



**Forestdale Elementary  
School News**  
*A Newsletter for and about  
Forestdale and our PTA*

Volume 3 Issue 7

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Music in our Schools  
Read Across America

Cheryl Toth, Principal Cathy Pullar, Assistant Principal

**Cell Phones and School**

In this day and age, cell phones are everywhere. They keep us in touch 24/7. Many children who come home to an empty house (latchkey kids) now carry cell phones to assure their parents of their safe arrival home. It is not the schools position to question the need for elementary children to have cell phones. That is a parental decision. Where the school gets involved is when cell phones are used in school and create a disruption to instruction or contribute to delinquent and inappropriate behavior. This past week, we have had several instances of sixth grade students taking their cell phones to the bathroom and text messaging friends and family. Fairfax County has a regulation that addresses student cell phone use in schools:

**Regulation 2601.22P** states that the use of a portable communication device (cell phone, beeper or any electronic mail device that is capable of sending and/or receiving messages) with out express authorization from the principal, possession of any such device in plan view or possession of any such device that is turned on is a violation and shall result in disciplinary action. Furthermore, the regulation states that portable communication devices are subject to confiscation by school officials. Principals may elect to return the device to parents or guardian.

When your child comes to school, they are here to learn. If there is an emergency, there are phones in every classroom, the office and clinic. We have experienced situations in the past where it is a parent who is calling a student during the day only to have the ringtone go off in class. Please help us with this situation. I appreciate your support.

**Survey Forms for 2009 –10**

Please fill out the attached survey form if you have a child who will reach their 5th birthday on or before Sept. 30, 2009. Virginia Law, section 22.1 –254 requires that children who will reach their 5th birthday on or before Sept. 30 must be enrolled in Kindergarten for the 2009—10 school year.



**Lucky's Night**  
**Monday, March 9th**  
**5:00-8:00**  
**Bring the whole Family!!**



## Partners in Print...

On February 26th, Forestdale hosted our first Partners in Print program. It was a HUGE success. We welcomed over 250 families that spent the evening rotating through four sessions that focused on literacy strategies that could be used at home. We are so excited to have programs that team teachers and parents together to support our children's success. Thank you for supporting this program. We look forward to making this a regular event.



## Competence to Excellence Award—Forestdale ES

Last evening, Ms. Pullar and myself represented Forestdale ES during the monthly School Board meeting. We were there to accept the Competence to Excellence Award. The Virginia Board of Education recognizes schools who

- Exceed the Commonwealths accreditation standards and the minimum requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2000 for at least two consecutive years.
- A pursuit of academic excellence resulting in an increasing percentage of students demonstrating advanced proficiency across the curriculum.
- Expands opportunities for learning and achievement.

This is a tremendous honor!! I am so proud of our students and staff who this award is a tribute to.

Too often we reflect on assessments as the driver of our curriculum. That is not true. The SOL assessments measure only a portion of the full scope and sequence of the FCPS curriculum. During our recent grade level meetings with students, I have explained that this award recognizes their (your child's) ability to learn, retain and integrate knowledge and then to be able to express the mastery of that knowledge through a standardized assessment. Our students, your children, work hard each and every day to learn the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed. They, like us, have challenges and stumbling blocks along the way. The outstanding teachers and staff understand that and continue to support and believe in them.

This award reflects the support you give to your child(ren) as well as the support you give us every day.

Last night was a very humbling experience, one filled with great pride and joy. This is the first time Forestdale has received this award and we hope to make this an annual celebration. Thank you for all that you do to support Forestdale!!



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## The Testing Corner...Attendance Issues

### Standards of Learning

Students in grades 3-6 will be participating in one or all of the SOL's (Standards of Learning ) assessment during the 2008-09 school year. Fifth grade tested on March 3rd and 4th with a writing SOL. .

Attendance is mandatory for SOL testing. This is the time of year when I get requests from parents to take their children out of school for long periods of time. When children miss school, they miss the quality of instruction, explanation, exploration and practice. Giving children work to take on their trip does not replace the instruction of the teacher. When the children return, they are often behind the class and have significant work that must be made up. This puts a tremendous amount of pressure on the child and teacher to help them "catch-up".

As the principal, I can not approve or decline a parents decision to take an extended leave from school. What I can share with you is that the consequence of such absence from school could result in failing grades and possible retention.

We do our best to accommodate families and their needs. But we cannot educate a child who is not here. Some kids are able to catch up quickly, some do not. Please be mindful of the amount of time your child spends out of school. There are obvious absences that we support such as emergencies, illness and religious events.

Thank you!



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## Are you moving??

If you are planning on moving and your child will not be attending Forestdale for the 2008-09 school year, please let Cindy Morris know in the office. Student enrollment is very important to us. It helps us to determine the number of teachers we will have along with additional programs for the children of Forestdale. Thank you for keeping us informed on your current and future status!

Cindy Morris—703-313-4300



<http://www.fcps.edu/ForestdaleES/>

"Home of the Falcons"

