

Lanier PTA News

November 2009



Sidney Lanier Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road, Fairfax, VA 22030 (703) 934-2400 www.fcps.edu/LanierMS/

Calendar



October

- 26 & 27 Picture Day (during PE classes)
- 30 End of 1st quarter

November

- 11 Veteran's Day Concert, 7 PM
- 13 Lanier Dismissal @ 11:55 AM
- 19 - 22 Musical at Lanier
- 25 2-hour early dismissal
- 26 & 27 Thanksgiving Holiday

December

- 5 Festival of Lights, Fairfax City
- 7 Chorus Concert, 7 PM
- 9 Orchestra Concert, 7 PM
- 15 Interims Mailed Home
- 15 Band Concert, 7 PM
- 16 Band Concert, 7 PM
- 23 Early Dismissal
- 24 Winter Break Starts

Contents

- 2 PTA President's Letter
- 4 Office of School Counseling
- 5 Literacy Corner
- 6 Department News
- 6 FCPS Newswire
- 7 Fairfax High School Events
- 8 PTA Board Members & Fundraisers

A Message from the Principal

Putting the Budget Situation in Context: How Spending Cuts are Already Affecting Schools in FCPS



Over the last few weeks, the FCPS budget forecast for Fiscal Year 2011 has been receiving a significant amount of attention. Numerous articles have been written about the expected \$140-\$176 million budget deficit and how school officials are moving to address it. While I'm glad that the public is being informed about the difficult decisions that lie ahead, I'm concerned that many individuals outside of the school system are not aware of how budget cuts are already impacting schools in FCPS. By providing an inside look at how these cuts are influencing life at Lanier, I hope that parents will be better able to understand the status of our programs and what is at stake as budget discussions for the next fiscal year move forward.

First and foremost, class size was increased by .5 of a pupil across the board. This translates into about a two percent reduction in general education staffing. Thinking about this increase in terms of class size may help illustrate the situation. For example, if class size is 26.8 students per class, this means that it increased to 27.3 students per class. Due to significant enrollment growth at Lanier, the effect of this cut was somewhat hidden—for we ended up hiring fewer teachers rather than laying any off. Regardless, it inched up our class sizes, making it increasingly difficult to offer more specialized classes that are differentiated to meet the needs of students.

Second, one front office position was eliminated from every middle school. At Lanier, this meant that we would have lost a staff member that has been at Lanier for over twenty years. Rather than disrupt a cohesive office team that has worked together effectively for many years, we decided to trade in local school monies to keep the position. We justified taking resources from other areas to save this position because we hoped that the economy would improve and it would be

reinstated; current budget projections clearly demonstrate that this plan of action was idealistic and untenable over the long run.

Third, one custodial position was cut from every middle school. As a result of our renovation that was completed in 2008, Lanier is now a facility that comprises 182,000 square feet and serves approximately 1300 people each school day. Losing one position means that only 7.5 people are tasked with keeping our facility clean and operating smoothly; at the same time, their pay, like that of all FCPS employees, is being frozen.

Fourth—as many parents know—bus transportation was reorganized to save millions of dollars. This was a great effort, but students have been impacted by longer ride times, fewer bus stops, and generally more crowded buses. This initiative has indeed saved a significant amount of money, but it has stretched resources to the limit and left almost no room for problems such as traffic delays and equipment breakdowns.

Despite these cuts, FCPS remains one of the highest performing school districts in the nation. Our SAT scores, graduation rate, percentage of students taking AP and IB courses, and other assessment indicators provide clear evidence that our efforts are paying off. I am growing increasingly concerned, however, that we are reaching a critical mass that could significantly hamper our capacity to serve students at such a high level. I hope this summary helps parents view the upcoming budget cuts as being another phase rather than as operational decisions that are impacting FCPS for the first time.

Scott Poole
Principal

PTA President's Letter

Dear Lanier Families,

What a terrific fall we have had! We would like to thank all the families who helped support the Entertainment Book Fundraiser, it was a great success, and our spirit wear sales were outstanding!

LMS student directories have been sent home with PTA members. PTA membership is accepted all year long, so if you would like to join and get your free directory, please contact Jean Naka, jeannaka@cox.net.

We ask that you take a few minutes to update your Giant, Safeway and Target cards to designate Lanier as your school of choice. These funds go directly to our school.

Volunteer opportunities are never ending at LMS. If you would like to help out during the day in the library or in the PALS desk, please contact Kim Thompson, kimberthompson@earthlink.net.

Our LMS Spirit Dining has been a lot of fun. It is a night where you leave the cooking to someone else and have time to meet other Lanier families. The students like the extra time to “hang out” with their new friends. Our next dining night will be in December, so watch for the information.

The PTA is having a special holiday evening at Barnes and Noble book store in Fair Lakes, Dec. 16th & 17th. A percent of all purchases will be donated to our school. We are planning other surprises for those evenings. So save those dates to do some last minute holiday shopping. More information will be coming soon.

Our Nov. PTA meeting will be on **Tuesday, Nov. 10th** due to the Veterans Holiday Concert on Nov. 11th. I invite everyone to attend and share you thoughts and ideas with us.

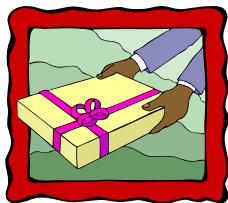
It is with gratitude that I send a huge **THANK YOU** to the many volunteers who have worked so hard and put in a lot of time make so many of our events so successful. The LMS families are by far the best around.

Warm Regards,
Pam Wagner
PTA President

Lanier Fundraisers at Barnes and Noble - December 16th & 17th Help Support the Library & Music Department

By Kim Thompson

Do your **holiday shopping** at **Barnes and Noble** and support the Lanier library in the process. Shop at Barnes and Noble in Fair Lakes



on December 16th and 17th and the Lanier library will receive a portion of the proceeds in books to stock our library. Members of the music department will also be on hand to **wrap gifts**. Look for additional information as the date approaches.

Volunteer Opportunity

The PAL Desk is still looking for volunteers. PAL stands for Parents at Lanier. Our PAL desk needs volunteers to do mainly copying and laminating projects for our teachers throughout the school year. Hours are flexible; and any help is greatly appreciated. Ideally we will have a volunteer covering the PALS desk every day. We have openings for volunteers on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month, as well as Thursdays or Fridays. For more information, contact Kim Thompson at kimberthompson@earthlink.net or 703/273-3487. Thanks!



LMS Car Decals



BRAND NEW! Show your school spirit! Only \$2.00! Send a request and \$2.00 in an envelope marked "Lisa Mountjoy - Decal" to the school

Lanier PTA News

office. Decals will be delivered to your student by their 5th period teacher.

Thank you to Posh Booth for Donation to 8th Grade Spring End of Year Celebration 2009

By Carlyn Floyd, EdD. Assistant Principal

The 8th grade end of the year party last year was a huge success last Spring. The planning committee wanted to thank one participant in particular: Posh Booth! They came and donated their photo booth, time and film to make the party extra special. The kids were able to take pictures of themselves with friends to have a lasting memory of 8th grade. For more information or to book them for a party of your own visit www.poshbooth.com. We hope to bring them back this year!

Health News from Lanier

By Kathleen Snow, RN, BSN

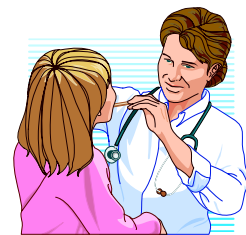
Public Health Nurse, School Health
703-481-4196 Health Department
Lanier MS, Oakton ES, Providence ES, Waples Mill ES

Vision and Hearing Screening

Thanks to the many parent volunteers during vision and hearing screening that took place the week of October 22 this year. If you receive a letter recommending more detailed vision testing, please follow up with the Health Room (also known as the Clinic) once that is completed so that we can update our records. Students who do not pass the hearing screening will be retested in four weeks, in case the problem was due to fluid in the ears. Hearing letters will go out in December for students who need further evaluation.

Flu Update

You don't need the newsletter to know that the flu season is upon us. Please be sure to check with your personal health care provider for the seasonal flu vaccine for yourself and your students. The H1N1 vaccine is being well publicized but it will not be effective against



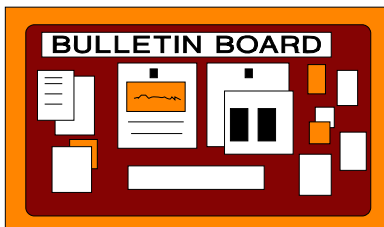
November 2009

the seasonal flu. If your student routinely uses an inhaler, please be sure to have one available for their use in school. The Inhaler Authorization forms are available at www.fcps.edu/forms. Part I is completed by the parent, Part II by the health care provider and Mrs. Robinson in the Health Room completes Part III. Remember, adults must bring medication to school to be checked in, even if it is an over the counter medication.

In addition to vaccination, the best way to prevent the spread of illness is to practice good hand-washing and respiratory etiquette. This means washing hands effectively with soap and water and using tissues or your upper sleeve to cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. If using a tissue, discard after one use and wash hands immediately. Soap and water is more effective than alcohol-based hand sanitizers, although those may be used if there is no option of actually washing the hands.

Thanks for your help in keeping the Lanier Community healthy!

News from the Office of School Counseling



Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth Talent Search 2009-2010

Johns Hopkins University is recognizing children with outstanding academic talent. If your child received Pass/Advanced on the English or Math SOL, they are eligible to take a test designed for older students. The tests are SAT or ACT. There is an application cost of \$37, plus the fee for the SAT or ACT test.

Your child can pick up an application in the Office of School Counseling. Please fill it out and mail directly to CTY Talent Search. Our school code is 2203069. They will contact you directly for the time and place for the test.

For more information, please see the Johns Hopkins CTY website, <http://www.cty.jhu.edu/index.html>

Please note the following upcoming dates & deadlines:

SAT Test:

November 20 Complete and return CTY application to Johns Hopkins CTY program

December 15 Test registration deadline

January 23 Testing date

ACT Test:

November 20 Complete and return CTY application to Johns Hopkins CTY program

January 5 Test registration deadline

February 6 Testing date

School Counselors will Provide Lessons to Students on Bullying & Sexual Harassment Prevention

On November 20 (8th grade) and December 4 (7th grade), school counselors will go into classrooms to present lessons about bullying and sexual harassment prevention. The lessons will include legal definitions, forms of bullying & harassment, and what students should do if they experience or witness bullying or harassment. We will also discuss the increasingly important issue of cyberbullying. These lessons will take place during students' Health/PE classes.

Lanier School Counselor Contact Information:

- Ms. Patti Bowers, Lead Counselor: Dolphins and Stars Teams
 - 703-934-2432
 - PAWowers@fcps.edu
- Mr. Mitchell Kamins: Lions and Diplomats Teams
 - 703-934-2433
 - MPKamins@fcps.edu
- Mrs. Dayle Ranallo: Patriots and Champions Teams
 - 703-934-2431
 - DCRanallo@fcps.edu
- Ms. Adrian Williams: Pandas and Explorers Teams
 - 703-934-2435
 - AWilliams1@fcps.edu

Lanier Magazine Fundraiser

By Diana White, Testing Coordinator, Intern

Please support our magazine fundraiser. Students will bring packets home on Friday. Students can take orders from parents or friends. Magazines can also be ordered online. First turn in date for orders is Oct 21, and last turn in date is Oct 27th.

We will have a BMX show for all students who sell at least 3 orders. Students who turn in the reach out books will be able to attend the Mad Scientist Show on Nov 6th.

Thank you for your support of all the fundraising activities.

SOL TESTING DATES:

By Diana White, Testing Coordinator, Intern

Mar 1-3 Writing SOL for 8th grade

May 17-June 4 - SOL TEST for 7 & 8th grade

More information to follow.

Literacy Corner

(Editor's Note: Watch this space for articles on Literacy from the Office of Middle School Instruction)

Inferences and Character Study:
two critical reading skills all 7th and 8th graders must master



Making Inferences

What is an inference in life?

- If the boss looks grumpy, it might not be the best time to ask for a raise. If a child's lips are quivering, it might be a sign to give him or her a hug.

What is it in reading?

- The reader combines what he or she already understands about the topic with the clues in the reading to figure out something that is not specifically stated ... reading between the lines.

How can I help my child?

- Read or watch TV together and talk about inferences you made.
- Use these ideas to spark conversation.
 - The author or actor didn't say...but I knew...because...
 - I understand...about the situation because...
 - I predict...because...
 - I think the people are thinking or feeling...I know this because...

Character Study

What is it?

- Character includes appearance, personality, thoughts, feelings, speech, and how other characters respond to them.
- Understanding character is essential not only to reading literature, but to understanding people.

How can I help my child?

- Read together and discuss a character.
- Select words the character says that help you understand their feelings, attitude, or personality. Describe them.
- How do other characters react to the main character?
- What do you know about the character based on his or her gestures or actions?
- How does the character change throughout the story?

Science Does ROCK!!!!

By Sissy Moses

We are working very hard on our new unit on The Invisible Atom. The students always love learning about atoms and elements. This will lead to further study of chemical reactions, bonding, solubility and pH. While working hard in the classroom, please remind your student that it is important to study at home and complete all assignments on time. Physical Science is a day by day learning process. Each lab builds from the previous lab. It is my goal to have each

and every student leave my Science class in June with a greater appreciation for Science and the world. Science does ROCK!!!!!!!!!!

Art Department News

By Leah Dubray

The art department is off to an exciting year! Both art teachers, Mrs. Dubray and Mrs. Armstrong, will be presenting wearable art lessons that students have done in the past and are currently working on this year at the Virginia Art Education Association annual conference! This is a huge opportunity for the art department to share the successes of our talented students here at Lanier. Student work will be brought to Richmond to share with other art teachers throughout Virginia. Help support our creative designers build their clothing by donating found materials such as fabric, yarn, plastic, table cloths, beads, laces, etc...

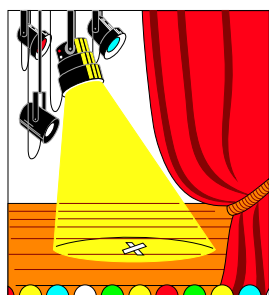
We appreciate all your support and hope you continue to read the newsletter in the coming months to hear more about what your students are working on at school!

SAVE THE DATE!!!!

Disney's

"Alice in Wonderland, Jr."

November 19 - 22



WHAT: Alice in Wonderland Jr.
WHEN: November 19 - 22
WHERE: Lanier Auditorium
WHY: Because it will be fun!

This year's fall show will be a musical. Make plans to come and see Disney's "Alice in Wonderland, Jr." music and

lyrics by Sammy Fain and Bob Hilliard, Oliver Wallace and Cy Coban, Allie Wrubel and Ray Gilbert, Mack David, Al Hoffman and Jerry Livingston. Music adapted and arranged and additional music and lyrics by Brian Louiselle; book adapted and additional lyrics by David Simpatico. It is based on the 1951 Disney film "Alice in Wonderland" and the novels "The Adventures of Alice

in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass" by Lewis Carroll.

FCPS Newswire

(General Items of Interest for Parents from the FCPS Newswire Website)



FCPS Is Now on Facebook and Twitter

Fairfax County Public Schools is now on Twitter, where news and information, emergency messages, and information about current issues are posted for those who choose to become followers of the school system. To follow FCPS on Twitter, visit <http://www.twitter.com/fcpsnews> and click on Follow.

FCPS also has a Facebook page; to follow FCPS on Facebook, visit <http://www.facebook.com/fcpsva> and select Become a Fan at the top of the page.

Citizens can also receive FCPS news and information by subscribing to the school system's Keep in Touch e-mail messaging system, or by subscribing to RSS (really simple syndication). To learn more about RSS, visit <http://www.fcps.edu> and go to the News Releases banner on the right side of the page, then click on the orange RSS logo.

School Bond Referendum to Be on November 3 Ballot

A school bond referendum will be on the general election ballot **Tuesday, November 3, 2009**. Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Residents of Fairfax County may vote if they are 18 years of age or older on Election Day and have registered to vote 29 days prior to the election (by October 5, 2009, at 5 p.m.).

The 2009 proposed bond referendum includes \$104.3 million for renovations, including \$101.8 million to renovate Marshall High School; \$2.5 million for renovation planning at Sandburg Middle School; \$65 million for new construction and modulars; and \$26.2 million for infrastructure management, including roof replacements, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) replacements, athletic improvements, security

enhancements, asphalt paving, and improvements required by the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The 2009 bond referendum includes \$50 million for construction of the new middle school in the South County area of Fairfax County and \$40.7 million for capacity enhancements at Crestwood, Cunningham Park, Kings Park, Lynbrook, Spring Hill, Springfield Estates, West Springfield, and Woodley Hills Elementary Schools and Whitman Middle School.

For further information about registering or voting, call 703-222-0776, or go to

<http://www.fcps.edu/news/bond09.htm>.

Hours Emergency Telephone Number

We know that your number one concern as a parent is your child's safety. We also know that it is frustrating—or even frightening—when you need to call someone for information about your student's whereabouts after school hours and the phones are not being answered. **If your child normally rides a bus home** and you cannot get in touch with him or her, contact the transportation office at **703-446-2000 until 5 p.m.** After 5 p.m., **or if your child normally walks home**, contact the FCPS school security office **at 703-764-2400**. In an emergency, the dispatcher can contact a school or a transportation staff member to help you.

Fairfax High School Theatre One Day Drama Camp - Tues Nov 3

Grades 1-8

Tuesday November 3, 2009

9:00 a.m.-3 p.m.

Location: Fairfax High School

Would you like your student to be doing something on the upcoming teacher workday that doesn't involve a computer or TV screen? Bring them to Fairfax High School's One Day Drama Camp for an active day of theatre- acting, improv games, makeup, costuming, and more- taught by Wendy Knight, Fairfax High School theatre director, and her enthusiastic and experienced high school counselors. The \$40 cost supports many theatre student activities. For more information and a registration form, please visit www.fxplayers.org.

Fairfax High School Events



(Editor's Note: This space will be used to provide information on various Fairfax High School events that may be of interest to our Future Fairfax High School Rebels.)

Sports

Interested in attending a sporting event at Fairfax High School? Check out the high school's athletic web site for more information at www.fairfaxhighsports.org

Late Bus Schedule

Late buses are available on the following days for Lanier students:

Mondays at 4:10

Wednesdays at 4:45

Thursdays at 4:45



2009 - 2010 Lanier PTA Board and Committee Representatives

President: Pam Wagner, pwagner58@aol.com
Vice President: Lisa Mountjoy, mlmountjoy@aol.com
Secretary: Laura Allsopp, Lallsopp@aol.com
Treasurer: Lisa MacCammon, ismaccam@aol.com
Directory: Kathy Scripka, ajklls@verizon.net
Giant/Safeway/Target: Pam Wagner, pwagner58@aol.com
Staff Appreciation: Courtney Robinson, courtneyrobinson001@msn.com
Staff Appreciation: Debbie Bermudez-Bernier, debbiebermudez@gmail.com
Library Representative: Kim Thompson, kimberthompson@earthlink.net
Live at Lanier/Silent Auction: Suzi Ginch/Co-Chair, ginch.clan@verizon.net
Live at Lanier/Silent Auction: Rana San Martin/Co-Chair, rsanmartin2@verizon.net
LMS Spirit Dining: Jean Kornegay, jkornegay@att.com
Membership: Jean Naka, jeannaka@hotmail.com
Minority Representative: Ann Williams, awilliams@winstonpartners.com
Minority Representative: Missy Edwards, medwards@alliancemicro.com
Music Representative: Sharon Buttram, buttramsp@verizon.net
Music Representative: Maria Rice, maria@cartomedia.com
Newsletter: Cathy Miller, milebfxva@aol.com
Newsletter Distribution: April Breedon, higha1975@hotmail.com
PAL Desk: Kim Thompson, kimberthompson@earthlink.net
Volunteers: Eileen Payne, Epayne@e-ware.net
Ways and Means (Fundraising): Lisa Mountjoy (fall), mlmountjoy@aol.com
8th Grade End of Year: Laura Allsopp, Lallsopp@aol.com
8th Grade End of Year: Lisa Mountjoy, mlmountjoy@aol.com
Teacher Representative: Margaret Gamble, MLgamble@fcps.edu

Newsletter Available On-Line

The newsletter will be available on the Lanier Middle School web site at <http://www.fcps.edu/LanierMS/>. If you desire a paper copy mailed to your home, please send a note to the school with PTA on the envelope or email April Breedon, PTA Newsletter Distribution Coordinator, at higha1975@hotmail.com and provide her with your student's name and your name. Please place Newsletter OPT-IN in the subject line.

December 2009 Newsletter Article Deadline:

Newsletter Articles are due by the Friday after the monthly PTA meeting. For the December 2009 newsletter, articles should be submitted by **Friday, November 13, 2009**. Please email them to Cathy Miller at laniernewsletter@verizon.net.

PTA Fundraising Opportunities



1. Giant Food

Register your Giant Bonus Cards. You must redo this every year. This just takes a minute and it is a good fundraiser for Lanier school. Lanier MS code is 01877 and here's the website to enter your info:

www.giantfood.com/aplus/aplus.



2. Safeway

Safeway contributes up to 3% of your purchases to our school. Register your Safeway Card - go to www.escrip.com/ Lanier school ID 148861819.

3. Target

Please register your Target Credit Card. Lanier's school ID is 103663.

4. Office Depot

Ask Office Depot to give Lanier credit when you check out.

Sidney Lanier Middle School
3801 Jermantown Road
Fairfax, VA 22030

