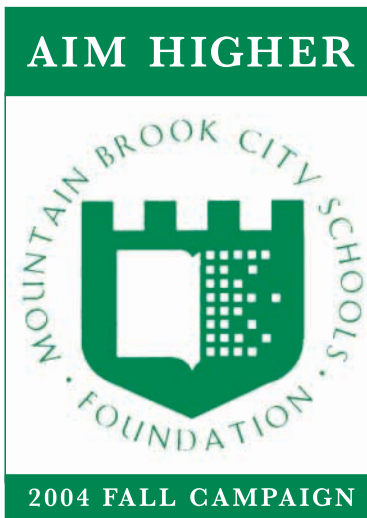


The Mountain Brook City Schools Foundation kicks off *Aim Higher*, the 2004 - 2005 public campaign to raise \$2 million in support of K-12 education.

Since its founding in 1992, the Mountain Brook City Schools Foundation has mobilized community support—to ensure that Mountain Brook’s system, consistently ranked among the best in the nation among public schools, retains its high standards. Mountain Brook has a low commercial tax base that is far smaller than neighboring communities like Homewood and Hoover, and the Foundation’s funding efforts are essential to maintaining the quality of the school system.

As part of its ongoing effort to raise funds—for a permanent endowment that supports academic needs that simply cannot be met through the school system’s operating budget—the Foundation is launching *Aim Higher*, its first public fund-raising effort since 1996.



“Here in Mountain Brook, we all share a commitment to quality education,” says Peggy Rafield, co-chairperson for the *Aim Higher* campaign. “Our schools provide a strong bond that holds our community together and helps define our quality of life.”

While tuition in the area’s best private schools can cost as much as \$14,000 a year, Mountain Brook students, from Kindergarten through grade 12, receive a superior education in a public school setting. “Our school system has earned national recognition for excellence in a variety of areas,” explains Dr. David Stiles, director of Organizational Development for the Mountain Brook City Schools. “The quality of our schools remains a key factor in attracting new residents and in maintaining strong property values.”

The School System’s Achievements at a Glance

- Mountain Brook High School, Mountain Brook Junior High School, Crestline Elementary and Brookwood Forest Elementary are recipients of the Blue Ribbon School Award by the U.S. Department of Education Recognition Program.
- The Mountain Brook school system was recently awarded “Gold Medal” status by *Expansion Management* magazine, which rates school districts as a way of providing its readers (executives of companies seeking to expand their businesses) with a basis for comparing the type of work force they are likely to encounter in various communities around the country.
- The College Board’s Advanced Placement Program recently honored Mountain Brook High School for academic excellence and outstanding support and participation in the AP program.
- Mountain Brook SAT scores consistently rank among the top 10 in public schools nationwide.
- Over 400 MBHS students have been named National Merit Finalists, and three Rhodes Scholars have graduated from MBHS.
- *Newsweek* magazine recognized MBHS as one of the nation’s top 100 high schools.
- MBHS has won more State Athletic Championships than any other Alabama public high school.
- Dr. Charles Mason, Mountain Brook superintendent, was recently named Alabama Superintendent of the Year.

The *Aim Higher* campaign will be a community-wide effort.

The *Aim Higher* campaign offers everyone in the community the opportunity to invest in the future of Mountain Brook by investing in the education of its young people. The last time the Foundation had a public funding drive was in 1996, so many of the families who are currently in the school system have not participated in any fund-raising efforts.

“The vision and the generosity of those who helped establish the \$5 million endowment in the early 1990s have made a huge difference for our schools,” says Carmine Jordan, executive director of the Foundation. “We are now calling on the families whose children currently benefit from the endowment to participate in its growth.”

The campaign will kick off in September, at the start of the 2004 – 2005 school year. Each family in the school system will be asked to contribute a minimum of \$1,500 per family over a period of three to five years. (That amounts to as little as \$1.21 per day.) However, those families who wish to contribute more are certainly encouraged to do so.

The overall goal in this *Aim Higher* campaign is \$2 million—and 100% participation among families in the school system. The Foundation’s private campaign has already received \$1.3 million in pledges so far. The combined goal of both campaigns is \$4 million.

Parent captains are forming leadership teams through the school system to assist in the campaign kickoff, and a pledge card will be mailed to every family in September. The Foundation looks forward to everyone’s generous support of this effort to fund programs such as library enhancement, professional development, and technology. Funding for these areas will help ensure the quality of children’s education in every classroom and at every grade level.

“The Foundation’s efforts have been very successful in the past and have funded major initiatives that would not have been possible without the generosity of the community,” says Tom Luckie, co-chairperson for the *Aim Higher* campaign. “With everyone’s participation, we look forward to *Aim Higher* being our most successful effort ever.”



Foundation President Doug Eddleman gives a recent donation to Mountain Brook Superintendent Dr. Charles Mason.

Question & Answer

Q: Why is the Foundation important to the Mountain Brook City School System?

A: Currently, our school system is considered among the best in the nation. Maintaining that status is not always easy during times of uncertain funding. The Foundation serves to provide an ongoing and dependable funding source for those critical “extras” (i.e., technology, teacher training and development, and library enhancement), which can help make the difference between a good school system and a great one. However the State resolves its funding challenges, the Foundation will continue to provide funding for these critical extras—to ensure our school system is able to move forward.

Q: How will the funding always be there?

A: The \$5 million previously contributed to the Foundation is in an endowment with several different managers whose objective is to preserve the principal. Only the income generated is distributed in grants to the school system. Therefore, the endowment will always be there to provide funds for the school system.

Q: Will the Foundation be independent of the school system?

A: Yes, the Board is composed of community-wide volunteers—functioning independently of the school system, but always with its needs in mind.

Q: Is my donation tax deductible?

A: The Foundation is a 501c3 tax-exempt organization. Contributions should qualify for charitable income tax deduction. Donors should contact their own tax advisor regarding individual situations.

Q: What process will the school system use to ask you for money?

A: The system assesses needs and determines priorities for funding on an annual basis. These needs are driven by system and local school improvement goals. The school system then submits requests to the Foundation Board of Directors.

Q: With possibly the highest tax base in Alabama, why do we need a Foundation?

A: Although our taxes are high for Alabama, they are not high compared to other states, even in the Southeast. In many areas where taxes are high, parents must still bear the burden of private school tuition (anywhere from \$5,000 to \$14,000 a year per child). Mountain Brook does not have a large commercial tax base with which to support our schools. There is always a struggle to get adequate funding from the State, yet Alabama regularly imposes unfunded mandates. It became apparent that we needed to create an alternative means of funding certain critical extras, and the Foundation was established to raise additional funding through private sources.

Q: Will the money from the Foundation go to build and repair buildings?

A: No.

Q: How does Foundation fund-raising affect local school fund-raising?

A: Local school fund-raising efforts will always be important, and the Foundation does not affect those efforts.

Q: What has the Foundation done for our schools to date?

A: The Foundation has approved grants of over 2 million dollars to the school system since it began making distributions in 1995.

Q: Why do we need your support?

A: The Aim Higher campaign will benefit every student and teacher in our school system. A pledge of at least \$1,500, to be paid over a three- to five-year period, will ensure that the Foundation reaches its overall goal to provide a total endowment of \$9 million, which will make a critical difference in keeping our schools among the best in the country.



When students have access to technology in the classroom, they learn more effectively. That is why technology has been a key priority for Foundation funding.

Where the Foundation money has gone so far:

The Mountain Brook City Schools Foundation funds the “extras” that would not have been possible through school system funding.

Technology:

600+ Computer Workstations
34 Laptop Computers
3 Portable AlphaSmart Labs (Wireless Word Processors)
1 Portable Dreamwriter Lab (Wireless Word Processors)
Projection Devices for all schools
Video Broadcasting Equipment
Science Lab Equipment
Wireless Connectivity Pilot Program at MBHS
Data Projectors for Mountain Brook Jr. High

Staff Development:

50,427 Hours of teacher training
7 Staff Development Specialists
- 3 years at Crestline, beginning in 2001
- 2 years at Brookwood Forest, beginning in 2002
- 1 year at Cherokee Bend Elementary, beginning in 2003
- Mountain Brook Junior High, beginning in fall 2004

NOTE: The State of Alabama has funded a Staff Development Specialist at Mountain Brook Elementary for four years. The federal government has funded a Staff Development Specialist at the high school for two years.

Library Enhancement:

4,500 Library Books

aim higher leadership team

Tom Luckie, Peggy Rafield, *Co-chairs*; Carmine Jordan, Executive Director of the Foundation; Dr. David Stiles, *director of Organizational Development for the Mountain Brook City Schools*; Angela Moorer, Lisa Rutherford, Cindy Williams (*Brookwood Forest Elementary*); Katherine Galloway, Martha Grizzle, Laurie Hereford (*Cherokee Bend Elementary*); Barbara Cooney, Laura Crumbaugh, Kathleen Doss (*Crestline Elementary*); Val Holman, Meme Hobbs, D.A. Tynes (*Mountain Brook Elementary*); Debbie Barstein, Julia Holt, Paige Lee (*Mountain Brook Jr. High*); Anne Marie Brown, Pam Pritchard, Kim Rogers (*Mountain Brook High School*)

the foundation board of directors

Board members are elected each year and represent citizens from throughout the community. This year's board includes: Billy Bates, Rich Bielen, David Brown, Chad Crowther, Johnette Davis, Elizabeth McDonald Dunn, Doug Eddleman, Glenn E. Estess, Jr., Bill Goodrich, Jim Gorrie, Pam Grayson, Price Hightower, Jeana Hosch, Tom Jernigan, Sam Johnson, George Jones, Gerard Kassouf, Karole Lloyd, Bill Lucas, Tom Luckie, Anne McCrory, Bill McDougald, Mac Moorer, Billy Pritchard, Amy Saag, Lloyd Shelton, Steve Still, Linda Stone, Bill Terry, D. A. Tynes, Lissa Tyson, Bill Welden.