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Manatee Messenger
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Melrose Elementary

JANUARY 2016

Refocusing behavior

Melrose Elementary
is seeing success
with a new program.

PAGE 7



Photo by Vernon Miller, fourth grade

MELROSE MOVING FORWARD

Changes are moving
our school in the
right direction. PAGE 6

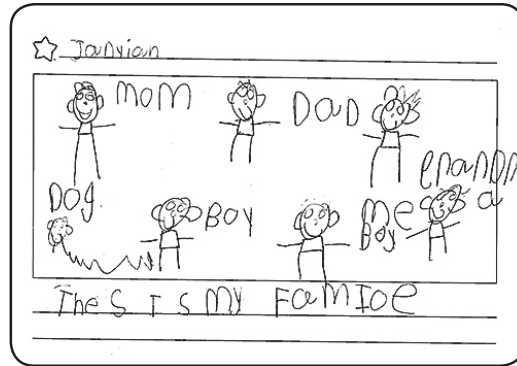
Kindergarten

Reporting on *family*

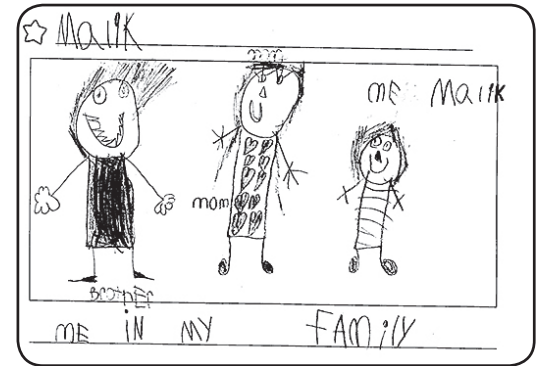
Kindergarten students report about their families and pets.



Artwork by Alyssa Gipson, kindergarten



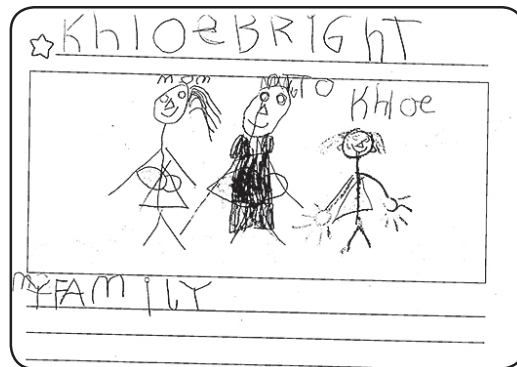
Artwork by Janiyah Shermon, kindergarten



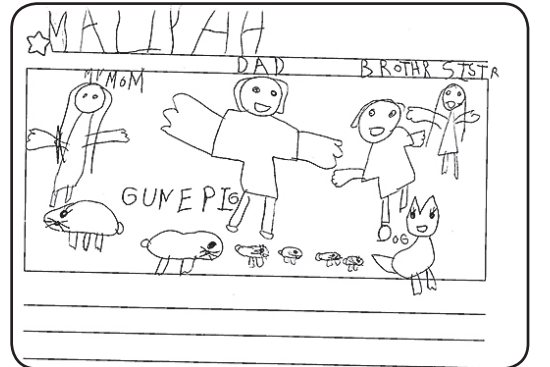
Artwork by Malik Nixon, kindergarten



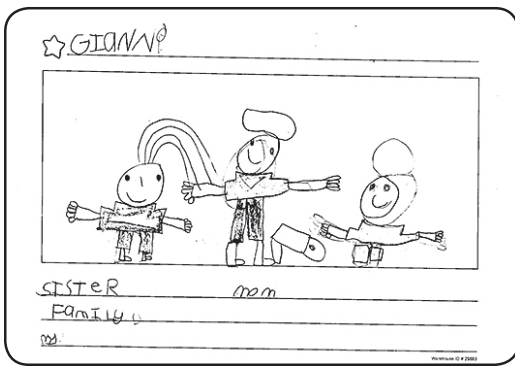
Artwork by Amiya Johnson, kindergarten



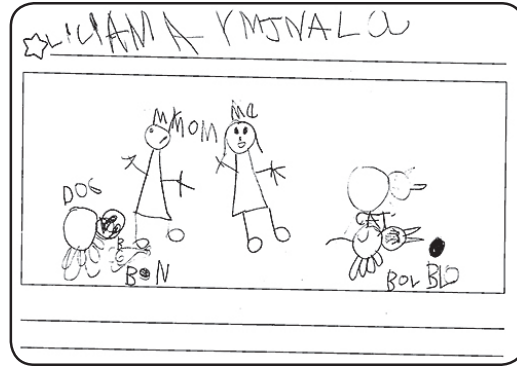
Artwork by Khloe Bright, kindergarten



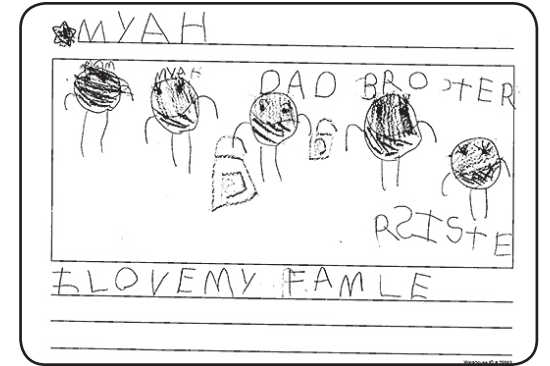
Artwork by Maliyah Morrow, kindergarten



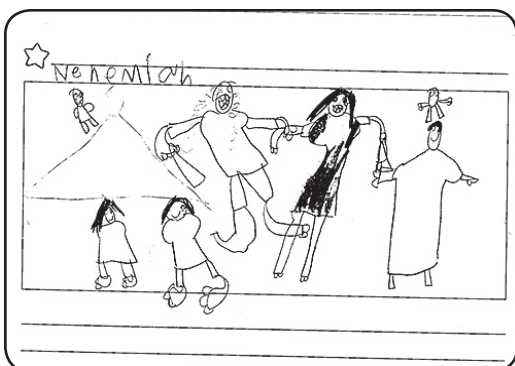
Artwork by Gianni Natteal, kindergarten



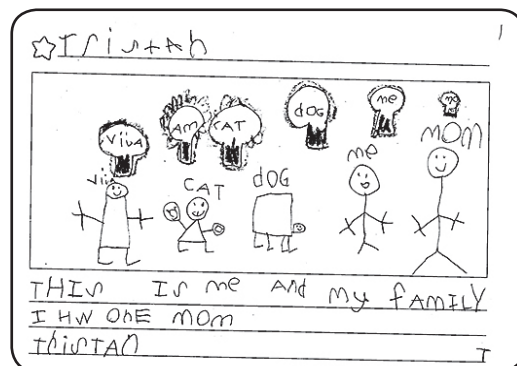
Artwork by Liliana Jaimes, kindergarten



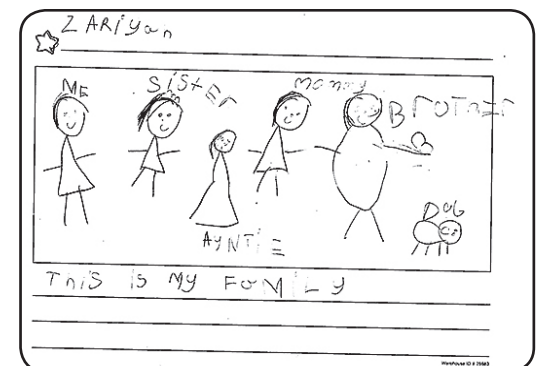
Artwork by Myah Phillips, kindergarten



Artwork by Nehemiah Akhter-Harris, kindergarten



Artwork by Tristan Patterson, kindergarten



Artwork by Zariyah McDaniel, kindergarten

How we see *ourselves*

What do you see when you look in the mirror? First graders describe how they feel about themselves.



Photo by Jacoby Varner, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel happy. What I like about me is my hair. The thing that makes me special is my family. One word that describes me is beautiful.

De'anna Carter



Photo by Verntez Miller, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel joyful. What I like about me is I am a big brother. My dad makes me feel special. One word that describes me is quiet.

Kairaba Andrews



Photo by Marlia Kirkland, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel excited. What I like about me is my glasses. The thing that makes me special is my smile. One word that describes me is smart.

Zamarian Williams



Photo by Jacoby Varner, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel cute. What I like about me is my smile. The thing that makes me special is I am a bike rider. One word that describes me is funny.

Kassidy Russell



Photo by Harold Britt, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel happy. What I like about me is my black eyes. The thing that makes me special is I am a big sister. One word that describes me is smart.

Zianna Burney



Photo by Zy'quayvion Williams, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel proud. What I like about me is I am cute. The thing that makes me special is I am perfect. One word that describes me is sweet.

Lamaria Thompson



Photo by La'Coreya Smith, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel happy. What I like about me is I'm cool. The thing that makes me special is my presence. One word that describes me is funny.

Tyreon Howard



Photo by Marlia Kirkland, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel brave. What I like about me is I am cool. The thing that makes me special is my smile. One word that describes me is curious.

Denairo Garrett

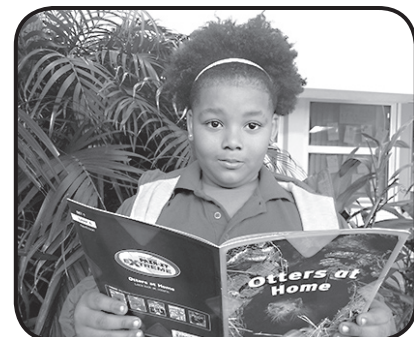


Photo by Jason Ross, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel special. What I like about me is I rock. The thing that makes me special is I am good in school. One word that describes me is fun.

Elijah Andrade



Photo by Harold Britt, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel funny. What I like about me is I am beautiful. The thing that makes me special is I tell jokes. One word that describes me is dancer.

De'cordasia Lloyd



Photo by Jordan Byers, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel happy. What I like about me is I am pretty. The thing that makes me special is I am a cheerleader. One word that describes me is helpful.

A'mariyona Davis



Photo by Jason Ross, first grade

When I look at myself in the mirror, I feel joyful. What I like about me is I am funny. The thing that makes me special is I am beautiful. One word that describes me is cute.

Eliana Taylor

Second Grade

We believe ...



Photo by Sapphire Bell, second grade

Ma'lia Williams

I believe in my teacher because she works hard to teach us. Sometimes she wants to scream at us because we get out of control but she can still handle it. Ms. McDonald is the best teacher ever. She is very important to me. Ms. McDonald is brave and she is very cute. I like her hair, it's cute.



Photo by Miracle Chatman, second grade

Zariah Hardin

I believe my mom can get a job because she is a great mother and she works hard all day to get a job. She's always there for me every day. She cooks, she works out and she lets me go outside. She always makes sure I do my chores and she looks after my sister and brother.



Photo by Miracle Chatman, second grade

Shania Fisher-Sutton

I believe in friendship because everyone has to be nice to one another. Everyone doesn't have to be friends, but it would be nice if everyone got along. Sometimes when I feel disappointed my mom comes upstairs to come cheer me up. That is why I believe in friendship.



Photo by Eric Moore, second grade

Jayshawna Hall

I believe in Ms. Vencil because she is nice and she helps me read. She is helpful and she is wonderful. I'm happy to have her as my teacher. I love Ms. Vencil.



Photo by Stephen Owens, second grade

Mario Mccant

I believe in Mr. Kimmel because he teaches social studies. He is good to me. He is the best teacher ever. He gives us snacks. He is funny and nice. He reads to us, puts on music and teaches us games.



Photo by Eric Moore, second grade

Jamaal Miles

I believe in my dog. My dog is a white and brown dog named Coco. My dog has ears and he is fluffy. I like to play with him outside and inside. My dog is safe and he makes me happy because every time he leaves I miss him. He is my favorite dog.

Second Grade

**... in our families,
our teachers and
our school.**



Photo by Sapphire Bell, second grade

Jazliyah Hubbard

I believe in my granddad because he fought for the country and he came back safe. I love him because he fought for us and he came back in a year. I'm proud of him because he is in the Army.



Photo by Destiny Moore, second grade

Cincerly Coley

I believe in my dad. He passed away, so when I get to heaven, I will get to be with my dad. I will be a successful little girl and make him proud. I will not give up on my dreams.



Photo by Tyrone Gray, second grade

Daisy Harris

I believe in my school. My school is important because it is a place to learn journalism, reading, writing and math. It's important to always clean your classroom every day and turn in papers. That's important for life, and you can get a scholarship.



Photo by Tyrone Gray, second grade

Dontae Nettles

I believe it's important to help people, because it's respectful and helpful for your community. It's important to help people be safe and take care of their family. It's important to help people help others. It's important to help people watch their surroundings. People should do community service and help keep their community clean.



Photo by Carl Mitchell, second grade

Amiya Boyd

I believe that getting tons of sleep is good for your body. When you go to school and don't get enough sleep then you will lose your concentration, so get good sleep. I want everyone in the world to be able to concentrate and to be smart like me.



Photo by Carl Mitchell, second grade

Jontez Williams

I believe in safety because you can be safe in many ways, for example wearing a seatbelt, walking on the cross walk, stopping when the red light comes on and waiting for people to cross the road because someone can get hurt. When you want to cross the road, you need to press the button and the car will stop.

...

Melrose moving forward

Changes and hard work are the success story this year. Melrose has been in the news a lot, but positive stories can be found in the halls.

BY NAJAE REID | FIFTH GRADE

At Melrose Elementary this year, some great things are going on: Mentors are working with administrators, teachers and students.

Every class has a paraprofessional in addition to the teacher, making extra help for students easier.

A new behavior system is reducing out-of-school suspensions. More parents, teachers and volunteers are attending PTA meetings. The Girlfriends club is going strong. An after-school dance class has been added. This year's student exhibit at the Studio@620 had a great turnout of family and students. Lots of people enjoyed dinner at the school beforehand. It's a good year, administrators, teachers and students agree, that's helping **Melrose move forward...**



Manatee Messenger staff

Retired administrator Mrs. Boyd jumps rope with fifth-grade girls during lunch recess, as part of a program to improve behavior.

"Sometimes the news has concentrated on the negative things that happened many years ago," said Principal Nanette Grasso. The coverage by the *Tampa Bay Times* "has not included enough of the positive things that happen here."

Mrs. Grasso points to the progress listed at left as examples of the positive. "Melrose is a wonderful community. Our parents and families love their children, and everyone wants to see our children do their very best."

The Florida Department of Education is helping Melrose move forward by hiring experts from The New Teacher Project, a national program created to help all students achieve their best. At Melrose, TNTP site manager Emily Appel has been visiting monthly since February to guide teachers, coaches and Mrs. Grasso.

"I'm helping teachers develop skills and strategies," she said, to improve the quality of learning.

Mrs. Appel, who lives in Washington, D.C., has worked with 130 schools trying to turn around academically. "I want to see Melrose Elementary become a model elementary school where teachers and students are happy."

At the holiday concert right before winter break, a lot of students were happy, but some

were making too much noise. Mrs. Grasso had to keep asking for respect, and she dismissed some students, showing there was still some work to be done in large groups of students.

Some changes in the lunchroom are making a difference when there are bigger numbers of students. Boys sit with boys on one side, girls sit together on the other.

"Some people are quiet," said fifth-grader Malcolm Woods, "but some are still noisy. 'The way we dump our food,' he

said, makes things better. When students are done with their lunches, they raise their hands and paraprofessionals pick up the trays, instead of all students carrying their trash to the garbage. This system has made lunch more orderly.

Administrators made another lunch change that they hope will help with the older students. "We're trying recess for fourth- and fifth-grade girls" at the end of their lunch time, said Mrs. Sue Boyd, Area III administrator who came out

of retirement to help at Melrose. Mrs. Boyd, who was principal for 11 years at Azalea Elementary, was asked by Area Superintendent Robert Poth to help guide the behavior system at Melrose.

Mrs. Boyd, who demonstrated her amazing Double Dutch skills to the girls at recess the week before winter break, said separating the boys and girls is good for both. "The girls' behavior was being overlooked because the boys' behavior was so loud," she said. Boys activities are being introduced as well.

School district official Dr. Dan Evans, executive director of assessment, accountability and research, oversees the data and information collected from Pinellas County schools. At Melrose and other schools, "We're seeing some positive trends.

"We're confident Mrs. Grasso and the teachers have a good plan in place," Dr. Evans said.

Fifth-grader Anaya Graham said she thinks things are better this year at Melrose, especially with the behavior system.

"Things are different, because now specials' teachers can track your points," she said.

That is good, she said, because last year, students could only lose points in their classrooms. Now there is more incentive to behave well all day long.



Manatee Messenger staff

Tampa Bay Times volunteer Vicki Flint works with first-grade students Cordajia Allen and Ke'Miya Bowman.

Focusing on behavior

BY LISANDRO MORALES
Fifth grade

In an effort to decrease behavioral problems, Melrose Elementary has been working with a new program using the Refocus Room.

The Refocus Room is designed as a place where students can calm down after they have had behavioral or emotional problems at school. Two behavioral specialists, Mr. Vasily Graham and Ms. Felicia Byrd, were hired to develop the new behavioral program, along with a retired administrator, Mrs. Sue Boyd, who was principal at Azalea Elementary for 11 years. All are new to Melrose.

Melrose began using the new system at the end of last school year. It involves a variety of steps fol-

Mr. Graham and Mrs. Byrd work together to improve behavior at Melrose.



lowing behavioral problems. First is an in-class time-out, and next is an out-of-class time-out in another classroom. Following that, a call is placed to a parent or guardian. If problems continue, the student is sent to meet with a specialist to discuss problems.

The No. 1 goal for Melrose this year according to administrators is to reduce the number of out-of-

school suspensions by 50 percent. Mr. Graham said that student out-of-school suspensions have decreased by around 49 percent from last year, nearly reaching the goal.

Melrose Principal Nanette Grasso is pleased the program is improving behavior, and said everyone plays a part.

"I'm working with the district, the teachers, the families and students," she said.

Mr. Graham said the Refocus Room helps students by giving them a quiet, supervised place to reflect on what happened. After a cooling off period and the teacher agrees, a student can return to the classroom. They are assigned to do class work while in the room.

Mrs. Byrd, who started the year as a behavior specialist but is now a fifth-grade teacher, said the program is designed to limit the smaller problems that prevent students from learning in the classroom. She said the system has been positive for the students.

After Demetrius Davis was sent to the Refocus Room frequently, Mrs. Byrd checked his grades. They were good, so she



Mr. Graham talks with students while checking in on Mrs. Jackson's kindergarten class.

Photos by Ate' Porter, fifth grade

continued to talk to him about how good grades are not enough. Respect and good behavior play a role in making the honor roll and principal's list, she said. She also reminded the student that a teacher could drop a student's grade because of disruptive behavior. Then all of their hard work would be for nothing.

Demetrius admitted to being in the Refocus Room several times. He added there were usually about four or five people in the room when he went there, and that many of the kids were just messing around.

"When they start settling down, sometimes we can use the iStation or ST Math," Demetrius said,

"which is fun, but is hard to get."

He also said Mr. Graham and Mrs. Byrd told him he needs to be good or he won't have a future.

Demetrius has not gone to the Refocus Room for a while and his grades have improved, as well as his behavior.

"My motivation was that the kids always want to learn," Mrs. Byrd said. "There's always a different challenge to defeat."

Despite any issues the teachers and specialists encounter, both Ms. Byrd and Mr. Graham said they enjoy helping students.

"Sometimes they may be a headache," Mr. Graham said. "But they can be fun."

BY THE NUMBERS

Out-of-school suspensions August-November 2014: **96**

Out-of-school suspensions August-November 2015: **51**

Out-of-school suspensions reduced by **49 percent**

Boys *AND* girls rule

BY SHAVION HOBBS AND LATERRIO BRINSON
Fifth grade

Some teachers have boys and girls in their classrooms. But, wait?! Mrs. April Bradley only has a class full of fellas?

That's right.

Mrs. Bradley has a gender-based class: all boys. Melrose administration decided to try separate boys' and girls' classes in second grade this year.

"It's working fabulously," said Ms. Heidi Bockover, assistant principal. "The boys are working as a team, and are engaged," which is not always the case with boys.

"The girls are cheering each other on -- there's a cute little kindness about them," she said.

Mrs. Bradley said it is great to teach a single gender class to see how boys like to learn. She believes that her classroom is performing well.

"I love to have an all-boy class," said Mrs.

Bradley, who has a house full of boys at home. "I can create my lessons to what boys like," she said.

For example, boys like competition, she said.

Student Stephen Owens in Mrs. Bradley's class said it is awesome to be in an all-boys class, because they get to play games boys like. Issac Mcgee also likes being in Mrs. Bradley's all-boy classroom "because there are no girls."

Mrs. Tracey McDonald has an all-girl classroom. An all-girl class was a new experience for her.

"It was a nice idea to try," she said. "I have four kids and three of them are girls, and I was asked to do it. Also, we all know girls rule!"

Mrs. McDonald said that girls are sometimes challenging to teach. She said her class is performing well separated from boys, when she is not dealing with issues like "girl drama."

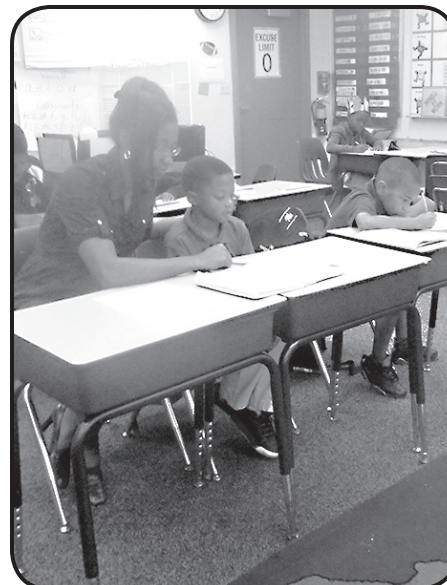


Photo by Malazha McDaniel, fifth grade

Mrs. Bradley helps her boys with a writing assignment on Dec. 14.

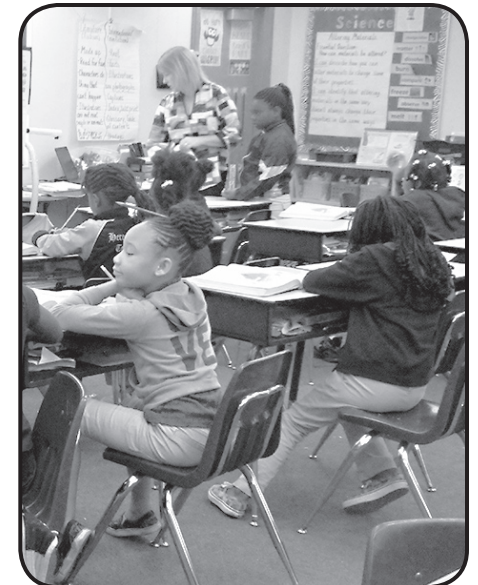


Photo by Aviyon Mack, fifth grade

Mrs. McDonald teaches a math lesson to her all-girls class.

around school

Let's move forward, **Me**



Shanoia Davis, paraprofessional, plays with kindergarteners and Curious George on the playground.

Photo by Nevaeh Walton, kindergarten



Fourth grade students explore at Boyd Hill Nature Park during a field trip on Dec. 14.



Students wear costumes at Melrose's annual trunk or treat on Oct. 29.

Photo by Vernon Miller, fourth grade



Fourth- and Fifth-grade chorus students perform at the holiday concert on the PE court Dec. 14. Aimyere Sanchez, fourth grade, portrayed the Grinch.

Photo by Latrillion Harris, fifth grade

rose!



Photo by Ashanie Maynor, fourth grade



Photo by Daemond Murray

Kindergarten students Nathaniel Burney and Aiyana Woods are the first to choose books from the more than 400 donated to Melrose Elementary on Dec. 2 by Wright Flood Co. Flood specialist Tariq Shabazz and colleagues presented the books with Principal Grasso.

10.



Photo by Joaquin Miller, kindergarten

Kindergarten students get to wear their pajamas to school on Dec. 18.



Photo by Jaiden Jefferson, fourth grade

Students in Ms. Johnson's third-grade class read while waiting to use the restroom. This maximizes learning time.

around school



Photo by Ta'niya Bell, fourth grade

New fenced-in bike racks offer safe *places to park*

BY AIYMERE SANCHEZ
Fourth grade

Melrose now has a more secure place for students to keep their bikes, and more shaded picnic tables for outdoor class meetings, lunches with mentors and other fun.

The new bike compound, with a concrete pad and high fence surrounding the bike rack and locking gate, is a good upgrade to the old rack, because now people can't walk onto campus and take bikes out of the rack. The gate is locked at the second bell at 8:35 a.m. and is unlocked at the end of the school day, according to Mr. Patrick Curry, Melrose's head plant operator.

Six new sturdy square picnic tables with big red umbrellas now dot the campus, too.

Why the two improvements?

Mr. Curry said the idea for the bike rack came from Principal Nanette Grasso because students' bikes were getting stolen. Volunteer coordinator Ms. Demetrice Lane said many mentors were telling her there were not enough places to meet with their students, and Assistant Principal Heidi Bockover approved the purchase of more tables.

Area Superintendent Robert Poth helped our school by giving Melrose around \$5,000 for the new bike compound and picnic tables.

"As the area superintendent in charge of your school, I have access to money that comes from the state of Florida that's sent to each county to help the students and the schools," said Mr. Poth. "So when we found out you had a need, I just

tapped into that money."

The bike compound is a hit with students. "I like that it's fenced in, because you don't have to worry about people stealing your bike," said Solanzjè Jones, a fifth-grader who rides her bike to school.

"The children are very glad to know that their bikes are safe," said Ms. Bockover.

The whole Melrose community likes the six new picnic tables with their bright red umbrellas. They are made of thick, smooth plastic, so no splinters. Teachers, mentors and other volunteers meet with their students at the tables, or use them for lunch breaks.

Fourth graders Ja'keem Jackson and Danterrio Bellamy, reading outside with teacher Mrs. Rosann Whiteman before winter break, said the new tables are nice.

"Melrose needs new things," said Danterrio. "They make the school look cool!"

The boys were reading *Horrid Henry and the Mega-Mean Time Machine*, a story about a boy who doesn't like to go outside. Ja'keem is not like Henry.

"We get to sit in the hot sun and feel the cool breeze," Ja'keem said, touching the red umbrella that can be adjusted to block the sun, letting him enjoy the fresh air.



Photo by Jaiden Jefferson, fourth grade

Charlie Frago, a Tampa Bay Times volunteer, works with second grade students Marlon Smith and Kwamaine Powell at the new picnic tables.

New and improved bike compound keeps students' bikes secure during school days.

Teaming up

Switching classes each day benefits two fourth grades.



Photo by Jaiden Jefferson, fourth grade

Mrs. Lind and Mrs. Williams line their fourth-grade students up in the hallway as they prepare to transition to another class.

BY UNIQUE THOMPSON
Fourth grade

Fourth grade teachers Mrs. JoAnn Lind and Mrs. Ottesha Williams both love to inspire students and are on the same page.

They have to be, because they are team teaching. At the beginning of the school year almost every third, fourth and fifth grade teacher was team teaching, but by December only Mrs. Lind and Mrs. Williams were still at it.

Melrose decided to try team teaching because some of the teachers asked about it, said Ms. Heidi Bockover, assistant principal.

"We had teachers who preferred one subject over another," she said. "They wanted to teach their stronger subject. And it allows them to go deep."

Mrs. Lind teaches reading and writing and Mrs. Williams teaches math and science. The teachers switch students every day at 10:30. This is the fourth year that Mrs. Lind has done team teaching, but it is the first year Mrs. Williams has done it. Mrs. Williams said that she had always wanted to try team teaching.

"I like the break-up of our day," she said. "I get to teach two hours,"

then switch students and do it again.

"I love that I get to see a variety of different students, and it's a nice break for the kids," said Mrs. Lind. "I have a competition (between) boys and girls during transitions so they can reach their goal, and sometimes I have a competition against Mrs. Williams' class to see who can transition the quietest."

Ms. Bockover agreed that team teaching gives students a variety.

"Children enjoy having two teachers," she said. "It gives them a fresh start in the afternoon."

The other teaching teams went back to their individual classes because the system works better for some students than others, Ms. Lind said. She and Mrs. Williams agreed that the biggest challenge is the transition between classes.

"I don't like trying to settle them down during the switch when they come in," Mrs. Lind said. "When they do settle down, they can do amazing things."

Other keys for success are consistency and good communication of expectations. Team teachers need to work well together, Mrs. Lind and Mrs. Williams agreed.

around school



Photo by Manatee Messenger staff

Guests at Studio@620 in downtown St. Petersburg check out Melrose students' photographs on display at the "Through Our Eyes" exhibit.

Melrose shines at Studio@620

A professional exhibit in St. Petersburg showcases journalism work by Melrose students.

BY SHAQUAJA HUMPHRIES
Fourth grade

Melrose students got to see their photographs on display at a real gallery in November.

The exhibit at the Studio@620 in downtown St. Petersburg was the 11th show for students at Melrose, John Hopkins Middle and Lakewood High schools. All are part of a Pinellas County Schools program called Journeys in Journalism.

Third-grader Myalyn Pompey is one of the students whose work was chosen for the gallery.

"I was excited that people got to see my picture at the exhibit," she said. "I felt proud when I saw my picture" of fresh produce, taken at Publix.

This year's exhibit was dedicated to Journeys in Journalism founding Coordinator Cynda Mort, who died in May. Mrs. Mort's husband, Kevin, who is a member of the program's advisory committee, said the event was a great tribute to his wife. "The exhibit was always the highlight of her year, because she was so proud of the students and their wonderful work," he said.

The three-week exhibition included a poetry slam, where local spoken word artists created poems after being inspired by the student

work. St. Petersburg's new Poet Laureate, Helen Pruitt Wallace, wrote a poem about fourth-grader Sanyiah McRae's photo called "Canopy," a view of trees at Sunken Gardens.

The exhibit also included a Taste of Midtown and Beyond, a night when people could sample donations from a dozen local restaurants.

"The food this year was the best ever," said Ms. Gretchen Letterman, journalism program coordinator. "There were yummy ribs with really good sauce, and pulled pork sliders that melted in your mouth."

The photographs and stories were spectacular, Ms. Letterman said.

Her two favorite photos? The one by fifth-grader Lisandro Morales of the three grandmas who volunteer at Melrose, and one by fifth-grader Najae Reid of a student looking at a glowing computer screen at Water Ventures Learning Lab, which stopped at Melrose.

Before the opening night at the gallery, Melrose families enjoyed a dinner in the school cafeteria. The Melrose Chorus performed for diners. The St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership donated a trolley to take families to and from the exhibit.

Besides the Studio@620, other sponsors of the exhibit were Duke Energy and the *Tampa Bay Times*.

istock.com

Exploring art online

With computers, loving art is just a click away.

BY JAZYMINE WEBB

Fifth grade

Some students at Melrose may not have a chance to visit an art gallery or museum, or have their work displayed.

Mrs. Karen Haraminac, the school's art teacher, came up with a great idea that brings an online art gallery directly to the students.

The online gallery Artsonia is a website where students from around the world can share their artwork. The website can also be used as a fundraiser where anyone can buy student work and the money will go directly back into the school's art program.

This is Mrs. Haraminac's second year teaching art at Melrose and her first year using Artsonia.

"The students at Melrose may not be able to get to a physical art gallery so this is a way for them to be exposed to the process of having their work displayed and celebrated. It will also extend their curiosity about wanting to visit an art museum or gallery, or just be an artist," Mrs. Haraminac said.

Students will begin publishing work after they return signed permission forms sent home to parents. Mrs. Haraminac hopes the students will learn something from this experience.

"I want the students to be proud of their work and the growth that they have," Mrs. Haraminac said.

People who visit the site can also leave comments about the artwork, which will allow students to receive positive reinforcement for their work.

"I want the students to be proud of their work."



Art teacher, Mrs. Haraminac looks through student artwork she plans to post on Artsonia, the online kids art museum.

Photo by Syncere Lewis, fourth grade

Teacher spotlight: Meet new staff

PHOTOS BY FIFTH GRADERS TERRANCE HOWARD AND ANAYA GRAHAM AND FOURTH GRADERS JAKEEM JACKSON, LASHAWN NELSON, DANA EVANS AND SHAPRICE JORDAN

Mr. John Potts, second grade



"When I was in high school, I had a history teacher that made history come alive. He made a difference in my life and I knew I wanted to make a difference.

"I've been a bank manager for most of my life. I was not happy and I wanted to follow my original dream.

"I spent the last four years in college. I interned in a kindergarten class at Campbell Park Elementary.

"I love teaching because I feel like I'm accomplishing something, every day is different."

—Solanzje' Jones, fifth grade

Ms. Brittany Jennings, kindergarten



Before coming to Melrose, Ms. Jennings worked at a bank. Ms. Jennings said that she wanted to become a teacher because of her kindergarten teacher who inspired her. Now Ms. Jennings is a kindergarten teacher, too. "I love teaching and being able to impact students and touch hearts," said Ms. Jennings.

—Solanzje' Jones, fifth grade

Ms. Shannon Bluett, kindergarten



It is Ms. Bluett's first year teaching and her first year at Melrose.

She did her final internship here at Melrose in Andrea Kimmel's class. "That's how I learned how to teach here," she said. In her free time, Ms. Bluett likes to write children's books. She hasn't had any published yet, but maybe one

day she will.

—Tyzeona Gray, fourth grade

Mrs. Kasandra Bodell, first grade



It is Mrs. Bodell's first year teaching and her first year at Melrose.

Ms. Bodell is a big Bucs fan. She is working on getting season tickets.

She has two kids, a 2-year-old and a 9-month-old. In her free time she likes to do things

with her kids. Mrs. Bodell said that she loves teaching first grade. "I want to teach first graders to be risk-takers, better friends, better readers and to dream big."

—By Tyzeona Gray, fourth grade

Mrs. Lindsey Barker, first grade



It is Mrs. Barker's fourth year teaching, but her first year teaching at Melrose. Previously she taught second grade. This is the first time she has taught first grade, but she likes it. Mrs. Barker moved here last summer from Alabama. "I moved here because my husband got a new job," she said. Mrs. Barker and her husband enjoy going to the beach on the weekends, because it's something they didn't get to do in Alabama.

—Ny'kiese Green, fifth grade

Ms. Kathleen Moss, kindergarten



It is Ms. Moss' first year at Melrose, but she has been teaching for many years. "When I lived in Georgia, I taught every grade except third," she said. Ms. Moss has also been a principal and most recently she worked for Head Start. Ms. Moss collects vintage toys and used to own an antique shop.

—Ny'kiese Green, fifth grade

Ms. Ashley Heaven, fifth grade



It is Ms. Heaven's first year at Melrose, but she taught for two years previously at a charter school. Her parents are from Jamaica. Every summer she went to Jamaica and went to summer school, so as a child she went to year-round school. When asked what she likes about teaching at Melrose Ms. Heaven said, "I love the teachers collectively. We are all so different, but one thing we have in common is we all love to teach."

—Ny'kiese Green, fifth grade

Mrs. Wendy Gillooly, second grade



Mrs. Gillooly spent the past 12 years teaching in Gainesville. She did research and decided to come to Melrose because, "I like the challenge. I specifically asked to come to Melrose. It can be a struggle unless everyone works together." She taught international cooking to elementary students. "I love to cook. I like to cook food from all over the world." Mrs. Gillooly's favorite subject to teach is math. "I like all the different ways you can come up with the same answer."

—Breastjah Tramel, fourth grade

Mrs. JoAnn Lind, fourth grade



Mrs. Lind has been teaching for 19 years, but it is her first year at Melrose. She loves teaching reading and writing and at one time she was a reading coach. When asked what the biggest struggle teaching at Melrose is? Mrs. Lind said, "Getting the engagement of students. Getting them to have fun and learn at the same time." Mrs. Lind is also a professional tennis coach. In the summer she works at a tennis club teaching tennis lessons.

—By Breastjah Tramel, fourth grade

Ms. Bonnie Halprin, third grade



It's Ms. Halprin's first year at Melrose and she teaches third grade. She previously worked as a preschool director for 18 years. She wanted to come to Melrose because she always wanted to work in Pinellas schools. "I like Melrose because of the friendly staff and administration." In her spare time Ms. Halprin likes to cook and bake.

—By Lashawn Nelson, fourth grade

Mr. Justin Black, PE coach



Mr. Black said he wanted to be a PE coach at Melrose because he likes teaching the students different sports and activities. He said he chose Melrose after journalism teacher Ms. Doss invited him to speak to her class two years ago. "She invited me to come and speak to a group of fifth grade boys about college and my time spent playing football, and from there I felt that this was the place where I could really make a difference," Mr. Black said.

—Solanzje' Jones, fifth grade

Mrs. Jennifer Jackson, kindergarten



This is Ms. Jackson's first year teaching at Melrose, but she spent the past seven years in New York working as a long term sub and she was also a guidance counselor. She has a master's degree in school counseling. Ms. Jackson said, "I love working with children." That is why she picked teaching for a career. She had the opportunity to visit the Adirondack Mountains and said that they were beautiful.

—Jocelyn Fisher, fourth grade

Mr. Louis Marinkovich, kindergarten



Mr. Marinkovich has been teaching for 19 years. This is his first year at Melrose. He is a huge Star Wars fan. He started collecting Star Wars items when he was 7 years old. "I went to see the first Star Wars movie at a drive-in and then I was hooked." Mr. Marinkovich has a second bedroom full of Star Wars collectibles. He said that his favorite character is Darth

Vader.

—Jocelyn Fisher, fourth grade

Mrs. Felicia Byrd, fifth grade



Mrs. Byrd started the year out as a behavior coach, but at the end of November she became a fifth-grade classroom teacher. The hardest part was transitioning from behavior, because she only worked with four or five students at a time, and now she has 21 students in a classroom. Mrs. Byrd has 14 years teaching experience. She has taught elementary, middle and at the college level. "Teaching is never boring, always exciting, and you have new challenges daily," she said.

—By Lisandro Morales, fifth grade

Mr. Vasily Graham, behavior specialist



It's Mr. Graham's first year at Melrose working as a behavior specialist. Previously he worked at Woodlawn Elementary as a behavior specialist. Mr. Graham played college football in Alabama. He said, "I enjoy the kids. They can be disruptive, but they can also be fun."

—By Lisandro Morales, fifth grade

Letters to our superintendent

Writing letters to important people can help **change** things for the better. Have your own great idea? Be sure to put **pencil to paper** to help make it happen!

As part of the student exhibit at the Studio@620 in November, Melrose students wrote letters to Dr. Michael Grego, superintendent of Pinellas County Schools, to tell him what they like about their school, and also what they would like to see changed. Here are some of their letters:



Times photo



DEAR DR. GREGO,

What I like about my school: I

like that I get to go to specials early in the morning, and go to journalism. What I wish I could change about my school? I wish that I (could) change Melrose from being an F school to an A school.

**Jashaun Norto
Fourth grade**

DEAR DR. GREGO,

What I like about my school: I like to learn.

What I would like to see change? We should play more.

Jermaine Brooks, first grade



DEAR DR. GREGO,

What I like about my school: I love journalism and P.E. and art and all the teachers. What I wish I could change about my school? Instead of (Melrose) being an F school, change it to an A+ school.

Myalyn Pompey, third grade



DEAR DR. GREGO,

What I like about my school: Art class. What I would like to see change? More roller skating. P.S. You are cool.

Melvin Jones, second grade



DEAR DR. GREGO,

What I like about my school: I like this school because this is the only elementary school that has journalism.

We have great teachers in this school. What I wish I could change about my school? I wish no kids (would) be bad in this school.

Breanna Bouey, third grade



DEAR DR. GREGO,

What I like about my school: I like the way the teachers are nice to me and they way they are nice to the other kids. What I wish I could change about my school? I wish I could change the school uniforms and wear regular clothes.

Diamond Witchard, fourth grade



around school

What's the word on the street?

A team of reporters and photographers went on the lookout for news around school.

Photographers: Za'khi Jordan, Darron Young, Keyontay Brown, third grade; Alana Gipson, fifth grade
Reporters: Myalyn Pompey, third grade; Diamond Witchard, fourth grade



Maliyah Morrow
Kindergarten

Q: What do you like about kindergarten?
 A: I like learning math, because it's fun.



Shanyjah Williams
Third grade

Q: What do you like to do after school?
 A: I like to dance with the Phoenix dance team here at Melrose.



Arnasia Parker
Second grade

Q: Why do you like Mr. Potts?
 A: I like Mr. Potts, because he reads to me and teaches me all about the book.



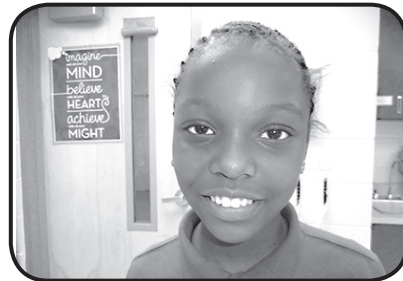
Malakai Rohlsen
Third grade

Q: What do you like about Melrose?
 A: I like Melrose because it's fun here and you can learn a lot of stuff, like multiplication.
 Q: What is your favorite food?
 A: Pizza, because it has lots of cheese in it.



Vermaria Cox
Kindergarten

Q: Why do you like playing outside?
 A: It's fun and I like to hula hoop.



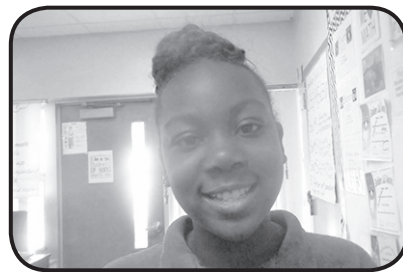
Su'kiyia Brown
Third grade

Q: What do you like to do after school?
 A: Draw and practice karate lessons.



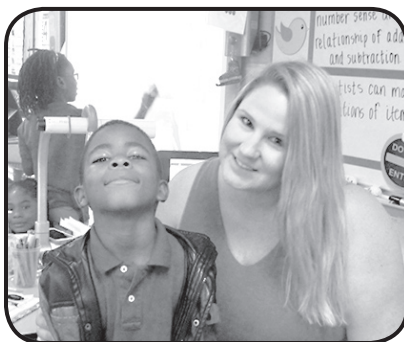
Jordan Rushing,
Third grade

Q: What is your favorite special to go to?
 A: PE, because I like to play basketball



Samaria Tunsil
Fifth grade

Q: What is your favorite song right now?
 A: *Bet You Can't Whip Like Me*



Zy'quayvion Williams
First grade

Q: What do you like about Mrs. Bodell?
 A: I like her, because she's nice and she's an artist.



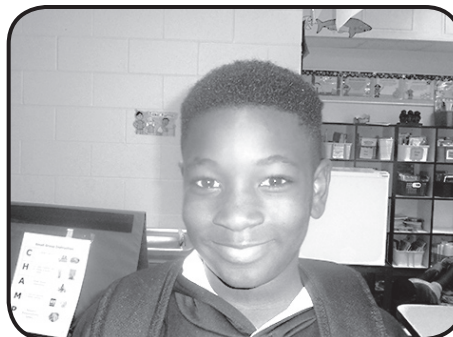
Solomon Pegues
Fifth grade

Q: What is your favorite subject in school?
 A: Art, because I like drawing.



Macayla Whyte
First grade

Q: Why do you like painting?
 A: It's fun and my favorite colors are green and purple.



Darnell Henry,
Fourth grade

Q: Who is your favorite teacher?
 A: Ms. Doss she is the nicest teacher



Sanyiah Mcrae
Fourth grade

Q: What is your favorite TV show?
 A: *KC Undercover*

around school

10 Tips to help you succeed at school

BY TERRANCE HOWARD
Fifth grade

- 1.** Always come to school on time.
- 2.** Eat a good healthy breakfast.
- 3.** Make sure your shirt is tucked in.
- 4.** Sharpen your pencils in the morning.
- 5.** Get enough sleep the night before.
- 6.** Make sure you brush your teeth.
- 7.** Tie your shoes.
- 8.** Brush and comb your hair.
- 9.** Wash your face so you're awake.
- 10.** Make sure your collar is folded.



Third graders clap and pay attention to instructions during PE.

Photo by Shaprice Jordan, fourth grade



Photo by Raynaiya Duckworth, fifth grade
Fifth grader Solanzje' Jones has fun on the monkey bars.



Kendall Wheelings, fourth grade, hangs onto the basketball hoop, which amuses Shaprice Jordan, fourth grade.

Photo by Jayvion McLaurin, fourth grade

Fifth grade reflections

BY ALEXIA LEVESQUE
Fifth grade
PHOTOS BY ZAMARI WILLIAMS
Fifth grade

1. How do you feel about leaving for middle school?
- 2. What subject are you looking forward to in middle school?**
3. What will you miss most about Melrose?
- 4. What middle school are you going to?**



Sierra Davis

1. Great, but kind of sad because I will miss the people here
2. Home economics
3. My classroom
4. Azalea Middle



Isaac Harris

1. Great, because I get to learn new things and it starts a new chapter
2. Gym
3. PE
4. Bay Point Middle



Da'niya Gray

1. I feel horrible, because I heard that there were bad people that use bad language in middle school.
2. Math, because it's fun
3. Journalism because of Ms. Milnes and Ms. Doss
4. John Hopkins Middle



Ny'kiese Green

1. Great, because it will teach me how to be independent
2. Math, because of structure
3. Journalism; being a reporter
4. Lealman Innovation Academy



Malazha McDaniel

1. Sad, because I'm ready, but not ready
2. Reading, because I love it
3. My teacher Ms. Heaven, because I like her
4. Thurgood Marshall Middle



Aaron Young

1. Happy, because I'll get more freedom
2. Math, because I'm really good at it
3. My teachers, because they are preparing me for middle school
4. Thurgood Marshall Middle

Manatee Messenger

FOURTH GRADE JOURNALISTS

Ms. Grizzle's class: Reporters – Shaquaja Humphires, Unique Thompson, Lashawn Nelson. Photographers – Jaiden Jefferson, Daemond Murray, Semaji Bolden, Lashawn Nelson

Mrs. Lind's class: Reporters – Diamond Witchard, Breasijah Tramel, Byron Moultrie. Photographers – Ja'keem Jackson,

Mrs. William's class: Reporters – Jocelyn Fisher, Tyzeona Gray. Photographers – Dana Evans, Shaprice Jordan, Jayvion Mclaurin, Kendall Wheelings

Ms. Rankin & Mr. William's class: Reporters – Aiymer Sanchez. Photographers – Ta'niya Bell, Syncere Lewis, Aiymer Sanchez, Ashanie Maynor, Vermon Miller

FIFTH GRADE JOURNALISTS

Ms. Lopez's class: Reporters – Najae Reid, Lisandro Morales. Photographers – Ate' Porter, A'zariah Sutton, Latrillion Harris, Alana Gipson

Mrs. Byrd's class: Reporters – Solanzje' Jones, Ny'kiese Green, Alexia Levesque, Terrance Howard, Jazymine Webb. Photographers- Terrance Howard, Demetrius Davis, Anaya Graham, Zamari Williams, Raynaiya Duckworth

Ms. Heaven's class: Reporters – Shavion Hobbs, Laterrio Brinson. Photographers – Aviyon Mack, Malazha McDaniel

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JOURNALISM TEACHERS

Kelly Milnes and Ashli Doss

JOURNEYS IN JOURNALISM COORDINATOR

Gretchen Letterman

JOURNEYS IN JOURNALISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Special thanks to Kevin Mort



Photo by Alana Gipson, fifth grade

Kindergarten students take a break from playing on the playground to look through the fence.



Photo by Aiymer Sanchez, fourth grade

Shayla Smith, fourth grade, studies her camera.



Photo by Kendall Wheelings, fourth grade

Shanyjah Williams tries to flip over while Unique Thompson, fourth grade, captures the moment.



Zamari Williams, fifth grade, jumps while out on a photo shoot.

Photo by Terrance Howard, fifth grade

On the cover:
Students and teachers take off during the school's Jingle Bell Run in December.