminders for parents: In our ever changing world of communication, we often change phone numbers and contact information on a regular basis. As the school year ends, if any of your numbers have changed over the past school year, consider calling the main office at 301-879-1300 to update your contact information in our system database and with the attendance office. Sometimes important information is missed by parents because they do not make these changes.

Students will soon receive a copy of their course schedule for 2015-16. If this schedule does not reflect the courses that your student has elected, please call the guidance office during the summer at 301-879-1310 to consult with your child's counselor. Late August is not the optimal time to attempt to make these changes since classes are set, and flexibility for change is minimal.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not take the opportunity to offer my thanks to every one of you who have made this a memorable year at Blake High School. This year has been a very positive one for Blake, with so positive academic and activity touchstones throughout the year. It has only served to reinforce for me that we have a committed staff, and student and parent community in our midst every day. Your advice and input to me is sincere and helpful. I appreciate your frankness when you have a concern and I hope you have come to know that I work to be equally as straightforward and productive for the sake of your children. Despite the difficulties and seeming constant changes in the world of education, I see great days ahead for our school with your support. It begins with what we, as a community, experience to a greater degree: working respectfully together, keeping "in the know", and working to figure out how and where we all can make a difference. Have a wonderful, relaxing summer!

## Blake HS NAACP Parents' Council Announcements

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On Wednesday, May 27, the NAACP Parent Council presented the African American Academic Excellence Awards to 200 students in grades 9-11 at a lunchtime dessert reception in the Amphitheatre. The Seniors were already presented their certificates at Senior Awards Night. The criteria is cumulative weighted GPA, 3.0 and above. The students enjoyed their cupcakes and cookies! Thanks to all the parents for their help and donations.

Our highlight event of the year, "The Best and Brightest" will be held on Saturday, June 6, ,2015, 8:45 AM at the Carver Educational Services Center. We honor outstanding staff members who have motivated and encouraged our students throughout the year. Don't miss this exciting event.

Have a great summer and please provide input on speakers/topics you are interested in for the new school year.

Sheila Holmes

[sheilaholmes@alumni.princeton.edu](mailto:sheilaholmes@alumni.princeton.edu)

Crystal Lee

[crysllee@comcast.net](mailto:crysllee@comcast.net)

NAACP Parents' Council representatives to Blake High School

## Staff Appreciation

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Thank you to all the Blake Families that helped with Staff Appreciation activities during the 2014-15 school year! Whether you baked a pie, bought cookies, stuffed mailboxes, served ice cream, etc. – it was greatly appreciated and enjoyed!

Jackie Stock, Chair, Staff Appreciation

## Hispanic Leadership Club

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The Hispanic Leadership Club is excited to announce a new tutoring program for Spanish immersion students attending Burnt Mills Elementary School. The kick-off was on Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, at White Oak Library. Twenty tiny scholars participated in Spanish getting-to-know you activities with Blake students from the Hispanic Leadership Club. The group also created a patchwork banner with original artwork to commemorate the event. Tutoring sessions will run every Saturday from 10:30 to 11:30 at the White Oak Library.

## Spanish-speaking Tutors Needed

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If you are interested in volunteering your time as a Spanish-speaking peer tutor, please contact Ms. Monica Abuliak at [Monica\\_abuliak@mcpssmd.org](mailto:Monica_abuliak@mcpssmd.org) for more information. Tutors receive leadership experience and SSL hours for participating in the program.

## Bengals Golf Classic set for September 24, 2015

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### SAVE THE DATE!

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Bengal Classic Golf Tournament will be held on Thursday, September, 24, 2015 at Hampshire Greens. Mark your calendars and spread the word! We want to include as many past, present and future Bengals in this annual fundraising event for the Blake Athletic Booster Club!

More details will follow in the coming months. Questions or want to be a volunteer? Please contact Alumni Parent Laura Matusek at [laura\\_matusek@comcast.net](mailto:laura_matusek@comcast.net). Go Bengals!!



## Student Service Learning (SSL) News

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Summer is a great time to earn SSL hours! Students who have not yet earned the 75 hours required for graduation should finish that up this summer. Find opportunities on the wall outside Ms. Wagner's classroom (E-279) or online at [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org). Remember that if a student wants to earn SSL hours, the organization must be pre-approved by MCPS or by Ms. Wagner. Then, the hours must be submitted on the appropriate verification form when the student returns to school. Pre-approval forms and verification forms are available from Ms. Wagner or at [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org).

## Student Government Association (SGA)

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The Blake SGA is excited to announce the Class Council and SGA officers for the 2015-2016 school year:

### **SGA**

President – Sara Kohorst  
Vice President – Alexandra Rundlett  
Press Secretary – Yelli Coulibaly  
Chief Information Officer – Ana Clyde  
Fundraiser Coordinator – Elvis Rodriguez  
Event Coordinator – Ericka Nejumi

### **Class of 2016**

President - Logan Dechter & Ashley Stuart  
Vice President – Victoria Nelson  
Press Secretary – Ozeyla Awundaga  
Event Coordinator – Riani Carr

### **Class of 2017**

President – Matthew Millstein  
Vice President – Christopher Wiggins  
Press Secretary – Nasia Nguyen

### **Class of 2018**

President – Milto Tasissa  
Vice President – Austin Gil  
Chief Information Officer – Maya Anderson  
Event Coordinator – Elaine Kaplan  
Fundraiser Coordinator – Diane Kalita

2014-2015 has been a school year of positive changes and new directions for Blake's SGA. From a successful Homecoming season, to organizing two food drives for local food pantries, to the new Shepherd's Table fundraiser, SGA continually worked to support and engage Blake's community.

The upcoming year's SGA officers and General Assembly looks forward to getting even more students involved in school events. Next school year will bring more community outreach as well as some changes. SGA welcomes Ms. Laura Fisher, who will be stepping in as the new SGA Sponsor.

**Important Dates to Remember:**

August 27 – New Student Orientation

Week 2 of September – Class of 2019 Class Council Elections

October 9 – Homecoming Football Game

October 10 – Homecoming Dance

## MCPS Regional Summer School Registration Closes June 10

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The last day to register and pay for the first session of summer school is next Wednesday, June 10. Students interested in attending summer school should schedule an appointment with their counselor to register and pay. Please keep in mind that the student is not registered until payment is received.

Please visit the MCPS Regional Summer School website for more information at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/extendedhours/summerschool/>.

## Counseling and Career Center News

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Anticipated SAT/ACT Test Dates for Fall 2015

**SAT**

October 3.....

November 7.....

Register online: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

**ACT**

September 12.....

October 24.....

Register online: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

We encourage rising seniors to take the current SAT prior to March 2016 OR focus on the ACT test instead.



Springbrook High School will be hosting a redesigned mock PSAT test on June 23, 8:30-12:30 for students in Gr. 9-11. A mock SAT/ACT Combo test (especially for seniors) will be offered on July 9, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Springbrook, as well. Blake students are welcome to participate. Please reserve your seat with Mrs. Moore, 301-879-1324 or Kathy\_L\_Moore@mcpsmd.org.

Counselors will be available to students and parents throughout the summer. Rising seniors are encouraged to schedule an appointment with their counselor and our college and career coordinator Ms. Moore to go over life after high school. The "Life After High School" packet can be found on the Blake Career Center website. This packet includes: How to Process College Applications & Transcript Requests, Sample Resume, Request for Teacher Recommendation Letter and other important information regarding the college application process. Seniors and their parents are also encouraged to fill out their reflection forms posted in Naviance and use the time over the summer to visit college campuses.

There are many FREE college readiness workshops sponsored by MCPS career centers this summer that students are invited to attend. Please register with the hosting school by e-mail or phone.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SUMMER PROGRAMS

# FREE COLLEGE READINESS WORKSHOPS

Sponsored by MCPS College & Career Centers

*Location: Blake & Springbrook HS Career Centers*

- Interview/Resume Workshop.....June 17, 8:30-11am...(Springbrook).....Gr. 9-12
- Mock PSAT (new) Test.....June 23, 8:30-12:30...(Springbrook).....Gr. 9-11
- ASVAB Career Exploration Test.....July 7, 8:00-10:30 am (Springbrook)....Gr. 10-12
- College Search & Application Process.....July 8, 9-11am @ Blake.....Gr. 11-12
- College Essay Writing Workshop (UMCP).....July 8, 8:30-11:00am (Springbrook).....Gr. 11-12
- Mock SAT/ACT Combo Test.....July 9, 8:30-12:30 (Springbrook).....Gr. 10-12
- Interview/Resume Writing.....July 15, 9-11 am @ Blake.....Gr. 9-12
- College Search/Admissions/Financial Aid (Towson)...July 16, 8:30-11am (Springbrook).....Gr. 11-12
- ASVAB Score Interpretation .....July 22, 8:30-10am...(Springbrook).....Gr. 10-12
- Financial Aid/Scholarship Workshop.....July 29, 9-11 @ Blake.....Gr. 10-12
- Common Application/Naviance Workshop (Stevenson)..August 4, 8:30-11am...(Springbrook).....Gr. 12
- The Common Application.....August 5, 9:00-11am @ Blake.....Gr. 12

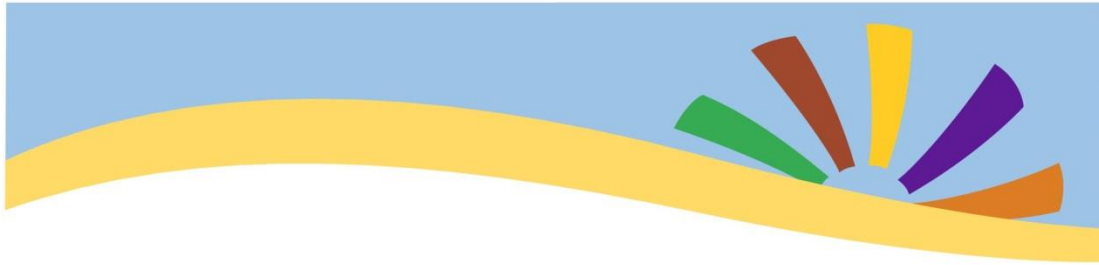
Similar FREE workshops will be offered throughout the summer at neighboring high schools. Check with your College & Career Center for more details.

**Reserve your seat for any of these free workshops by calling or emailing the hosting Career Center:**

Blake: Kathy\_L\_moore@mcpsmd.org

301-879-1324

Springbrook: Tammy\_R\_patterson@mcpsmd.org



# College Essay Writing Clinic

Rich Edgar, Director of U.S. Operations, John Cabot University and former Director of Admissions at St. Mary's College of Maryland, will provide a presentation on how to write a winning college essay. Learn how to make your experiences, thoughts and philosophy come to life in your admissions essay with time, energy and effort. Enrollment is limited.



**Wednesday, June 24, 10:00 am to noon**

**James Hubert Blake High School**

**300 Norwood Road**

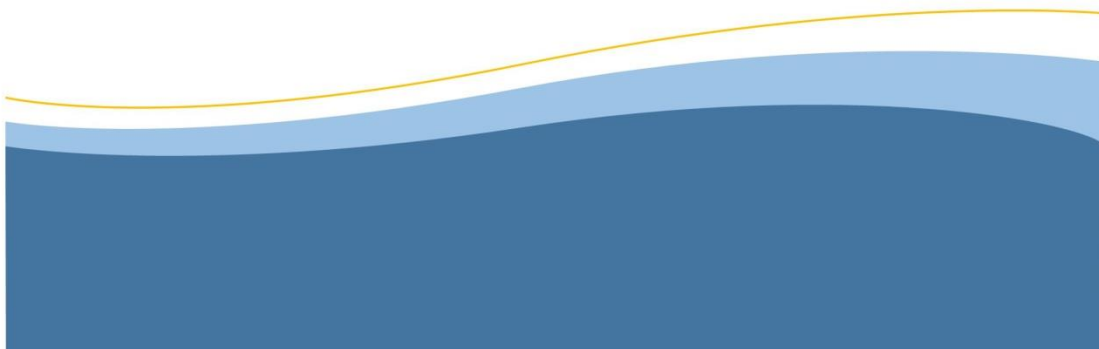
**Silver Spring, MD 20905**

**Cost: \$30 per student (payable online **by June 19, 2015**; non-refundable)**

***<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/blakehs/>***

***Choose "online payments" under Quick Links; College Essay Writing Clinic 6/24/15***

Questions? Contact Mrs. Moore, College & Career Coordinator, [Kathy\\_L\\_moore@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Kathy_L_moore@mcpsmd.org); 301-879-1324



### **Summer 2015 – a starting point toward high school success for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders**

Ninth grade is an important year because a smooth transition to high school starts a student on the path to academic success and positive social experiences. Incoming Blake students can get a running start on being ready for the challenges of high school by enrolling in our unique summer program.

High School 101 eases the transition from middle school and builds connections to Blake that will be in place when the academic year begins. New ninth grade Bengals will be ready to learn from the first day of school, bolstered by the academic support and activities in High School 101.

High School 101 is a week filled with useful information, self-discovery, skill-building and new friends—all delivered in a fun atmosphere of hands-on activities. Blake High School invites your son or daughter to join us for this starting point toward achievement and high school success.

#### FEATURES OF THE HIGH SCHOOL 101 PROGRAM

- **Opportunities to make new friends**
- **Academic support for required summer English and Math assignments**
- **Orientation to the Blake HS building and staff**
- **Strategies for academic success**
- **Sports activities and teambuilding**

#### DATES

**SESSION 1: July 13 – July 17**

**SESSION 2: July 27 – July 31**

[NOTE: Sessions offered through High School 101 are not for credit.]

#### DAILY SCHEDULE

8:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., Monday through Friday

#### ELIGIBILITY

Students currently in 8th grade who will be attending James Hubert Blake High School in the fall of 2015 are eligible to participate in this program.

#### TRANSPORTATION

School bus transportation will be available (pick-up and drop-off) at designated school locations within the Northeast Consortium. Register by June 1<sup>st</sup> to guarantee availability to your stop. Sites will be reduced based on enrollment after June 1, 2015. (See application form for specific sites.)

### FEES

Cost is \$120.00 per one-week session.  
Tuition assistance is available to eligible participants.

### ENROLLMENT

Applications and directions for enrollment are also available in the Blake Main Office or Counseling office or Blake's website. You can also register online at [www.pay4schoolstuff.com](http://www.pay4schoolstuff.com). Create an account, find Blake HS, click on HS 101 to register!

### PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Mrs. Christina Kiedrow  
Program Director  
School Counselor  
301-879-1310

[Christina\\_R\\_Kiedrow@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Christina_R_Kiedrow@mcpsmd.org)

### **PARENTS ARE SAYING:**

*"Great way to break the ice and introduce our son to the school. It took the anxiety out of orientation and school in general."*

*"The best part was helping my child complete her summer assignments. Also, my child was able to learn more about what to expect when starting high school."*

*"It got her excited about clubs and sports."*

*"The Blake faculty is remarkably warm and welcoming. They make the freshman feel very welcome. This is our second time in the Freshmen 101 program."*

*"Yes, I truly believe that it helped this new transition immensely – thank you so much!"*

James Hubert Blake High School  
300 Norwood Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20905  
301-879-1300

*Many thanks to the Blake Athletic Booster Club for their partnership with the Summer 2015 High School 101 program.*