

The Carson Courier

Volume 14, Issue 5

January 2012

“Rediscovering... the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.”
from Rachel Carson’s “A Sense of Wonder”

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL

In an issue of *Educational Leadership*, an Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development publication, there is an excellent article titled *A Case for School Connectedness*. The article highlights the importance of students feeling connected to their schools in order for them to reach a high level of success. School connectedness refers to the students’ belief that the adults in the building care about their academic success, but just as important, their sense that the adults care about them as individuals. Research shows that students who don’t believe this may become disengaged. This sense of connectedness is especially critical during the adolescent years.

Three school characteristics stand out in making students feel connected to their academic environment:

1. high academic standards coupled with strong teacher support,
2. an environment in which adult and student relationships are positive and respectful,
3. a school where students feel physically and emotionally safe.

The article reports that students who feel connected to their schools are less likely to use harmful substances, exhibit emotional distress, and demonstrate violent or deviant behavior. Students that experience connectedness feel that they belong, enjoy school, believe that education matters, have friends at school, and take opportunities to participate in extracurricular clubs and activities.

What can you do as a parent if you think your child is feeling disengaged from the school environment? Contact your child’s counselor and discuss how the child perceives his or her environment. In middle school, sometimes perception and reality are in conflict with one another, and a child needs the guidance of an adult to sort through information. They need to feel that their parents and the school staff are working together to ensure a high level of success. At Rachel Carson, our goal is to have every child feel connected to their academic environment and enjoy the learning process.

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

Winston Churchill

Augie Frattali
Principal

Carson Student Recognition!

SAT Math Test Level 1 – A student earned a score of 800 out of 800 recently.

CARSON STAFF IN THE NEWS!

Congratulations to two of Carson's teachers on recent honors. Mr. Garrett Evans, one of Carson's two fine technology exploration teachers, was named the 2011 Virginia Middle School Technology Education Teacher of the Year in August. Mr. Evans was recognized by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at a December board meeting, where Supervisor Frye praised Mr. Evans' work in the technology field and recognized the amazing things that students do in technology, from rocketry, to robotics, to electronics, to flight simulation. He noted how important these valuable experiences are in preparing students for the technology-rich world for the 21st century.

Mr. Mark Bolt, our other outstanding technology exploration teacher, was recognized at the White House in December for having achieved recertification as a National Board certified teacher. As part of the event Mr. Bolt was invited to participate in a panel discussion on effective teaching along with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Following the recognition at the White House, he and two of his technology exploration students, Jet P. and Audrey L., met Secretary Duncan and participated in workshops on education issues at the Department of Education.

NOTES FROM THE OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES

Career Exploration

As part of our program in preparing students for their futures, school counselors on each team met with their 7th grade students in December to present a career lesson and will meet with their 8th grade students in January. During these lessons, counselors introduced students to the many career opportunities available in today's world economy. Using a new career website through Naviance, students completed an interest and skill inventory, and were matched with careers which utilize these interests and skills. Students then researched several careers, discovering the education needed, future job prospects, current earnings, job descriptions, etc.

Registration for 2012-2013 School Year Begins

In February, counselors will begin the process of registering students for the 2012-2013 school year. During January, February, and March, rising 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students will be assisted in selecting courses for their next grade level. Please note the parent orientation/curriculum dates and times that are listed here. If you have additional questions regarding the high school curriculum nights, please feel free to go to the individual high school websites for more information.

School	Curriculum Night	Snow Date
Oakton HS	February 1 st	February 8 th
Westfield HS	February 1 st	-----
South Lakes HS	February 2 nd	February 9 th
Chantilly HS	February 6 th	February 7 th

February 2

Rising 8th grade Parent Orientation at RCMS – 7:00 p.m.

(Gifted and Talented Center, and Special Education breakout sessions - 6:30 p.m.)

(Snow date: February 10)

March 7

Rising 7th grade Parent Orientation at RCMS – 7:00 p.m.

(Gifted and Talented Center, ESOL, and Special Education breakout sessions - 6:15 p.m.)

Did You Know?

Fairfax County has a Parenting Education Center that offers courses to parents ranging from early childhood developmental classes to how to communicate with adolescents. For a brochure or more information call (703) 846-8695 or visit their internet site:

<http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/DIS/OECFS/parented.htm>.

Counselor Recommendations

About this time of the year, our counselors receive many school and summer program referrals and recommendation requests. Due to their many obligations, we would ask that you please allow a two week window to have these requests processed and returned.

Looking Ahead – Important Dates to Remember:

January 10	Parent coffee – 8:15-9:15 cafeteria (Topic: Cyber bullying & Internet safety)
January 16	Martin Luther King, Jr. day; staff and student holiday
January 19	IB Information Night – lecture hall – 7:00 PM
January 27	Second grading period ends
January 30	Teacher work day (student holiday)
January 31	County-wide in-service for teachers (student holiday)
February 1	<u>Second semester begins</u> (third grading quarter); many students will begin new elective classes
February 2	Rising 8 th grade Parent Orientation (details above)
February 3	Report cards mailed home
February 17	High school counselors come to Carson for registration of 8 th grade students
February 20	Washington's Birthday holiday (Presidents' Day); staff and student holiday

Looking ahead – 8th Grade Finance Park Field Trip

Information will be coming home in the near future regarding the 8th grade field trip to Finance Park. This event is being sponsored by our area Junior Achievement organization and will take place on March 12-16, 2012. Many parent volunteers will be needed, so please consider going with your child's team to this exciting educational field trip. The teams are tentatively scheduled to go on the following dates from 8:00-1:30:

March 12	V team
March 13	W team
March 14	X team
March 15	Y team
March 16	Z team

If you have any questions, please contact your child's 8th grade civics or math teacher.

Telephone Etiquette

Remember – the front office personnel are there to help you. A reminder to parents that when you contact our front office (or the Student Services office), our office personnel will try their best to assist you in whatever way that they can - as politely as they can. We would urge you to remain calm until

the appropriate person can be located to speak with you, or they can locate the information that is requested. Good communication is important to us, not only in its content but in its delivery as well.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS' MESSAGE

We would first like to welcome everyone back from what we hope was a restful and fun winter break. We are ready to plunge into the new year with renewed vigor and attention to our number one focus: learning. We have relatively few instructional days before the end of the quarter, so it will be important for everyone to maintain that focus.

To that end, now is a good time to replenish school supplies and, especially at the end of the quarter, work with your child to clean out binders and appropriately file papers that may be needed later. Organization is a key skill for successful students and adults; regular attention to keeping materials and assignments up to date and in place will go a long way to supporting academic success.

The students continue to be delightful to work with, and we continue to be impressed with the respect they demonstrate toward one another and the adults in the building and with their behavior in general. We know we will see more of the same in 2012 with this fine bunch of young people.

Please contact us if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas as we work together to support your child in being successful. We look forward to working with your student in this brand new year!

Tamara Ballou, Sybil Terry, and Phil Hudson

STUDENT ACCOUNTS & INFUSION OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

What was that password? As adults we often have difficulty trying to remember all of the logins and passwords to the various programs we need to access. It is no different for Rachel Carson students. Beginning in elementary school, students have a wide array of online educational resources. The days of your child placing his or her homework on the kitchen table for you to check over are slipping away. Now there are teacher websites and clouds where work is stored and in some cases turned in to the classroom teacher. Perhaps it's not a "paperless classroom", but we certainly may be seeing classrooms and students use less paper.

RCMS students have access to the following accounts this school year:

FCPS 24-7 LEARNING [Blackboard](#)- Each student has an individual login and password. Parents can register for a ParentView account.

[Parentview Blackboard Account](#) – Parent login for accessing all blackboard content for all children in the family. Provides access to WeCare to view and instantly update the emergency care card. [Directions to register for a ParentView account can be found on the Carson website.](#)



Horizon Assessment Center (eCART) – Our FCPS assessment center is located within Blackboard. Students log into Blackboard and click on the eCART tab.

My FCPS

Courses

Community

eCART

The programs below require individual student logins. There are no separate parent accounts.

[Google Apps for Education](#) – Students are working in the Google Cloud beginning this school year.

They are provided the functions of an internal messaging system (access between other FCPS subscribers only); calendar; and documents (Document, Presentation, Spreadsheet, Form and Drawing). Items can easily be shared



between students to work collaboratively or shared back to the teacher to review or grade.

Skills Tutor- Online practice to enhance math and reading skills. This program is used for additional practice to support content embedded in the program of studies.



Social Studies Online Textbook - 7th and 8th grade students were supplied with an online social studies textbook this school year. Any student having trouble accessing this textbook at home should contact his or her social studies teacher.



Need Help? Rachel Carson has a school based instructional technology specialist that works with staff and students. If you have questions regarding accounts or the overall program, please feel free to contact Stacy Kirkpatrick by e-mail at SKirkpatrick@fcps.edu.

PTA NEWS - A Legacy of Advocacy

About half of the Carson families have become members of the Carson Middle School Parent Teacher Association and we thank you for that choice. As you know, our PTA supports a myriad of school activities and funds needed resources for our school. But you may not know that a portion of your dues is forwarded to the National PTA, our parent organization.

The National PTA, founded in 1897, is the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy association in the United States. The PTA has a long, successful history of influencing federal policy to promote the education, health, and well-being of all children. PTA advocacy has resulted in public kindergarten classes, child labor laws, school lunch programs, a juvenile justice system, and stronger parent-teacher relationships.

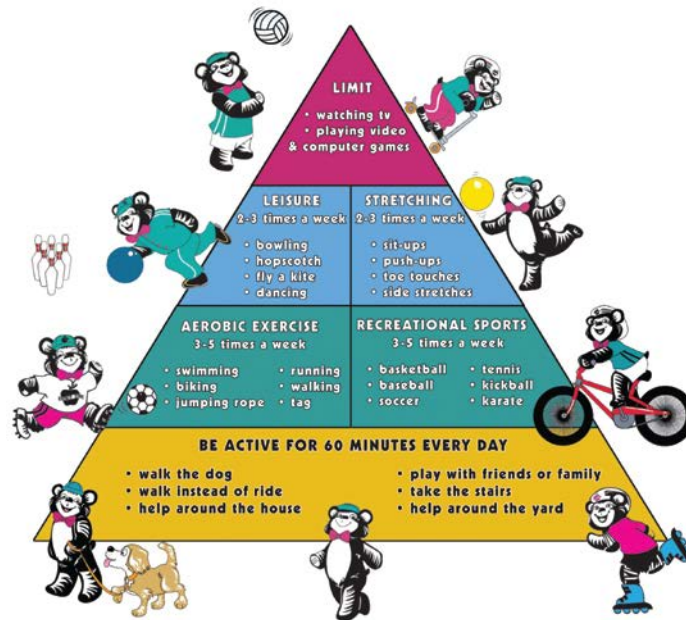
That legacy continues with its current federal public policy priorities: Family Engagement in Education, and Opportunity and Equity for all Children. You can read about PTA policy positions at www.PTA.org/Public_policy.asp. PTA members are encouraged to learn about policy positions and educate members of Congress and State representatives about PTA policy priorities. You can also get more involved by attending school board meetings and working with school leaders and state education officials to implement PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.

To my knowledge, our Carson PTA has never had a legislation or advocacy committee. If you are interested in public policy initiatives involving children and education and would like to step forward to chair a new advocacy committee, I would welcome you to our Board. The National PTA is holding its annual legislative conference in Arlington, VA, in April of this year. Funds are available to send one or two interested PTA members to this event. If you would like to attend, e-mail me at Dtycer@gmail.com.

Finally, as the presidential campaign ramps up in 2012, please pay attention to candidate positions on public education. If you like what candidates are saying about educational reform, let them know. If you disagree with their positions, let them know that as well. Together, we can ensure that even in these uncertain economic times, quality public education remains a national priority.

Diana Tycer-Bice
RCMS PTA President

The Exercise Pyramid



TIPS FOR FAMILIES:

EAT RIGHT

- Choose healthy foods.
- Increase whole-grain foods.
- Eat fruits and vegetables, especially dark green and orange.
- Include calcium-rich foods such as low fat dairy products.
- Select low fat meat, chicken, turkey and fish.
- Avoid foods and beverages with sugar as the first ingredient.

EXERCISE

- Be an active family.
- Exercise 60 minutes per day.
- Include physical activities at family celebrations.
- Limit TV and computer time.



CARSON MS

Please join us and enjoy coffee and conversation with other parents:

CYBER-BULLING/INTERNET SAFETY

WHAT, WHEN AND WHERE?



Coffee and Conversation

Date: Tuesday, Jan 10

Time: 8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Where: Carson Cafeteria

- Learn how cyber-bullies use the Internet to manipulate students.
- Discover how cyber-bullies harass or spread false rumors about students on electronic devices.
- Determine which internet activities are acceptable, safe and legal.
- Realize how sexually explicit material can affect students; how sexual predators will try to gain their trust.
- Students need to know that their electronic messages can leave footprints that can be misused by others.
- Students have to learn about psychological ploys and how to get immediate adult help.
- Students should be taught how to maximize the internet's potential, and protect themselves from potential abuse.

Middle School Enrichment Opportunities



To register

Register online at www.fcps.edu/is/ace; select Registration Options. Reduced tuition is not available.

Questions

Karin Valentino, Assistant

kvalentino@fcps.edu
703.658.1290

Lynn Killiany, Program Specialist

lkilliany@fcps.edu
703.658.1289

Other courses also available:

- SAT Online
- SAT Critical Reading
- SAT Math Victory
- SAT Writing
- SAT Test Preparation

“They helped me get on the A/B honor roll...”

ACE Student
Essential Skills for Success in MS



Effective Study Skills for Teens (Grades 6-8)

Study smarter, not harder. Topics: time management, motivation, note taking, memory techniques, and exam tips. 5 sessions @ 2 hrs each.

\$155 Tuition
\$ 12 Text: Effective Study Skills for Teens Workbook
\$167 Total Cost | **Course SM07624**

Section 1010 6:30 pm
South Lakes HS, Rm 244 Th, February 9-March 8

Section 1020 6:30 pm
Chantilly HS, Rm 123 Tu, February 21-March 20

Section 1040 10:00 am
Hayfield SS, Rm 1148 Sa, March 3-March 31

Section 1030 10:00 am
Woodson HS, Rm G106 Sa, March 24-April 28

Essential Skills for Success in Middle School

An exciting and unprecedented opportunity is now available to ALL middle school students in Fairfax County! In an effort to further support academic achievement, Fairfax County Public Schools, Adult and Community Education is on the forefront of providing programs that will help students make the successful transition from middle school to high school.

Students in grades 6-8 can enroll in the Essential Skills for Success in Middle School **NOW** and ensure that they have the essential, non-negotiable skills needed for academic success.

DO NOT wait until high school to begin this very important process. The Essential Skills for Success in Middle School covers four major skill areas: **English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science**. Register now to ensure a strong finish to this school year! 6 sessions @ 2 hrs each.

\$147 Tuition
\$ 52 Text: Cambridge Non-Negotiable Skills - Level One
\$199 Total Cost | **Course SM07300**

Section 1050 6:30 pm
South Lakes HS, Rm 210 Tu, January 24-February 28

Section 1010 10:00 am
Woodson HS, Rm G120 Sa, February 4-March 10

Section 1040 6:30 pm
Fairfax HS, Rm A144 W, February 8-March 14

Section 1020 12:00 pm
Plum Center, Rm 116 Su, March 11-April 29

Section 1030 10:00 am
Hayfield SS, Rm 1149 Sa, March 17-April 28

NEW

7th Grade Jumpstart: TJ Test Prep

For the first time, Thomas Jefferson test prep classes are being offered to students in grade 7 during the 2011-2012 school year. Instruction focuses on admissions test-related mathematical and verbal reasoning, essay writing, and study strategies. Other topics include enhancing individual test performance and confidence builders. This jumpstart course is an excellent precursor to the TJ admissions test prep course offered to students in grade 8. Participants should have strong mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills appropriate to viable candidacy for admission to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST). Participation in this seminar does not constitute application, admission, or acceptance to TJHSST. Applying to TJHSST is a separate process that begins in the fall of 2012. 10 sessions @ 2 hrs each.

\$273 Tuition
\$ 47 Text: Kaplan New York City SHSAT, 6th ed (\$14); TJ Admissions Test Student Handbook (\$11); Jumpstart: TJ Math Student Workbook (\$11); Jumpstart: TJ Verbal Student Workbook (\$11)
\$320 Total Cost | **Course TX04000**

Section 0100 6:30-8:30 pm
Fairfax HS W, February 1-February 29
Rm A141 and
10:00 am-12:00 pm
Sa, February 11-March 17

Section 0200 6:30-8:30 pm
Hayfield S W, February 1-February 29
Rm 140 and
10:00 am-12:00 pm
Sa, March 3-March 31

Section 0300 6:30-8:30 pm
McLean HS Th, February 2-April 12
Rm 125

Section 0400 6:30-8:30 pm
South Lakes HS Tu, February 7-April 17
Rm 463

Section 0500 9:00-11:00 am
Woodson HS Sa, February 18-March 17
Rm TBD and
11:30 am-1:30 pm
Sa, February 18-March 17

Section 0600 9:00-11:00 am
Plum Center Sa, March 3-March 31
Rm 140 and
11:30 am-1:30 pm
Sa, March 3-March 31

Section 0700 9:00-11:00 am
Centreville HS Sa, March 24-April 28
Rm 112 and
11:30 am-1:30 pm
Sa, March 24-April 28

Section 0800 10:00 am-12:00 pm
Fairfax HS Sa, March 24-April 28
Rm TBD and
12:30-2:30 pm
Sa, March 24-April 28

Register now for winter/spring classes; summer schedule will be available March 9, 2012.

Fairfax County Public Schools | Adult and Community Education
6815 Edsall Rd | Springfield, VA 22151

Rachel Carson Administrative Office
Ph. 703.925.3600
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

August FrattaliPrincipal
Cheryl Weaver.....Director of Student Services
Tamara Ballou Assistant Principal
Sybil Terry Assistant Principal
Philip Hudson Assistant Principal
Tracy Bromberg.....After-School Program Specialist
Eileen Harrington..... Finance Technician
Nancy Hofrichter..... Administrative Assistant
Margie McCarthy Office Assistant
Traci Nicol Office Assistant

Rachel Carson Attendance Line
Ph. 703.925.3636

Accessible 24 hours a day
7 days a week!

If you prefer to use your computer to notify us when your child will not be in school for any reason (except early check-out) or if he/she will be tardy, just send an e-mail to

CarsonMS.Attendance@fcps.edu.

Please do not send homework requests or early dismissal requests to this e-mail address.

Pre-arranged absence requests must be submitted three (3) school days in advance. If you know your student will be absent, have him or her bring a note to the front office giving the dates and reason for the absence. We will start the pre-arranged absence process, which will notify the attendance secretary as well as the teachers, and the student will be given his or her assignments for the time he or she will be out. At that point the pre-arranged absence form is submitted to the administrator for review. Pre-arranged absences may or may not be considered excused.

FORGOTTEN ITEMS

Parents are welcome to bring forgotten items to the front office.

Instructional time will not be interrupted to inform students when an item is dropped off.

It is the student's responsibility to check for forgotten items. Students are frequently reminded of this policy throughout the school year.

Please refrain from calling the Carson MS office asking that a message be delivered to your student. We cannot interrupt instructional time to give messages from home to students.

RCMS Student Services
Ph. 703.925.3614
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Cheryl Weaver Director of Student Services
Brenda Humphrey Lead Counselor
Esther Ferrell..... Counselor
Joni Fraundorfer..... Counselor
Rebecca Little Counselor
Jamie Mahoney..... Counselor
Lesla Lloyd..... Guidance Assistant
Mikela Burris Clerical Assistant
Donna Winston..... Social Worker
Stephanie Harris Psychologist
Danilda Bassols Parent Liaison
Ph. 703.925.3603
Jackie Plunkett..... School Health Aide
Ph. 703.925.3610
Kathleen Snow Public Health Nurse
Ph. 703.925.3611

Please visit our school website and bookmark it as a "Favorite." Check the website often for the latest news about RCMS, *Couriers*, curriculum, calendars, lunch menus, PTA news, and links to FCPS 24/7, Keep in Touch, and emergency announcements.



Rachel Carson MS Website:

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

VISITING RCMS

All outside doors are locked at all times. Our staff and students have been instructed not to open any locked doors for visitors. All visitors are directed to the main entrance marked **Door #1**. Press the doorbell located on the wall to the right of the right-hand set of doors, and when asked, display your photo ID and state the nature of your visit. When the door latch is released, pull the door open and proceed to the **Main Office** on your right.



Remember that we ask for photo identification when you pick up your student or visit the school.

January 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day	2 Winter Break	3 School Resumes	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Parent Coffee RCMS Cafeteria 8:15-9:15 a.m.	11	12	13	14
15	16 School Closed Martin Luther King Jr. Day	17 PTA Meeting RCMS Library 7:00 p.m.	18	19 IB Information Night Lecture Hall 7:00 p.m.	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 Teacher Workday Student Holiday	31 Teacher Workday Student Holiday				

February 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 RCMS Rising 8 th Grade Parent Orientation 7:00 p.m. Break-out Sessions 6:30 p.m.	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17 HS Counselors meet with 8 th graders	18
19	20 Presidents' Day School Closed	21 PTA Meeting RCMS Library 7:00 p.m.	22	23 RCMS SCA Dance Cafeteria & Gym 3:00 p.m.	24	25
26	27	28	29 Spring Pictures Pre-Pay Only			