

FCPS Report Card Shows Promise

Frederick County public school students outperformed their counterparts statewide on the Maryland School Assessments (MSAs), given for the first time last spring to all third, fifth, eighth and tenth graders. In addition, our elementary and middle school attendance rates and high school graduation rates exceeded the ultimate targets established for the year 2014.

To comply with No Child Left Behind, Maryland has changed its accountability system from the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) to the MSAs. The reading, math and geometry tests include short-answer and multiple-choice questions. MSA reports results by eight subgroups of students, including racial/ethnic groups, students with limited English proficiency, special education services, and poverty. Although Maryland and MSPAP previously reported subgroup performance, school accountability focused exclusively on overall performance. Now, schools and districts must show that each student subgroup meets the annual statewide targets, and all subgroups must meet the proficiency standards by 2014.

"We are pleased to see that all ethnic groups in Frederick County exceeded the first-year statewide targets," said **Steve Hess**, FCPS director of curriculum and evaluation. "We recognized from the outset that having our special education children and the growing number of non-native English speakers

SAT SCORES SURPASS STATE AND NATION

FCPS seniors' mean verbal, math and combined SAT scores exceed Maryland and U.S. averages, consistent with trends for previous years. For Frederick County, the average combined mean score is 1056, while Maryland and the nation average 1024 and 1026, respectively. More of our students took the 2003 test—139 more than last year, for a total of 59% of our seniors.

meet these new targets would be a challenge, particularly in reading. As addressed in the FCPS Master Plan, we are focusing on research-proven programs and strategies that accelerate the performance of children in poverty and other historically underperforming groups of students."

For the first time, elementary and middle school teachers are receiving individual students' results, enabling them to adjust instruction on a student-by-student basis. In

October, parents will also receive reports that summarize their children's performance.

Superintendent **Jack Dale** encourages teachers and parents to view test results in light of a student's overall academic performance in school. Classwork, homework, other test scores and the student's general attitude about learning are all significant.

"Most importantly," Dr. Dale says, "set high expectations for children, not just at test time but every day. Emphasize that A's, B's and C's are acceptable grades but D's and F's are not. Help students realize that academic achievement is ultimately their responsibility. Only by reading, studying, working hard and giving their best will they succeed in school and after they graduate."

In February and March 2004, all Maryland students in grades 3 through 8 and 10 will take the MSAs. The next round of tests will begin to reveal more useful trend information and show us where to focus resources for meeting adequate yearly progress targets set by the state. ★

READER SURVEY!

Please complete and return the attached survey.

On the back is a list of FCPS Summer Institute prize sponsors & winners.

Cathy Alspaugh, Steve Nibbs and Jeanie Parr (left to right) enjoy helping students learn, building self-esteem and modeling a good work ethic. Cathy teaches 1st graders in the New Market Elementary gifted and talented magnet program. Steve is athletic director and service-learning coordinator at TJ High. Jeanie teaches in the Special Education and Treatment (SET) program at Lewistown Elementary.

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Visit "Giving the Best to Education" on-line at www.fcps.org for more profiles of outstanding employees.

BOARD BRIEFS

■ **School Construction** In September, we joined local and state elected officials for the Tuscarora ES and Crestwood MS groundbreaking ceremonies. While the BOE and the Commissioners may disagree about some things, the two bodies are working well together to try to build the classroom seats we need. In the same month, the BOE approved an Educational Facilities Master Plan that we will now submit to the state. The only thing holding us back from having the seats we need and renovating the schools that need work is the money. But Commissioner Thompson summed it up very well at the Tuscarora ES ground breaking when he said we are entering a new era where the county will be asked to bear more of the construction cost burden. The BOE will continue to work with the state and county to move projects forward, and we are actively looking at other funding and construction options.

■ **4-Tier Bus System** As the BOE gets started with the operating budget for next year, we may face new challenges to fund the basic operating needs. As part of this process, the BOE is looking at different options for student transportation, including a proposal to split elementary school start times so that we have a total of 4 start times across the school system. The BOE thanks all staff members who submitted comments on these proposals. Hearing staff's suggestions and experience is very helpful when the BOE needs to make such important decisions.

■ **Decision-Making** Regardless of how anyone feels about the merits of reinstating the D grade, many people have expressed concern that the BOE disregarded established process in doing so — including adequate review of data, reflection, and consideration of comments from the staff and community. The BOE is hoping to learn from this experience to utilize better decision-making techniques in the future.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

- Ronald W. Peppe II, President
- Jean A. Smith, Vice President
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- Michael E. Schaden
- Michael Lapsa, Student Representative

The Board holds public meetings twice monthly, usually at 115 East Church Street. They are televised on Cable Channel 18. For meeting or other information, call 301/696-6850. Or e-mail judith.ricketts@fcps.org.

Exploring a 4-Tier Bus System

At their October 8 public meeting, Board of Education members voted to forward four options to a bus transportation consultant for further analysis as they consider a 4-tier bus transportation system for next year. The Board narrowed the six options previously discussed to three and agreed to also consider staying with the current 3-tier model. The tiers and approximate school start times are:

OPTION	TIER 1 – 7:30 a.m.	TIER 2 – 8:00 a.m.	TIER 3 – 8:30 a.m.	TIER 4 – 9:00 a.m.
A	HS	MS	1/2 ES	1/2 ES
B	MS	1/2 ES	1/2 ES	HS
D*	MS	HS	1/2 ES	1/2 ES
Stay with Current Model	HS – 7:30 a.m.	MS – 8 a.m. (most)		ES – 9 a.m. (most)

*The BOE voted not to pursue options C, E and F.

The consultant's cost analysis will be presented at the November 24 Board meeting. The Board implemented a 3-tier bus transportation model at the start of this school year, allowing them to allocate \$650,000 from Transportation to other priorities. Preliminary analysis shows the 4-tier model could pare costs even more.

To comment, e-mail boe@fcps.org or write to the Board at 115 E. Church Street, Frederick, MD 21701. ★

ASK THE SUPERINTENDENT



Please send your questions for **Dr. Jack Dale** to marita.loose@fcps.org. Inside FCPS will publish them based on relevance to a wide FCPS audience.

Q: Many employees recently participated in focus groups for the FCPS employee reclassification study. What is the purpose?

A: The study addresses one of our five systemwide goals that FCPS will recruit and retain employees that are highly qualified, motivated and effective. The FCPS/Frederick Association of School Support Employees (FASSE) Compensation/Classification Study is under way to assemble accurate job descriptions for all support positions and employees on the administrative, managerial and technical (AMT) pay scale. FCPS will learn how our salaries compete in area job markets, with the goal of enabling FCPS to establish salary scales that are fair and highly competitive.

Q: How many staff members participated, and who may be affected by the study's results?

A: Thirty percent of our support/AMT work force—over 557 employees—took part in the focus group sessions this fall with Education Management Solutions, a consulting company that has completed similar studies with over 100 school systems in 23 states. The study will evaluate all 155 support and AMT job classifications and affect all 1,838 staff positions.

Q: What does all this mean to employees?

A: Support and AMT employees will have updated and accurate job descriptions. While we do not anticipate decreases in salaries, if increases are recommended to recruit and retain employees for particular jobs, increases will depend on funding available in future operating budgets. We are committed to implementing the recommendations, but how quickly we can is dependent upon funding.

Q: What are the next steps?

A: Human Resources is distributing draft job descriptions for validation by employees and supervisory staff. Next come evaluation of the drafts to formulate final position descriptions, a local area market salary survey and analysis, and interim and final reports. All phases are to be completed by November 30, 2003. At that point, the Board and contract negotiating teams will develop a plan to implement the recommendations, within budget constraints.

☆☆☆ ACCOLADES ☆☆☆

State's Best — Twin Ridge Elementary teacher **Beverly Lloyd** is not only a local Wal-Mart/Phi Delta Kappa International Teacher of the Year but came in top in the state as the award's Maryland Teacher of the Year. She earned \$5,000 for her school, in addition to \$1,000 from the local award. The State Department of Education recognized **Frederick High's** Connections program with a Maryland Excellence in Minority Achievement Award.



Success — The latest Maryland Adolescent Survey shows that the FCPS Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, facilitated by **Linda Gouker** and implemented by **K-12 staff who teach the substance abuse prevention curriculum**, is working. The state surveyed 2,031 FCPS students from 8 high and 11 middle schools and reported reduced numbers of students using illegal substances across all grade levels in Frederick County.



Charity — Over the last 3 years, FCPS employees have increased giving each year and donated more than \$50,000 to Community Health Charities and its member agencies. **FCPS** earned the Community Health Charities Annual Achievement Award for superior commitment to health in the local community. In 2002, staff donated \$20,392—the highest raised in Western Maryland. In the Combined Charity Campaign, of which Community Health Charities is a recipient, FCPS raised \$72,380. Materials for this year's campaign are coming your way this month. If each FCPS employee pledged \$1 per week by the November 14 deadline, our combined contribution would provide nearly \$250,000 to those in need.



Partnership — Thanks to an outstanding partnership with Costco, **South Frederick Elementary** students receive tutoring in reading and, for the 2nd year in a row, got 450 new backpacks to start the school year.



Newsworthy — First **Linganore High** gave an outstanding welcome to Governor Robert Ehrlich when he visited last month. Then Renzulli teacher **Melanie Laffer's** journalism students got to interview the Governor at The Great Frederick Fair. Left to right are **New Market Middle** 7th graders [redacted] and [redacted], Governor Ehrlich and Ms. Laffer.



"The Governor was so impressed he told the students their open-ended questions were better than those of reporters from major newspapers," Ms. Laffer said.



Published — *Promising Partnership Practices*, collected by the Johns Hopkins University National Network of Partnership Schools, featured articles about teaching math and reading by **Thurmont Middle** teachers **Joyce Bruchey** and **Linda Jernigan**. The latest *Frederick Family Magazine Resource Guide* features great information from Special Education and Psychological Services Director **Sharon West** in an article about helping children make the most of their abilities.

Better Schools

FCPS recently held groundbreaking ceremonies at **Crestwood Middle** and **Tuscarora Elementary**, to open August 2004, and celebrated the completed modernization of **Gov. Thomas Johnson High**. To learn more about future construction plans, call 301-644-5025 for a copy of the BOE-approved Educational Facilities Master Plan. ★



Principal **Kathy Hartsock** breaks ground with future **Crestwood Middle** students Mohammed Mohiuddin and Shaniece Cole. Joining in, left to right, are Superintendent **Jack Dale** and Director of Middle Schools **Bruce Brown**.



Principal **Steve Lockard** celebrates construction of **Tuscarora Elementary** with the school's future students (left to right) Matthew Fox, Holly Kipe and Kelly McCarthy.



Facilities Inspector **Ted Stephenson** (left) and TV Manager **Tim Dean** wrangle a 'dozer for Tuscarora's September 30 groundbreaking ceremony.

Negotiations to Begin

Serving on this year's team for negotiations with the Frederick County Teachers Association (FCTA) are chief negotiator **Jamie Cannon**, Fiscal Services Executive Director **Hal Keller**, Associate Superintendents **Dan Cunningham** and **Michele Krantz**, Human Resources Executive Director **Paula Lawton** and Elementary Director **Steve Martin**.

The Frederick Association of School Support Employees (FASSE) team consists of chief negotiator **Jamie Cannon**, **Hal Keller**, Facilities Manager **Joe Dattoli**, Food Service Officer **Cheri Dattoli**, Transportation Manager **Richard Wandres, Jr.**, Yellow Springs Principal **Gerald DeGrange**, Human Resources Officer **Robert Hagans** and Special Education Director **Sharon West**.

During the first week of September, employees received copies of the 2003-04 negotiated agreement. If you did not get one, **Human Resources** has extra copies, 301-644-5088 or 5097. ★

NEWS TO USE

Security All FCPS employees must display a photo ID badge while on FCPS property. This includes substitute teachers, who are issued special badges. Not only do badges enhance security for staff and students, as all schools are converted to keyless entry, they will provide building access. Questions? Contact **Debbie Huffman**, 301-644-5227.

Health Coverage Claim forms are on-line. Print a FlexAmerica form at www.flexamerica.com or a Delta Dental form at www.deltadentalpa.org. Or call **Brenda Hedges**, 301-644-5058.

Recognizing Others Celebrate community service by nominating a student in grade 5-12 for a Prudential Spirit of Community award. Applications, due October 31, are available in middle and high schools and on-line at www.prudential.com.

New Date The October 14 TJ feeder area Conversation with the Superintendent, published in the *Calendar Handbook*, is rescheduled for October 29 at 7 p.m. in the **TJ Middle** media center.

1st in Maryland Check out BOE voting records at www.fcps.org/boe/vote/home.cfm. FCPS is the first in Maryland to offer instant voting results entered via wireless technology at BOE meetings. At BoardDocs.com you can access BOE agendas and related documents. Also visit www.fcps.org for new info in the curriculum section about service learning and improved access to policies and regulations.

Schoolyard Habitat Fourth grade teacher **Jason Offutt** and the Glade Rangers Environmental Action Team (GREAT) [see photo] recently completed the 2-year construction of Frederick County's first National Wildlife Federation Schoolyard Habitat. **Glade Elementary** uses the habitat to enhance education with hands-on discovery and lessons about creating and protecting a wildlife habitat. **Oakdale Elementary** is working to host Frederick's second Schoolyard Habitat. To learn more, visit the Glade Rangers link at www.offutt4.homestead.com.



FCPS FACTOID

How much did FCPS grow this year?

As of September 30, 2003, FCPS enrolled 383 more students this year than last, bringing total enrollment to 39,003. This is well below the average increase of 793 recorded for the last 5 years. Contributing factors: a drop in new housing starts, slower economic growth and an earlier date by which children must turn 5 to attend kindergarten.



Tune to channel 18 for FCPS news:

School Talk – Tuesdays 7:30 PM
Saturdays 2:30 PM

Newsbreak – 10:30 AM
12:30, 5:30 & 9:30 PM

Inside Look – 2 & 7 PM

PTA Perspective – 10 AM & 8 PM

BOE Meetings – Wednesdays: 6 PM (live)
Calendar Handbook lists meeting dates
Re-broadcast the following evening

Bulletin Board – Menus, closing info, etc.
To submit news, fax: 301-696-6958 or
e-mail dian.nelson@fcps.org.

Classic Arts – Midnight to 5 AM

See our program guide at fcps.org
Schedules are subject to change

Inside FCPS is produced by the
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Your news, ideas and suggestions are welcome.
Please fax 301-696-6958. Call 301-696-6900.
E-mail dian.nelson@fcps.org. Or courier to the
Communications Office, 115 E. Church Street.



Frederick County Public Schools

Working Together to Educate Each Child and Promote Success

The Frederick County Public Schools does not discriminate in admissions, access, treatment, or employment in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, gender, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability. For more information, call 301-696-6851.

- October 19-25 **Character Counts! & School Bus Safety Week**
- October 20-November 14 **Combined Charities Campaign**
- October 23-31 **Red Ribbon Celebration**
- October 29 **Conversation with the Superintendent:
Gov TJ feeder schools**
- November 16-22 **American Education Week**
- November 18 **Conversation with the Superintendent:
Linganore feeder schools**
- November 19 **Educational Support Personnel Appreciation Day**