

# Wellbeing, Trauma-Informed Practices, Centers for Healing Engagement, and Education Innovations

## MINDPEACE Presentation 8-10-2021

Dr. Art McCoy

STL.works Leader & Champion, Saint Louis University  
Distinguished Fellow, Superintendent of School/CEO

[www.linkedin.com/in/artmccoy](https://www.linkedin.com/in/artmccoy) [www.ArtMccoy.com](http://www.ArtMccoy.com) [www.severingthegap.com](http://www.severingthegap.com) websites



**STUDENTS FIRST**

**EMPOWERING, ENGAGING, ENLIGHTENING, AND EXCELLENCE**

# What is your position?



“

First, you need to enlighten people to the various voices in their community. We need to honor voices and value what people bring to the table based on their background.

—Dr. Art McCoy

”

Teacher

Professor

Principal

Curriculum Coordinator

Assistant Principal

District Administrator

State Administrator (Dept. of Education)

K12 Director

Non-profit Director or Leader

Industry Professional or Corporate Leader

University Administrator

Other

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# Where are you on the Mood Elevator right now?



Grateful  
Wise  
Compassionate  
Creative  
Optimistic  
Appreciative  
Understanding  
Hungry (for more)  
Curious  
Frustrated  
Irritated  
Anxious  
Defensive  
Judgemental  
Angry  
Depressed

**Something I am most interested in hearing about is:**

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# What's your "Why" (in 1 word)?

SUCCESS FOLLOWS WHEN  
YOU DEFINE WHAT  
INSPIRES **YOU**  
MOTIVATES YOU  
AND FIRES YOU UP!

.....  
WHAT'S YOUR WHY?

©2013 [ ] - d-5e783344e8-000  
#FiresYouUp! #SuccessFlow

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# Hard Times

Grandmomma just died

There is no other family nearby

Feeling like Godzilla's bride

Because every two hours, one of us expires from acts of violence All I do is hide Empty inside

There's no understanding these hard times

It doesn't even help to get high

Go to school? Can't. Go to church? Why. Don't deny that even if I could, it wouldn't help.

There's too much pain and too much pride.

Call it fate, but hate helped me just get by

But to my surprise

A new feeling has visited my mind

When alone late at night it seems justified

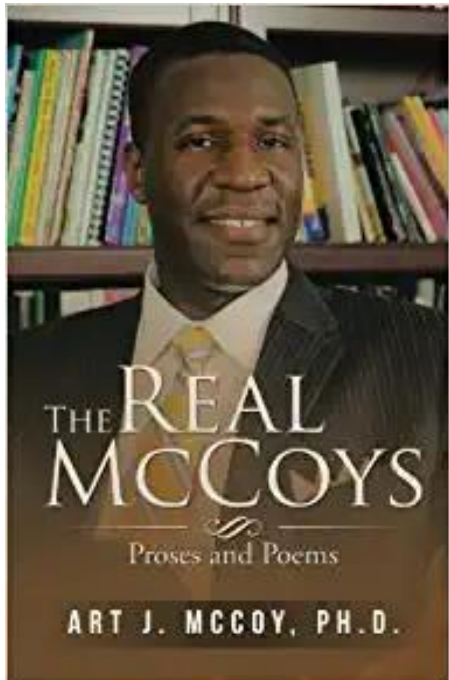
It is a suffocating feeling inside

It says, "I am your savior."

God? No!

Suicide? Yes!

Suicide.



From The Real McCoys: Proses and  
Poems by Art J McCoy, Ph.D.



# ***Who Can I Turn To***

I am this person lost in the world,

And don't know where to turn.

I am a girl wanting to achieve in anything I do.

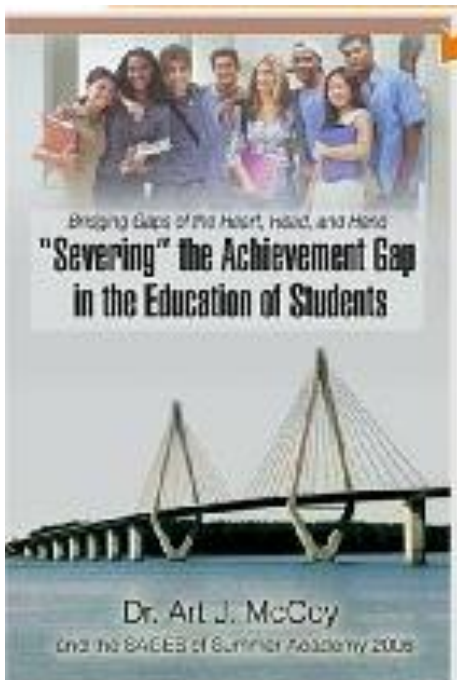
I want to be treated like I exist. I want to be seen for more than the outer me. I want to be seen for the person placed inside of me. I feel like I'm alone in the World. I feel like there is no one out there in the world to run to when I feel like it's the end of me.

Sometimes I want to run away to a place where no one can hurt me. Sometimes I feel like

Life for me will never go right. As much as I try it will never go right.

What should I do if the problems I face won't come up from the deep, dark place inside me? Who should I turn to if I can't turn to the person that gave life to me?

Then who can I turn to?



*From Bridging Gaps of the Heart, Head, and Hand authored by Dr. Art McCoy*

# A Decree For Victory

I can feel the change rising within me  
Wanting to bring hope to our desperate society  
Longing to lift up hearts filled with anxiety  
But quietly questioning how and why me.

I can hear the silent agony of our steadfast generation  
The endless questioning and doubt amid their inner altercation  
Silent screams for help wondering how long they'll be patient  
And fearing they'll never be heard in our ignorant nation.

I can see the best of nature slowly wilting away  
As we selfishly poison it throughout night and day  
Faithfully holding out as its color begins to gray  
Hoping that we'll realize our careless actions someday.

(Continued)

Yet I can smell the raindrop dew  
Pointing toward a day anew  
Never forgetting what our hearts went through  
But beckoning the change to come from me and you.

I can taste the near victory  
Transforming tears to vitality  
So I'll end this plea with one last decree  
If not them, then how about WE.

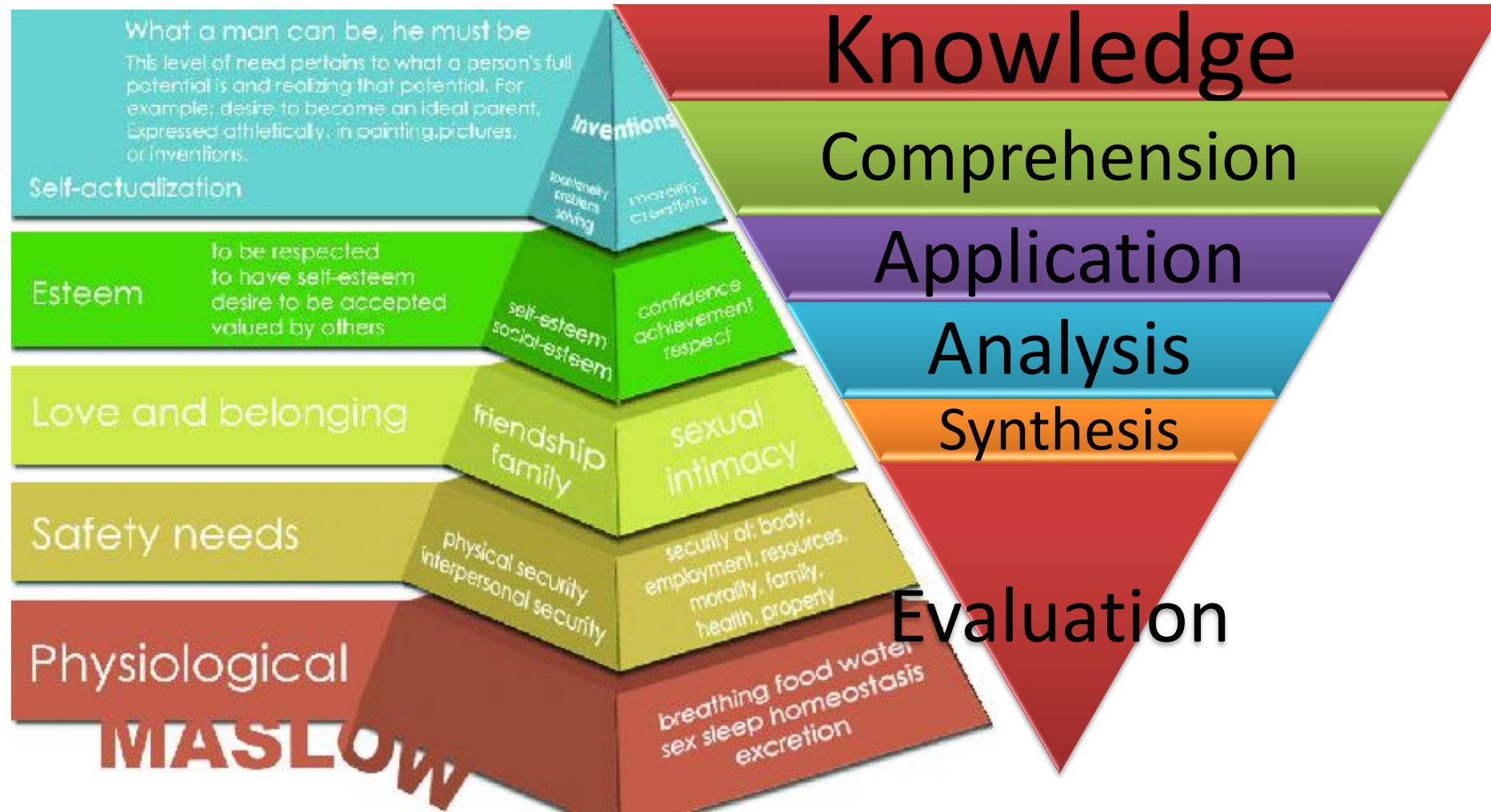
- June 2020 (written by a team student in the wake of George Floyd)



# Pandemic Shift: Maslow-Inverted Bloom Taxonomy

**Successful Schooling Shift until at least 2022-23 school year:**

Ask why? Is it essential? Can it be done faster with CBL (Competency Based Learning), Hybrids, or Virtually? What are the mental health and health needs using a wellness framework? Is it equitable? Is it service-learning, active citizenry, or [learning-and-earning](#) programs?





# 5 Bs for Best Mental Health Programs

1. Bonding (Every Children Deserves a Champion),
2. Belonging,
3. Boundaries,
4. Believe System (asset-based),
5. Behavioral Modification (Excellence is a habit of the Head,  
Heart, Hand)

For Enlightenment, Empowerment, Engagement





# **JENNINGS' WARRIORS WELL**

*It is our aim for all Jennings Students to be*



**Well-adjusted, Well-connected, Well-dressed, Well-educated,  
Well-engaged, Well-equipped, Well-fed, Well-informed, Well-known,  
Well-led, Well-loved, Well-mannered, Well-paid, Well-read,  
Well-respected, Well-rounded, Well-served, Well-in-Spirit,  
Well-spoken, Well-supported, Well-traveled, Well-understood,  
Workers, Wunderkinds, Wellness**



# From “I”Inness to “WE”Inness

**Enlightenment and Empowerment** comes from moving from me, myself and “I” to “WE”.

Community Approach to Heal = Centers for Healing Engagement

F.I.T. = Further Insight to the Teams and Further Insight to the Tension(s)









Two Food Hubs: Seen and Supported  
with Resources, Resilience, Respect,  
Real Relationships







Seen

Supported with Food and Love  
J-Town Market

---

NOW,  
YOU ARE SUFFICIENT

AND WE ARE SUFFICIENT

---

# Jennings High School celebrating 100 percent graduation, career placement rate

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ST. LOUIS

NEWS

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AM SHOW

SPORTS

TRAFFIC

CONTESTS

STLMOMS

JENNINGS, MO – The Jennings School District is celebrating a unique achievement: a 100 percent graduation rate.

"When you have such an awesome culture and climate you're able to produce amazing things and that's how we're able to be here to celebrate a 100 percent graduation rate and 100 percent career- placement rate" said Jennings Superintendent Dr. Art McCoy.

Jennings High Principal, Dr. Rhonda Key says all 160 Jennings High School students have graduated and are headed to college, the military, a technical/trade program or already employed.

"The people, the process, and the procedure has produced a product we can be proud of and that's when each student that enters this building as a ninth grade, we already looking at them as future employees outside of these walls" said Dr. Key.

Kevon Larkin is one of those students. He also received a \$50,000 scholarship to attend college and will major in engineering and architecture at UMSL.

"I couldn't do math" said Larkin. "I could do it but it was hard for me. So, I'm like I'm not going to college, I know they're going to throw a math class my way I wasn't going to take, but it was like if they could do it I could do it" he said.

Dr. Key says that can-do attitude is fostered at Jennings High when students walk in as freshmen. During their high school years, students become required to fill out at least two college application, apply for federal student aid and take the ACT.

"We are making a difference in that every child no matter what your zip code, should achieve" said Dr. Key.





TOPICAL

## Sultan: Finding small projects that deliver big results

Dec 13, 2019

Subscribe now! \$3 for 3 months



The Jennings School District offers comfort spaces for teachers and students to take a break when they need it.

Courtesy of Jennings School District

The country may be divided on many things, but we can all agree on this: An idea that doesn't cost much and helps a lot of people is a great one.

As an antidote to the acrimony in our politics and social culture, I want to call out a few people who figured out creative ways to make a positive difference with relatively little money. When considering the return on investment on a societal level, it's hard to beat programs that help children from low-income homes perform better in school.

Art McCoy, superintendent of the Jennings School District, has started many services to help students who face challenges living in high-poverty areas. It's usually the human services schools need — hiring more teachers, specialists and therapists — that cost the most money. But the small stuff matters, too. Two years ago, the Jennings district created comfort spaces for students in each school, from elementary to high school. Each one required a cheap couch, a couple of bean-bag chairs and some squeeze toys that help relieve stress. The spaces gave students a place where they could take a minute to relax, calm down or talk to someone about whatever might be bothering them.

This year, the schools created a similar space just for teachers and staff. McCoy says the spaces are frequently used and appreciated. It helps improve the culture in the school and gives people a place to feel supported, he said.

Students who deal with difficult circumstances at home face additional stressors at school. And it can be tough on the teachers and staff who want to help them. Having spaces that feel less institutional in schools is a way to acknowledge that life can feel overwhelming at times, and it's OK to take a break.



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## Lezley McSpadden plants new seeds in Jennings

By Sophie Hurwitz For The St. Louis American Jul 19, 2017 0



Lezley McSpadden and her son Andre, 12, work in a garden in the Jennings School District that was planted and is being maintained by the Brown We Love Our Sons and Daughters Foundation and the St. Louis County Police Foundation/

### Latest News



PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

MaryAnn Taylor Crate joins United Way of Greater St. Louis



HEMGROWN BLACK MALES

Learning to beat the cheat



LOCAL NEWS

Chappelle-Nadal calls for Congress to require psych screens of presidential candidates, files Missouri Senate resolution in response to Trump denying deaths in Puerto Rico



HEALTH NEWS

Operation Food Search served over 92,000 free summer meals





## ELEMENTARY HEALTH CLINIC



## 2017 Salute to Excellence in Health Care

# Congratulations!

The SPOT has been selected to receive the 2017 Health Advocacy Organization of the Year Award, in recognition of its achievements and commitment to improving access to health care in the St. Louis community.









# Jennings students and police officers shoot hoops together to build trust, understanding

By Kristen Taketa • St. Louis Post-Dispatch Aug 7, 2016 (1)

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Officer Brandon McCrory, with the St. Louis County Jennings Department, watches Trevion Donelson, 11, (legs), and Kyrii Franklin, 8, in a two-on-two basketball game on Monday, August 1, 2016. The Jennings School District is supporting activities like summer basketball and boxing to improve relationships between its students and police. Photo by Christian Gooden, [cgooden@post-dispatch.com](mailto:cgooden@post-dispatch.com)

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## RECOMMENDED



LAW AND ORDER

Two suspected shoplifters at West County Center charged with assault in attempt to flee police



LAW AND ORDER

Hazelwood Central senior suffers graze wound in shooting near school grounds

RECENT OBITUARIES View





## HOME FOR STUDENTS IN TRANSITION














Hope House II Video Shows  
Equity in Action and students  
living a house that students  
rehabbed.



# Wellbeing Structures, Strategies, and Skills

**1**

## **Create safety**

If the child is overwhelmed, perhaps guide them to a quiet corner or allow them to decompress by visiting the restroom. If you are in a classroom, maybe you have a peace corner that you've outfitted with blankets or a screen so that it feels like a safe place.

**2**

## **Regulate the nervous system**

Stress brings a predictable pattern of physiological responses and anyone who has suffered toxic stress or trauma is going to be quickly stressed into hyperarousal (explosive, jittery, irritable) or hypoarousal (depressed, withdrawn, zombie-like). No matter how ingenious our regulation strategies, how artsy-crafty we get with tools, the child has to find what works for them.

**3**

## **Build a connected relationship**

This is the number one way to regulate the nervous system. When we are around people we care about, our bodies produce oxytocin, which is the hormone responsible for calming our nervous system after stress. If we stay connected, then eventually the calm discussion of each person's feelings and needs can take place.

**4**

## **Support development of coherent narrative**

Creating predictability through structure, routines and the presence of reliable adults helps reduce the chaos a child may feel and allows them to start creating the kind of logical sequential connections that not only help them understand their own narrative, but are also the fundamental requirement of many types of learning.

**5**

## **Practice 'power-with' strategies**

One of the hallmarks of trauma is a loss of power and control. When someone is wielding power over you with no regard to your thoughts or feelings, the toxic shame of the original trauma may come flooding back. As adults, we should use our power well. If we model a 'power-with' relationship with children it's our best chance of creating adults who will treat others with dignity and respect.

**6**

## **Build social emotional and resiliency skills**

Trauma robs us of time spent developing social and emotional skills. The brain is too occupied with survival to devote much of its energy to learning how to build relationships and it's a good chance we didn't see those skills modeled for us. Learning to care for one another is the most important job we have growing up.

**7**

## **Foster post-traumatic growth**

We know that there are qualities and skills that allow people to overcome the most devastating trauma and not just survive but find new purpose and meaning in their lives. Problem solving, planning, maintaining focus despite discomfort, self-control and seeking support are all known to lead to post-traumatic growth and are skills we can foster in children.



## HOW TO SURVIVE TRAUMA REMINDERS

### BE OK NOT BEING OK

"I'm fine!" Maybe you don't notice the stress is getting to you but pay attention to the clues. Is your hair falling out, do you feel tired all the time, suffer digestive problems, get irritable, feel a sudden lack of interest in the things that used to give you joy or motivation? If so, talk to yourself as you would to your best friend, with compassion and lack of judgement.

### ROAD TEST YOURSELF

Check in with your body to feel where it is tight, where you can release. Track your thoughts as if they were clouds in the sky – let them drift in and let them drift out. Whenever you experience a whoosh of strong emotion tell yourself, "It's just a feeling, it's just a feeling." Learning how to notice (or "mindfulness") is a practice.

### SELF SOOTHE

Our parents and caregivers are supposed to teach us how to self-soothe – babies are not born with that capacity. Some of us got lucky: We were wrapped in a warm blanket, we were rocked, we were stroked, someone tapped gently on our back, or we were sung to. These are still good strategies for calming the nervous system. Think about what has helped you in the past. You are the expert at regulating your own nervous system.

### GET ACTIVE

Powerlessness reminds us of the lack of power and control experienced during the traumatic event. It is a huge trigger for trauma survivors. It's time for us to get active, take to the streets, petition our lawmakers, educate our sons, and challenge social norms. It is a lie that we are powerless. We are mighty and we will prevail.

### CELEBRATE RESILIENCE

It's good to recognize and celebrate our adaptations to toxic stress and trauma that have kept us alive. We should also recognize that these adaptations have the potential to derail us and no longer be life-serving once the danger is passed. For example, a biting wit can deflect verbal abuse but also destroy current supportive relationships.

### SEEK COMMUNITY

That can be harder than it sounds – particularly if life has taught you that other human beings may not trustworthy – but human beings are wired for cooperation and connection; it is how we've survived as a species. Safe, stable, nurturing relationships are the key – and they don't have to be with a romantic partner or family member who has lost the right to your trust.



**EXPRESS SCRIPTS AND JENNINGS PARTNERSHIP**





## From Jennings to Harvard: Malik Sediqzad will study architecture at Ivy League school

By Ashley Jones May 25, 2020



Malik Sediqzad is the first Harvard bound graduate from Jennings School District in 20 years. He will study architecture, which he said combines his love of math with his passion to draw.

"I feel like architecture is an art form, but it's functional," Sediqzad said. "It's not just something that you can look at, it's something you can use too."

### Latest News



LOCAL NEWS  
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1 Day Until Salute



OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of Elizabeth "LIZ" Patricia Robinson



OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of Barbara Seals



OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of Gabrielle Johnson



OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of Carl Evans



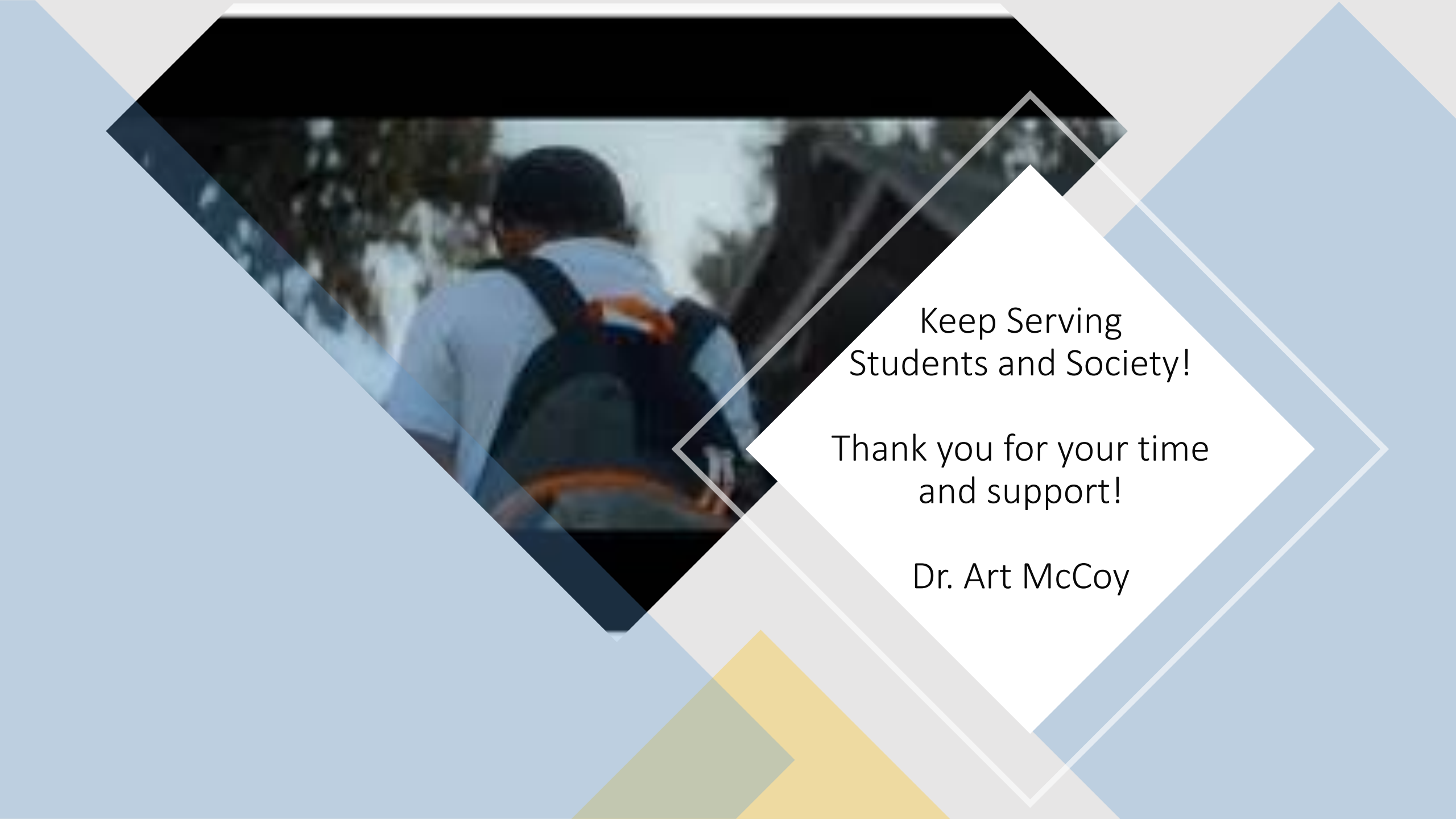
SPORTS

LeBron James, Lewis Hamilton reach milestones



SPORTS EYE

Dak's injury not as disastrous as it looked – physically or financially

The image features a background photograph of a person from behind, wearing a white shirt and a dark backpack, walking on a path. This photo is partially obscured by a large, white, diamond-shaped graphic element that contains text. The entire composition is set against a background of overlapping geometric shapes in shades of blue, grey, and yellow.

Keep Serving  
Students and Society!

Thank you for your time  
and support!

Dr. Art McCoy

# List of Embedded Videos (Empowering Inspiration)

1. Mastercard elementary Kid Inclusion [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-xProyWwK8&ab\\_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-xProyWwK8&ab_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD)
2. Student Led Protest by Social Justice Club in Jennings July 2020  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mh2G8OLhbPI&ab\\_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mh2G8OLhbPI&ab_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD)
3. Jennings Schools Surprised by 150 Express Scripts Executives with \$25K  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJnLVNfQZe0&ab\\_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJnLVNfQZe0&ab_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD)
4. KSDK 5 The Lou Rene Knott Features Art McCoy 5/20  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbW5Omo0F00&ab\\_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbW5Omo0F00&ab_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD)
5. JETS Food Market Give Away (041720)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUOr04Tvlf8&ab\\_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUOr04Tvlf8&ab_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD)
6. Students breaking down stereotypes with technology  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syFIQb\\_ilkk&ab\\_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syFIQb_ilkk&ab_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD)
7. Jennings students learning their own history (August 21, 2018)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zw\\_WkhsbMPo&ab\\_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zw_WkhsbMPo&ab_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD)
8. Jennings School District Creates Youth Homes: Hope House II  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pP7zfk\\_zwc&ab\\_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pP7zfk_zwc&ab_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD)
9. On a Mission: Attendance is up, two food markets open, and Walgreens gives Jennings teachers \$25000  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kV\\_NsHRe3tY&ab\\_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kV_NsHRe3tY&ab_channel=ArtMcCoyPhD)
10. Serving Students and Society: A Touching Video <https://youtu.be/8l-aywl3dbbs>
11. "Spotlight on America" National Story Features Jennings and SYSC for Solutions to Gun Violence <https://youtu.be/UQLjPDQkC-c>