

Forming a 'Network': Imagine Prince George's County Hosts Second Annual Conference

For the second year in a row, the staff of Imagine Prince George's County Public Charter Schools gathered for the Network Teacher Conference. This year the two-day event, held on the campus of Imagine Foundations at Leeland, featured 14 education tracks covering all aspects of the Imagine Prince George's Instructional Model, the organization's proprietary curriculum. Topics included everything from an overview of the Math/Science and Reading/History coursework for students in Kindergarten - Grade 8, to tips for lesson planning for Special Area Teachers and Training for the new Intervention Team members.

Several members of the newly formed Network Instructional Leadership



"[Our goal is] to build each educator's capacity to deliver outstanding classroom instruction for students," says William Hill, posing with members of the Imagine Prince George's County Network Instructional Leadership Team.

Team (NILT), including Jessica Stewart, Network Intervention Coordinator, and Alexis Pike and Carol Holding-Smith, both Network Mentor Teachers, led many of the sessions and served as moderators throughout

both days. NILT members are tasked with creating and maintaining commonalities in a number of areas, such as curriculum, behavior, and

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Two New Names, Three New Principals

The start of the 2012-2013 school year marked the beginning of a new era for two schools in the Imagine Prince George's County school system and for three staff members. Not long before the doors were opened to students, Imagine Foundations I was renamed Imagine Foundations at Leeland, and Imagine Foundations II was renamed Imagine Foundations at Morningside. Both of the new names were chosen to better represent each school's unique character and place in its community. Other changes included updating the logos on the Web sites, school signage, and other materials.

In addition to getting new names, both schools welcomed new leadership: Erika McCoy was named Principal of Imagine Leeland and Dr. Peter Thompson became Principal of Imagine Morningside. Additionally, Danielle Goddard joined Imagine Lincoln as the new Principal.

Principal McCoy, a resident of Prince George's County, was previously employed with Imagine Schools in a number of roles, including as a teacher and a principal at the elementary and middle school levels, and as an Assessment and Curriculum Program Director. McCoy most recently served as Executive Director of Principal



Erika McCoy is the new principal at Imagine Leeland (formerly Imagine Foundations).

Support in the Baltimore City Public Schools.

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Letters From the Directors

Welcome Back, Congratulations, and Keep Up the Good Work

Welcome to the start of what is already shaping up to be another productive and successful school year.

Last year was certainly one for the record books at Imagine Schools, and this year has the potential to be even more outstanding.

Please allow me to begin the year by saying "Thanks!" for doing an amazing job each and every day of the year. Your dedication and hard work are an integral part of the formula that makes Imagine Schools such a unique place for our students and families.

This year marks my sixth as the Maryland Regional Director and, as always, I am inspired by the growth and accomplishments that have taken place over the past 12 months, all across our region. For instance, last year we opened the doors on five schools, including two start-ups and two major renovations, and added a Grade 7 and a Grade 8 to three



schools, raising the number of students serve to close to 2,000. We increased our staff size, too, creating three new principal positions and adding more than 20 new classroom teachers, as well as several new administrative and support staff positions.

More recently, we changed the names of our two Imagine Foundations schools to better represent each school's unique character and place in its community. And we created the Network Instructional Leadership Team, a 12-member group tasked with creating and maintaining commonalities in a number of areas, such as curriculum, behavior, and professional development, across all Imagine Prince George's County campuses.

And I would be remiss if I didn't also acknowledge the award-winning performances of many of our colleagues and team members over the past year, from the five school-based Teacher of

the Year winners to the overall national Teacher of the Year winner, Jenny Brumbalow, who were recognized last spring and over the summer. More recently we learned that both Imagine Andrews and Imagine Discovery received a combined five awards from Imagine Schools for their performances last year. Congrats to all!

Such a list of achievements is impressive indeed, especially given the challenges that we in public education face these days, both individually and collectively. Rather, what our list of past accomplishments signals is the need to remain vigilant, to recognize that our successes are inextricably linked to a great deal of responsibility to ensuring that our students receive the highest quality education possible. What I mean is, we need to raise the bar.

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Finding New Ways to Become Even More Effective

We are excited about the start of another amazing school year!

As always, we have made several significant changes to our Network Office Structure so that we are poised to better support the work happening at the school level and, most importantly, within our classrooms.

First, we welcome Mrs. Alexis Pike and Mrs. Carol Holding-Smith to our Network Office in their new roles as Network Mentor Teachers. Both will work directly with all teachers in our Network to provide instructional leadership, support, professional development, coaching and mentoring. Mrs. Pike and Mrs. Smith are both Master Teachers in the Imagine Prince George's

County Instructional Model and bring a wealth of knowledge and an unwavering commitment to our schools.

Mrs. Jessica Stewart also joined the Network Office as our Network Intervention Coordinator. Mrs. Stewart is charged with leading and supporting the intervention teachers across our Network as we implement Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) in each of our schools. Mrs. Stewart previously served as Master Teacher, Mentor Teacher and Professional Developer in Baltimore City Public Schools. We are excited about the knowledge, unique perspective, and energy that she adds to our team.



In addition, we have provided six professional development opportunities for teachers, academic facilitators and principals since the beginning of school. We take seriously our charge to provide on-going, relevant and impactful job-embedded professional development opportunities. We currently have nine additional professional development opportunities scheduled, and those workshop titles, dates and times can be found in the calendar section of this newsletter.

As we move our work forward, we will spend the bulk of this year understanding and becoming more effective in our

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Campus Kiosk: Brief Notices from the Imagine Maryland Public Charter Schools

Parent Choice

Imagine Foundations at Leeland:

Our parent-teacher organization (PTO) announced its officers for the upcoming 2012-13 school year are: Ebonni Wright (President); Tashua Parker (Vice President); Katrina Rawls (Treasurer); Mandisa Wright (Recording Secretary); and Stacy Richardson (Correspondence Secretary).

Imagine Foundations at Leeland:

Our PTO invited everyone — students and staff alike — to attend a day of fun and fundraising at the Crofton Skate Zone on September 9. Admission to the “Back to School” event, which ran from 1-6 pm, was only \$10 per person and included skate rental.



Imagine Andrews: Our parent-teacher organization (PTO) announced its officers for the upcoming 2012-13 school year are: Paul Vann (President); Matt Stewart (Vice-President, 1st Chair); Jennifer Whitaker (Vice-President, 2nd Chair); Ken Swan (Treasurer); and Mia Howerton (Secretary).

Academic Achievement

Imagine Lincoln: We received generous book donations from Dodge Park Elementary and the Heart of America Organization to help us fill the shelves in our classroom libraries. Now every classroom offers students between 50-75 books for easy access to reading. Special thanks to Janna Parker, Fifth Grade Math & Science teacher, and the reading teachers who helped to lead this task force and divide up the books amongst classes.

Character Development

Imagine Lincoln: We received generous book donations from Dodge Park Elementary and the Heart of America Organization to help us fill the shelves in our classroom libraries. Janna Parker, Fifth Grade Math & Science teacher, lead a task force of reading teachers to divide up the books amongst classes. Now every classroom offers students between 50-75 books for easy access to reading.

Imagine Morningside: We recently named our “Eaglets of the Month” (or our Students of the Month) for September: Kaiden Hudson and Chase Plater, Kindergarten; Amaya DeCastro, Dyan Latimer, Imani Roane, Joseph Sinkfield, D’Angelo Pracht-Smith, Jordyn Simmons, Morgan Ford, Josephat Kusansuka, Amira Edwards, and William Plater, Grade 1.

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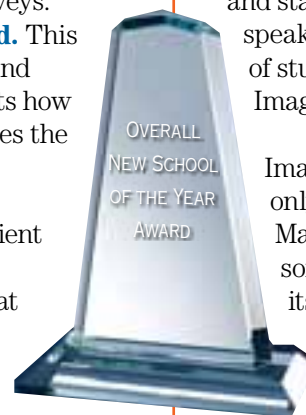
Imagine Andrews, Imagine Discovery Win National Awards

Imagine Andrews has received a lot of recognition for its inaugural school year successes — not the least of which were the four awards recently given by Imagine Schools. The awards, considered to be among the organization’s highest honors, were received in the following areas:

- **Overall New School of the Year Award.** This honor is awarded to the best new Imagine school in the nation for each school year.
- **Academic Growth/Achievement Award.** This award goes to the school that met high marks on state assessments while also showing significant learning gains for students as measured by the SAT10.

- **Parent Satisfaction/Choice Award.** Imagine Andrews was rewarded for its very high response rate on the Parent Surveys.
- **Shared Values Award.** This award, based on staff and student surveys, reflects how well the school embodies the shared values.

Although the official recipient of the awards, Principal Marquis Dwarté stated that winning the awards is an experience shared by everyone.



“We want to send a sincere thanks to the entire school community for their continued support for our students and staff,” he says. “These awards speak volumes about the caliber of students, staff, and families of Imagine Andrews.”

Imagine Andrews was not the only member of the Imagine Maryland family to receive some national recognition for its hard work over the past school year. Imagine Schools presented the Parent Satisfaction/Choice Runner-Up Award to Imagine Discovery.

Meet the New Facilitators

Among the changes instituted this school year was the addition of a new leadership position for several of the Imagine Prince George's schools: the Academic Facilitator. Reporting to the Principal, the Academic Facilitator helps to plan and conduct staff development programs to promote instructional and programmatic improvements, and provides professional development to teachers in the use of selected instructional programs, among other tasks. Meet the Imagine staff members who will be pioneering this new role:



Kishawn Smith: As someone who has taught children in Kindergarten through Grade 3 in Prince George's County for 11 years, Mrs. Smith is committed to building teacher capacity through coaching, mentoring, and school improvement to ensure students receive quality instruction. She is new to the Imagine Leeland family.

RaeShauna Mboma: With more than 12 years of experience in the Prince George's County schools — including being named the county Teacher of the Year for 2011-2012 — as well as a master's degree in School Administration and Special Education, experience with emerging leader programs, and a pending doctorate



in educational leadership, RaeShauna Mboma is well prepared for her new role as Academic Facilitator at Imagine Lincoln.



Douglas Gaither: In his nearly three decades of experience, Doug Gaither has played many roles, in the classroom and administrative settings. For the past two years he has served as the PBIS (positive behavioral interventions and support) Coordinator for Prince George's County Public Schools and is now the Academic Facilitator at Imagine Foundations at Morningside.

Forming a 'Network'

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professional development, across all campuses. The annual Network Teacher Conference provides a great opportunity to accomplish these tasks.

"The goal for holding this event every year is to offer some high-quality, intense professional development to our staff, at the beginning of the school year, in order to reinforce the implementation of our instructional model and to build each educator's capacity to deliver outstanding classroom instruction for students," says William Hill, Executive Director, Imagine Prince George's County.

About 150 staff members, including teachers, support staff and administrators from all four Imagine Prince George's County schools, attended the meeting. The guest speaker, Derek S. Mitchell, PhD, Chief Executive Officer for Partners in School Innovation, discussed the importance of fostering innovation in the school setting and offered some strategies for implementation in the classroom.

Several members of the Imagine Schools leadership team who were in attendance say this unique event is a win-win for the organization in terms of improving the quality of the education offered and boosting employee satisfaction and camaraderie.

"This kind of meeting is a great way for us to gather everyone together in one spot for some professional development and to meet and mingle with their colleagues from the other Imagine Prince George's schools whom they might not have a chance to interact with during the course of the busy school year," says Pat Crain, Imagine Maryland Regional Director.

Permanent Building Underway at Imagine Andrews

Construction on the new, permanent building at Imagine Andrews is underway. Immediately following the June 14 groundbreaking ceremony, which was conducted by officials from Joint Base Andrews (JBA) and Imagine Schools, construction crews began transforming the open field across the street from the Welcome Center on San Antonio Boulevard into a 37,000-square-foot school building.

Built to accommodate expansion plans for Imagine Andrews, which include adding a grade per year through Grade 8, the new building will feature 18 dedicated classrooms, with high-speed Internet connectivity, including wireless capability, and SMART Boards, or interactive electronic whiteboards, in every classroom.



Other features of the new building include a media center with a dedicated computer lab; a 4,000-square-foot multi-purpose room to accommodate physical education classes and dining; an adjacent warming kitchen for preparing and serving hot lunches and breakfast meals; and a dedicated music room.

The existing playground structure will be moved to the new building site, which totals 7 acres and offers plenty of open green space for outdoor play and other activities.

Principal Dr. Marquis Dwarte says the construction of the new building is the



Construction crews are busily erecting a new 37,000-square-foot permanent school building for Imagine Andrews.

next logical step in making Imagine Andrews an important factor in the daily lives of JBA families.

“From the beginning, our goal has been to offer the students of the Andrews community a school environment that prepares them for higher education, develops their moral character, and provides them

with the skills necessary to lead and advance our nation,” he says. “This new, permanent facility will solidify our place in the community and allow us to build on the successes we have achieved so far and continue to grow and expand over the coming years.”

The new facility is scheduled to open midway through the 2012-2013 school year.

A Special Visitor

Students weren't the only ones heading back to school at Imagine Lincoln Public Charter School in late August. Prince George's County Executive Rushern L. Baker III stopped by the Norcross Street campus on Tuesday, August 21, as part of his annual “Back to School Tour.” During his visit, Baker walked the halls of the school building, visited each classroom, introduced himself to students and teachers, and discussed his responsibilities. According to Imagine Lincoln Principal Danielle

Goddard, County Executive Baker “was friendly, excited and very much interested in learning more about Imagine Lincoln.” This is the second time since taking office in 2010 that Baker has spent the first few days of the academic year touring different schools throughout the county.



Staff Spotlight

Danielle Goddard, Principal at Imagine Lincoln, recently welcomed several new staff members:

- **Ayo Jones: Second Grade Teacher**
- **Angela Randolph-Koop: Sixth Grade Teacher**
- **Joseph Christie: Seventh Grade Teacher**
- **Imaobong Ekanem: Eighth Grade Teacher**
- **Marcia Robertson: Eighth Grade Teacher**
- **Kenneth Barnes: Classroom Assistant**
- **Delton Fontroy: Classroom Assistant**
- **Danielle Kornegay-Foxx: Classroom Assistant**
- **Shaniece Cummings: Dedicated Aide**
- **Brendal Scott-Gibson: Dedicated Aide**
- **Tyeshia Harrison: Dedicated Aide**

“We are thrilled they chose to join our Eagle Family and bring a wealth of experience, commitment and new energy,” commented Goddard.



Ayo Jones



Joseph Christie



Angela Randolph-Koop



Imaobong Ekanem

Kudos & Commendations

In the spirit of our Six Measures — and in the name of “character development,” in particular — Dr. Mark Harris, the fearless leader of Imagine Discovery, went “above and beyond” the call of duty and “took the plunge” by riding down the playground slide on the last day of school.



Congratulations to Stacey Gordon, First Grade Team Leader at Imagine Discovery, for recently completing her Masters in School Improvement Leadership and Administration I certification.



It may be true that teachers like to receive apples as a gesture of appreciation. But cupcakes, cookies, and candies are even more welcome. At least that’s what the administrative staff at Imagine Lincoln discovered when they welcomed back this year’s teaching staff with a spread of sweet treats in the teacher’s lounge on the first day of school.



Imagine Morningside announced that its “Eagle of the Month” (or Staff Member of the Month) for September was Michelle Zitofsky (our beloved “Ms. Z”), Professional School Counselor/Testing Coordinator.



Two New Names, Three New Principals

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Dr. Thompson, a resident of Prince George's County, brings more than 20 years of experience in education, spanning both the Kindergarten – Grade 12 and collegiate levels. He most recently served as Acting Principal at Imagine Lincoln and received the 2012 Imagine Schools of Maryland/DC Region Principals Award.

Principal Goddard has 10 years of experience in the Prince George's County Public Schools, including the last four as an administrator. Goddard, who worked closely with the Imagine Lincoln family a few years ago, during an administration transition, replaces Acting Principal Dr. Thompson.



Dr. Peter Thompson is the new principal at Imagine Morningside (formerly Imagine Foundations II).

"Anyone who has worked with these three individuals can attest, they are thoughtful, responsive, organized and



Danielle Goddard is the new principal at Imagine Lincoln.

intelligent," commented William Hill, Executive Director of Imagine Prince George's County. "They have our full support."

Imagine Morningside Students Learn On-the-Job Training

During the first few weeks of school, third grade students at Imagine Foundations at Morningside experienced a unique way to learn about setting goals and taking responsibility for their education. Specifically, they outlined their paths to the future, thinking about what their dream jobs might be and what they will have to do to achieve them.

Teachers Ashley Stone and Alexis Lassus, along with other members of the third grade team, decided that the best way to get the students invested in school and their futures was to help them practice applying for jobs. First, the students and teachers

brainstormed a list of classroom jobs and developed a job application for each student to fill out. Then students had to reflect on their best skills and talents and asked family and friends for letters of recommendation. The process concluded with an offer letter that was given to each student after their job interview.

Parents, teachers, and students say they all have enjoyed the job application process because it has given them real-life experience for the future.

"All of us had our four top choices. Some of the job choices are Artist

in Residence, Teacher's Temp and Environmentalist. After that, we got an offer letter," commented Madison Hueston, a third grader in Ms. Lassus's class. "It's important for third grade to have responsibilities because when we are in fourth grade we are going to have to be trustworthy."

Each student received a "paycheck" of Eagle Feathers for their hard work, distributed by the class "Bankers." Student "employees" who did an excellent job were rewarded at an "office party" at the end of the first 9 weeks.

Welcome Back, Congratulations, and Keep Up the Good Work continued from page 2

No, I'm not suggesting we need to open three new schools this year, or double our enrollment, etc. What I am suggesting, however, is that we must continue to strive for and achieve excellence in all that we do, especially in terms of abiding by our core principles — the Six Measures of Excellence: Parent Choice, Academic Achievement, Shared Values, Character Education, New School Development, and Economic Sustainability. For example, we must continue to find new ways to get our families interested in and stay involved with the goings-on at our Imagine Maryland schools. We must continue to develop innovative methods of teaching the curriculum and making it meaningful to the students. Nor can we let up in our pursuit

of promoting excellence in character development and modeling integrity, justice and fun as a way of life, every day, for all.

In other words, we need you to continue to do all that you've done this year — in the classroom, during staff meetings, at family events, etc. — to make an Imagine education such an amazing experience. And we need to continue to set big goals for ourselves, just like we did this past year, and do everything in our power to meet and exceed them. If we do this, and do this together, we will continue to do great things for the families and children we so honorably serve.

Thank you for choosing Imagine Schools and thanks for all your efforts to make the start of another school year so successful. I look forward to serving you once again as your Regional Director. **WE ARE IMAGINE!**

Pat Crain
Maryland Regional Director

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delivery of instruction, specifically the best practices that are embedded in our instructional model. You can look forward to regular visits and feedback from our team, designed to improve our instructional practices.

I ask you to remember that parents have placed in our hands their most precious resources. I salute you for your willingness to serve our children and for your hard work and dedication thus far. I challenge you, if you have not done so already, to take the goal-setting process seriously and to set three to five clear and meaningful goals for yourself this school year, specific to increasing your effectiveness in your current role. Post your goals somewhere that requires you to view them regularly. As we move through the school year, stop and benchmark yourself (current reality)

against the goals that you set for the year. This process will help you remain focused on improving your practice, and ultimately your ability to serve in a more impactful way.

Lastly, we have decided to form a Network Book Club (NBC). Each month, the NBC (don't you just love acronyms?) will read one book related to our work. We will host several book talks during the year to discuss our learning and how this new learning will impact our work. I sincerely hope that you join us in the book club this year and that you participate in the upcoming book talks and professional development opportunities.

Our October book is *The Tipping Point*, by Malcolm Gladwell. You will find this book to be a wonderful read. For those of you

who may have already read this book, we ask you to consider a second read. It's sometimes almost surreal the new connections that we make when we read a familiar piece of literature the second time around. Upcoming NBC book talk times will be sent out in the coming weeks.

As always, we thank you for your work, continued support and willingness to be a life-long learner so that you can serve our students in a more profound way. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

William Hill
Executive Director
Imagine Prince George's County



Imagine the possibilities

Campus Kiosk: Brief Notices from the Imagine Maryland Public Charter Schools

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Shared Values

Imagine Morningside: On September 21, our community participated in the International Day of Peace, an opportunity for children and adults to create and participate in acts of peace on a shared date. In honor of "Peace

Day," we focused on the meaning of "peace," which is the character trait for the month of September, with our students participating in a variety of peaceful activities.

Calendar of Events

OCTOBER

- 19 MESA Convention, Schools Closed for Students and Teachers (PG County)**
- 26 End of First Quarter**
- 29 Professional Development and Grading/Teacher Planning, Schools Closed (PG County) for Students**

NOVEMBER

- 6 Presidential Election Day, Schools and Offices Closed**
- 12 Parent Teacher Conference, Schools Closed (PG County) for Students**



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ImagiNation, published monthly by the Imagine Maryland Regional Office, offers facts and features about our faculty and staff, and shares information about our schools and organization. Each edition is sent via email to all staff of Imagine Andrews, Imagine Discovery, Imagine Foundations and Imagine Foundations II, and Imagine Lincoln.

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Pat Crain
Maryland Regional Director

William Hill
*Executive Director,
PG County Imagine Schools*

Professional Development Calendar

OCTOBER

- 15 Reading Eggs (K-2 Teachers), 4:00-6:00 pm. Imagine Foundations at Leeland in the Science Building**
- 17 Study Island Reading (Grade 3-8 Teachers), 4:00-6:00 pm. Imagine Foundations at Leeland in the Science Building**
- 18 Study Island Math (K-8 Teachers), 4:00-6:00 pm. Imagine Foundations at Leeland in the Science Building**
- 23 Saxon Phonics (K-2 Teachers), 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Imagine Foundations at Leeland in the Science Building**

NOVEMBER

- 13 FOSS Science: Improving Literacy through Science (all math and science teachers), 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Imagine Foundations at Leeland in the Science Building**
- 27 Learning.com: Aha math & Science, 4:00-6:00 pm. Imagine Foundations at Leeland in the Science Building**

DECEMBER

- 12 Classroom Management, 4:00-6:00 pm. Imagine Foundations at Leeland in the Science Building**

JANUARY

- 16 Treasures Training, 4:00-6:00 pm. Imagine Foundations at Leeland in the Science Building**
- 17 Saxon Math, 4:00-6:00 pm. Imagine Foundations at Leeland in the Science Building**

