



GREAT FALLS CURRENT

Principal, Ernest Leighty

Assistant Principal, Barbara DeHart

Main Office: 703-757-2100 **Attendance: 703-757-2111** Fax Machine: 703-757-2197
Clinic: 703-757-2110 Cafeteria: 703-757-2121

Websites: Great Falls Elementary School: www.fcps.edu/GreatFallsES FCPS: www.fcps.edu

BELL SCHEDULE:

Monday

8:40 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.

Tuesday-Friday

8:40 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.

8:15 a.m. - the earliest students may enter the building. Students report to the cafeteria for adult supervision. **8:35 a.m.** - 5 minute warning bell.

8:40 a.m. - The school day officially begins. Students not in the classroom at this time are considered tardy. Parent and student must report to the office for a pass before proceeding to class.



SEPTEMBER 2011

*BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHTS

Monday, September 19:

Keane Kindergarten	6:30-7:15 p.m.
Fifth Grade	7:30-8:15 p.m.
JIP Fifth Grade	6:30-7:15 p.m.
First Grade	8:30-9:15 p.m.
JIP First Grade	7:30-8:15 p.m.
Third Grade	7:30-8:15 p.m.
JIP Third Grade	8:30-9:15 p.m.
Preschool, a.m. Class	6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, September 20:

Ambrosini & Bentz Kindergarten	6:30-7:15 p.m.
JIP Sixth Grade	7:30-8:15 p.m.
Sixth Grade	6:30-7:15 p.m.
Second Grade	8:30-9:15 p.m.
JIP Second Grade	7:30-8:15 p.m.
Fourth Grade	7:30-8:15 p.m.
JIP Fourth Grade	8:30-9:15 p.m.
Preschool, p.m. Class	6:30 p.m.

*A Keep in Touch Message was sent to our Great Falls ES families on September 16, 2011. This message sent the details on Back to School Night for students with split grade level classes.

OCTOBER 2011

10/4	3 rd Grade Field Trip
10/6	PTA General Meeting 9:00 a.m.
10/10	Columbus Day Holiday – School Closed
10/19	AAP Parent Information Mtg., 9:00 a.m.
10/20	Kindergarten Field Trip
10/21	Student Individual Photo Day
10/28	PTA Costume Dance

Welcome to the 2011-12 School Year!

The school year is off to an excellent start in spite of the bad weather the first week of school. The dismissal on Thursday, September 8 turned out to be extremely challenging. But the students, staff, parents, and bus drivers all rose to the occasion! The bus drivers did their best to arrive at school for dismissal, but most could not make it. The few who did, arrived very late. By the time one driver reached Great Falls, parents had already picked up his riders. Two other drivers couldn't navigate the run due to road closures. One bus driver managed to take two students home around 6 pm.

At 6:15 pm, forty-five students remained at school, plus 32 SACC children. We placed a pizza order at that time and a minute later, some pizzas were delivered care of our PTA. So when the other pizzas arrived, we were able to feed all of the remaining students, plus the staff.

The Great Falls office and instructional staff helped immensely by remaining calm, being flexible, and helping out in any way they could. Of course, the thoughts of their family members' safety weighed heavily on their minds as well as the obvious concern about their own journeys home. Most of them staff stayed at school until around 7 pm when we were down to about 20 students. Several left their vehicles at school and car-pooled with each other. Staff members who lived close to school offered for others to spend the night at their homes. I am aware of three who did stay the night due to the concern of dangerous road conditions.

We know that parents worked diligently on making it to school that afternoon and evening to pick-up their children. There were many stories of some being on the road for 2 – 3 hours when it would normally take them 5 – 10 minutes to drive to school. The last student was picked-up at 9:40 pm.

We are grateful for our students, staff, parents, bus drivers and that all were safe that evening! It was a great team effort!

Ernie Leighty & Barbara DeHart

The *Great Falls Current/PTA Roadrunner Express* will be sent home once a month via e-mail. One exception will be this month. We are sending out our first newsletter this week to highlight important events and information, such as the Back-To-School night schedule and Advanced Academic Program continuum of services information. We will begin sending the newsletters home electronically, starting with the October issue, via the KIT message system.

Picture



Day

OCTOBER 21st. Volunteers are requested for student picture day. Please find the volunteer duties listed below:

- *Must be available for minimum three hour shift
- *Grooming assistance of the child such as: combing hair, straightening collars, cleaning faces, etc.
- *Runner/escort to and from the classroom
- *Assist in keeping children in a single file line and talking to a minimum
- *Assist in recording package information

If you are available and able to perform these duties, please contact Lori in the main office to schedule your volunteer shift time. *As a thank you for your service, you will receive a complimentary photography package of your child (one per family). Selections include Packages A-E.*

We look forward to a "Picture Perfect" day with you,

- **AM KISS & RIDE Drop off**

Parents are reminded that students are not to enter the school building before 8:15 a.m. Staff members are not available until 8:15 am, and students may not be in the building unsupervised. Students dropped off before 8:15 are enrolled in the SACC program and report directly to the SACC room.

- **PM KISS & RIDE Pick up**

Have your child's name written on a large piece of paper, and place it on the passenger side of the windshield. Our adult staff patrol will use this to relay your child's name to our waiting students. Please don't assume you don't need to follow this rule because our staff patrol recognizes your car. Staff duty changes so the same person who may recognize you is not always on duty. We need to keep our Kiss & Ride line moving forward to avoid backups. Having your child's name readily available to our patrols to see will keep the traffic flow moving and make sure our students are safely put into the correct car.

- **TRANSPORTATION OFFICE – SCHOOL BUS QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS**

School bus routes and times are determined by the Office of Transportation. If you have questions or concerns about your child's bus transportation, during the school day please call the Transportation Office 703-249-7100. If there is an emergency after regular office hours, call the School Security office at 571-423-2000. They are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and are able to contact whoever is required to handle any type of situation regarding school buses.



The Transportation Services website has compiled a list of common questions and answers concerning school bus transportation. Please visit: <http://www.fcps.edu/fts/tran/faq/>

- **DISTRIBUTION OF NON-PROFIT FLYERS**

Twice a year, Fairfax County Public Schools permits non-profit organizations to send their information home to our families. These materials are neither sponsored nor endorsed by the Fairfax County School Board, the Superintendent, or this school. Contact the school office for more information.

FALL - Distribution date is Tuesday, September 20th.

SPRING - Promotional materials are due to the school office by Friday, May 11th, 2011
Distribution date is Tuesday, May 15th.

Physical Education Foot Note



Closed toe shoes are highly recommended for students to wear during the school day. Flip-flops and other open toed shoes do not provide enough foot support for activities such as recess and gym. Flip-flops are especially hazardous when walking up and down the stairs.

Also, please make sure your child is properly dressed and prepared for outdoor activities throughout the school year. Students may go outside for recess as well as PE, unless there is inclement weather.

GREAT FALLS FACTS

- **Bell Schedule**

8:35 a.m. Warning Bell

8:40 a.m. School day officially begins. Students not in their classrooms at this time are considered tardy, and must report to the office to sign in before proceeding to their classroom.

For safety and security, parents of tardy students are required to walk their children into the building, sign in at the office, and walk their children to their classrooms.

Students are not permitted to enter the school building before 8:00 a.m.

12:50 p.m. Monday Dismissal Bell

3:20 p.m. Tuesday-Friday Dismissal Bell

- **Student Absence and Tardy Notification**

The telephone number to report absent or tardy students is 703-757-2111. Please call the attendance line by 9:00 a.m. This telephone number is a dedicated line that will connect you to a 24-hour answering machine, so you can leave a message any time after the school day. You will need to call every day your child will not attend school, unless you notify us of a specific return date.

- **Homework for Absent Students**

Please leave a message on the attendance line when calling your child's absence in. Teachers pick up messages during their lunch break; therefore, calling before 10:00 will allow the teacher sufficient time to pick up the message and prepare the homework during the school day. Homework will be ready to pick up in the office after school dismissal, or if you would like the homework sent home with another student, make sure to leave that student's full name and his/her teacher's name.

- **Forgotten Homework**

Sufficient time is provided at the end of the day for students to get ready to go home. Classrooms are locked when teachers are not in the room during and after school hours. Custodians are not authorized to unlock doors for anyone not employed by FCPS. Staff members are not permitted to give their keys to students or parents. Therefore, we cannot accommodate requests by students or parents to open a teacher's classroom for forgotten items.

- **Emergency Care Forms**

Listed on this form are the names and telephone numbers of people you have authorized to pick-up your child from school in case of emergency. When your child is sick, or has missed the school bus, etc., these are the people called when we cannot reach the parent. Therefore, please list local friends/neighbors and their telephone numbers under the 'Other Contact' section. **Students will not be released to anyone not noted on this Emergency Care Form. Once the child's Emergency Care Form has been submitted to our office, the addition or deletion of any contact person must be made by the parent. It is important to update this form as telephone numbers change. Changes to your child's Emergency Care Form can be made online, through the FCPS 24/7 Learning site. Follow the link to wecare@school.**

- **Changes of Transportation COT Program begins October 3rd.**

At this time, students are not permitted to bring a friend home from school, by either bus or private transportation. Please make arrangements for your children to get together with friends after they arrive home from school. However, COT Forms may be used to notify the teacher if picking up your child before the end of the school day. Volunteers are needed before this program may begin. Contact PTA Chairperson Judy Meeks at 703-899-0079 and at mrs_jmeeks@yahoo.com. No experience necessary. Training will be provided.

- **FCPS 24-7 Learning** (Blackboard) is the online resource that allows Fairfax County Public Schools students to extend learning beyond the traditional school day and beyond school facilities. Students and parents are invited to use FCPS 24-7 Learning to access homework and classroom assignments, view class calendars, explore links to enrichment activities, and much more. **Parents can now create their own account for FCPS 24-7. After registering and having their account validated at one of their children's schools, parents will have their own username and password to access all of their children's active courses, and will be able to update their children's emergency information through [weCare@school](mailto:wecare@school). Updating weCare with the correct email address will ensure better communication via Keep in Touch.**

Before creating a parent account, please be sure to have the student ID numbers for your children available. You can find the FCPS student ID number on report cards and student class schedules.

HEALTH ROOM VOLUNTEER TRAINING OPPORTUNITY We need help with Vision and Hearing Screening in October. Please call Health Room Aide, Mrs. Dawna Poyner, 703-757-2110 to volunteer.

The Health Room welcomes all volunteers, not only to help care for our students, but also assist with administrative duties. Please consider volunteering for a few hours during the year. No experience is necessary. Training for student care is provided by the Fairfax County Health Department and is essential for anyone working in the school health room. Stop by the Health Room for information and training dates.

ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS (AAP) CONTINUUM OF SERVICES

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) offers a continuum of advanced academic services for all students in grades K-8. Learning experiences are designed to develop higher-level thinking through enrichment, acceleration, and extension of the Program of Studies. Teachers, administrators, and advanced academic resource teachers (AARTs) work together to provide the following Levels of Service:

Critical and Creative Thinking Lessons, Grades K-6 (Level I)

The first level is provided to all students in grades kindergarten through grade six and consists of model lessons that are designed to teach critical and creative thinking skills. The lessons are modeled in all classrooms by advanced academic resource teachers and the thinking strategies are then used throughout the year by classroom teachers and other teachers who work with students. Student responses to these lessons are used as part of the identification process for levels II-IV. Parents may also practice these strategies during family conversations and activities. A description of the 9 critical and creative thinking strategies can be found at <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/aap/level1.html>.

• **Differentiated Lessons in Areas of Academic Strength, Grades K-6 (Level II)**

The advanced academic resource teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to provide additional challenge through lessons and resources that extend and enrich the program of studies. Screening for this level of service is ongoing throughout the school year. The Young Scholars Model begins at this level and is designed to find and nurture advanced academic potential in students from historically underrepresented populations.

• **Part-Time Advanced Academic Program, Grades 3-6 (Level III)**

Students identified by a local school screening committee for part-time advanced academic services (Level III) are challenged through models and strategies designed to extend and enrich the POS in the four core subject areas. Screening for this level of service is ongoing throughout the school year.

• **Full-Time Advanced Academic Placement, Grades 3-8 (Level IV)**

Students found eligible for placement in a full-time Advanced Academic Program (Level IV) through a central selection process receive a highly challenging instructional program in the four core subject areas. Screening for this level of service occurs in the fall for students who are new to FCPS and in the spring for all other students. The referral deadline is in October for students who are new to FCPS and the first week of February for spring screening. Additional information is available in the Parent Information Packet, published on the AAP website, www.fcps.edu/dis/aap.

• **IBMYP: Selected Schools, Grades 6-10**

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program is designed for students ages 11-16. The program helps students develop the knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and skills necessary to participate actively and responsibly in a changing world. The curriculum is supported by the fundamental concepts of intercultural awareness, holistic learning, and communication.

• **Honors, Grades 7-8**

Advanced and/or accelerated classes are available for students in grades 7-8 through an open enrollment process. Students receive instruction that is differentiated for advanced learners in the four core subjects in one or more areas of academic strength or interest.

SCREENING

Multiple criteria are reviewed to determine eligibility for all FCPS Advanced Academic Programs. The local school committee determines student eligibility for part-time school-based services. The countywide central selection committee determines eligibility for full-time AAP (Level IV) placement.

TESTING

Each fall all FCPS first grade students are administered the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). Students in second through seventh grades who do not have an NNAT score may also be administered the NNAT. Each fall all FCPS second grade students are administered the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). Students in third through seventh grades who do not have a CogAT score may also be administered the CogAT. A second grade screening pool is established using the test results from first and second grade testing. Students in the second grade pool are automatically screened for full-time AAP (Level IV) placement. Parents or guardians may exercise a one-time retest option during the fall testing cycle.

REFERRALS for FULL-TIME ADVANCED ACADEMIC PLACEMENT LEVEL IV (Grades 2-7)

Parents or guardians of students not in the second grade screening pool may initiate the full-time AAP (Level IV) screening process by completing and submitting an **AAP Level IV Referral Form to the local school principal no later than February 3, 2012.** No late referrals will be accepted. Second graders **not** in the pool and **all** third through seventh graders are screened only by referral. Forms are available on the AAP website (www.fcps.edu/DIS/aap) and in the *Parent Information Packet* available at the local school. (Please note: Parents or guardians of students who are in the 2nd grade pool will be notified by the school. Students who are not in the 2nd grade pool will not receive notification. The benchmark score used to create the 2nd grade pool will be published on the Advanced Academic Programs website mid-January.)

PARENT INFORMATION MEETING AT GREAT FALLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A parent information meeting will be held at Great Falls Elementary School on October 19, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. The advanced academic resource teacher will provide information about levels of service and examples at Great Falls Elementary School as well as explain and answer questions about the screening processes for part-time school based and Level IV services. The meeting is open to all K-6 parents.



Advanced Academic Programs: A Continuum of Services

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Advanced Academic Programs provide challenging learning experiences that are designed to meet the unique learning profile of a broad range of advanced learners. Through a continuum of opportunities, students engage in complex subject matter, preparing them for more challenging and rigorous classes as they advance in grade level. Children identified for FCPS advanced academic services exhibit exceptional performance capability in academic, intellectual, and creative endeavors. In order to meet their needs and develop to their potential, these learners require a differentiated curriculum.

Elementary School Opportunities

Young Scholars, K-12 (All Levels) YS is designed to find and nurture advanced academic potential in students from historically underrepresented populations. Curricular interventions and support are provided through the collaboration of the classroom teacher and the Advanced Academic Resource Teacher. As students progress through elementary and secondary school, continuing support and opportunities for accessing rigorous coursework are provided by school .

Critical an Creative Thinking Strategies, Grades K-6 (Level I) The Advanced Academic Resource Teacher and classroom teachers teach nine higher order thinking strategies across all subject areas and grade levels.

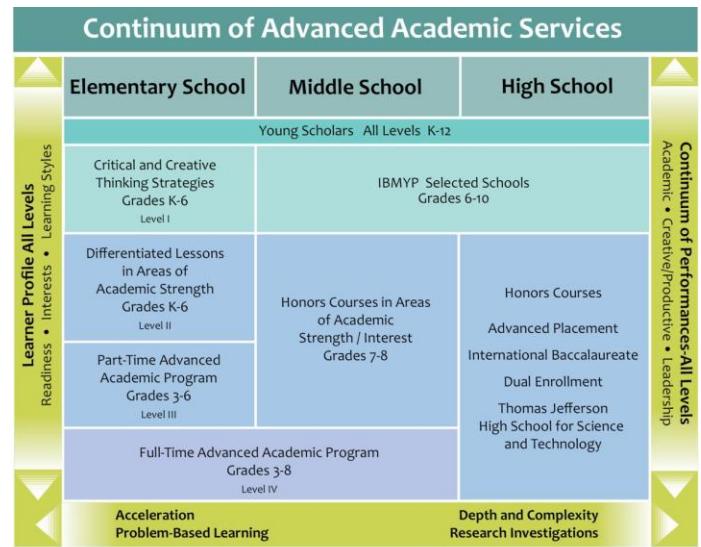
The strategies are embedded in lessons that incorporate 21st Century thinking skills and extend and enrich the Program of Studies (POS) for all learners. Student responses to the lessons are also used to collect evidence of advanced academic potential in order to ensure equity and increase access to Advanced Academic Programs.

Differentiated Lessons in Areas of Academic Strength, Grades K-6 (Level II) Students who exhibit a need for additional challenge in an area of academic strength are considered for Differentiated Services within the classroom. These services are specifically planned for the identified child to provide more challenging content, assignments, resources and/or instructional grouping within the classroom. The Advanced Academic Resource Teacher collaborates with the classroom teachers to provide additional challenges and resources within the general education program.

Part-Time Advanced Academic Program, Grades 3-6 (Level III) Students identified by a local school screening committee for advanced academic services (Level III) are challenged through models and strategies designed to extend and enrich the POS in the four core subject areas. Students receive direct instruction from the Advanced Academic Resource Teacher in their local schools.

Advanced Academic school-based services are delivered to eligible students in grades 3-6 through a collaborative model that supports a continuum of advanced academic services. The model is designed to strengthen direct services for advanced learners and to enhance the quality of instruction offered to all students. The Advanced Academic Resource Teachers collaborate with classroom teachers to design differentiated lessons that challenge students to learn at a faster rate, think on a higher level, and/or study sophisticated and complex content through extensions of the FCPS Program of Studies for students identified for differentiated lessons in areas of academic strength (level II). Students identified for school-based (level III) services receive direct services from the Advanced Academic Resource Teacher either in a pull-out program or through small-group interaction within the general education classroom.

Full-Time Advanced Academic Program, Grades 3-8 (Level IV) Students found eligible for placement in a full-time Advanced Academic Program (Level IV) through a central selection process receive a highly challenging instructional program in the four core subject areas. The Level IV program is designed to meet the needs of advanced learners with a strong emphasis on higher level thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. Students have ongoing opportunities for reflection and self-assessment that develop an understanding of the characteristics, demands, and responsibilities of advanced intellectual development.



Adapted from the Integrated Continuum of Special Services by Sally Reis and Levels of Service by Donald Treffinger.