

Family Gram

Fall 2008

Jack Dale
Superintendent
Fairfax County
Public Schools
Falls Church, Virginia
www.fcps.edu

Inside This Issue

- Inclement Weather and Emergency Closing Plans—page 2
- Gifted and Talented Center Information—page 6
- Bailey's and Hunters Woods Elementary Schools Open Houses—page 7
- Update Your KIT Account—page 8
- Readership Survey—page 9

The Last Page

- Parent Orientation for New Families

FCPS is completing a research study about the school system's grading policy that is examining the six-point grade scale and weights awarded for advanced classes.

Direct From the Superintendent *We Need Your Input on the Budget*

Your schools need your help. Given the economic outlook, it is clear that Fairfax County Public Schools has a budget deficit of more than \$150 million for the FY 2010 budget. Along with the FCPS School Board, Leadership Team, and budget staff, I am working closely with county government leadership to address this deficit, while maintaining high quality education programs.

We all know that the deficit is the result of a downturn in the housing market and subsequent losses in tax revenues. Unfortunately, by state law,

counties must depend inordinately on property taxes for revenue. Also by law, the School Board and the Board of Supervisors must adopt a balanced budget.

This year, even beyond our usual effort to provide excellent schools as cost-effectively as possible, we have—working with the county government—undertaken a comprehensive program and operations review that involves the School Board in focused discussions with the Leadership Team, central instructional

continued on page 4

What You Need to Know About the Research on FCPS' Grading Policy

The first grading period of the year has come and gone, but the topic of grades continues to generate interest throughout the school system and the community.

This fall, FCPS will complete a research study about the school system's grading policy. The study examines two elements: the system's six-point grade scale and the weights awarded for grades earned in advanced courses. A six-point grade scale awards grades as follows:

A 94-100	C 74-79
B+ 90-93	D+70-73
B 84-89	D 64-69
C+80-83	F Below 64

To determine grade point average (GPA), FCPS also provides an additional weight of .5 for students who take and pass Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

A parent advocacy group, Fairgrade, has been collaborating with FCPS on the research study. The group's organizers collected data to support changing to a ten-point grade scale, adding weights for AP and IB classes, and establishing a weight for honors classes. In April 2008, they met with Dr. Jack Dale, FCPS Superintendent, who agreed that the issue warranted a study. In May 2008, FCPS

continued on page 4

2008-09 Inclement Weather and Emergency Closing Plans

Due to inclement weather or other emergency situations, it may be necessary to close schools for the entire day, to open schools late, or to close early. The procedures used in school closings are detailed below. Keep this information in a convenient location for future reference.

Parents are urged to make arrangements now for the care of their children when schedule changes are made (and to provide for the rare situation when it is necessary to close an individual school because of a power failure or other circumstances). Children should know where to go if a parent will not be home.

Decisions on schedule changes are made after careful study of the best information available from many sources including weather services, the highway department, the police, and FCPS transportation staff members who are out checking the roads. FCPS will make every effort to **decide** before 5 a.m. whether to close or delay schools and will begin communicating the decision once it is made. **The 5 a.m. decision time is a goal.** Weather conditions can deteriorate after 5 a.m., which means that it may not be possible for FCPS to meet that goal.

While no sources dealing with weather predictions can be infallible, decisions are made with one overriding consideration—the safety of the students who ride buses or walk to school each day.

FCPS has several schedules set up to deal with inclement weather; these are put into effect when conditions threaten the safety of children who are walking or riding school buses to schools. These schedules are:

(1) Keep schools closed. (2) Open two hours late. (3) Close two hours early.

In every case of a schedule change:

- tune in to local radio and television stations (including cable **Channel 21**, a channel programmed by FCPS), which are notified as soon as a decision is made.

- check www.fcps.edu.

- call the FCPS hot line at **800-839-FCPS (3277)**.

- to receive this information via e-mail, sign up for the FCPS Keep in Touch (KIT) e-mail notification system. (See article on **page 8** for information on how to subscribe and update your Keep in Touch information.)

Do not phone the school or one of the stations for this information. To receive this information via e-mail, sign up for the **FCPS Keep in Touch** e-mail notification system.

When schools are closed for the day, the following will apply:

- Extracurricular activities, interscholastic contests, team practices, field trips, middle school after-school programs, adult and community education classes, professional learning and training courses, and recreation programs in schools and on school grounds are canceled.
- School age child care (SACC) centers are closed.

When schools are opened two hours late, the following will apply:

- If it is on Monday, elementary schools (which usually close early on Mondays) will close at their usual Tuesday-through-Friday time.

- Morning (half-day) kindergarten will be dismissed one hour later than the usual Tuesday-through-Friday time. Afternoon (half-day) kindergarten will begin one hour later than the usual Tuesday-through-Friday time.

- Morning preschool (special education) and Family and Early Childhood Education (Head Start) classes are canceled. Full-day preschool (special education) and Family and Early Childhood Education (Head Start) classes start two hours later than the regular schedule. Afternoon preschool (special education) starts on the regular schedule.

- Morning field trips are canceled.

- Morning transportation for high school academy classes is canceled.

- School age child care (SACC) centers will be open by 8 a.m. when possible.

- Adult and community education classes will start on time.

When schools are closed two hours early due to worsening weather conditions during the day, the following will apply:

- FCPS' **goal** is to make a **decision** by 10 a.m. and to



begin communicating the decision at that time.

■ Elementary schools will close two hours earlier than the usual Tuesday-through-Friday time.

■ Afternoon (half-day) kindergarten is canceled. Morning (half-day) kindergarten students will be provided lunch at no cost and will be released with other students. Morning kindergarten students who were bused to school will be bused home with other students without special kindergarten stops. Kindergarten students living within the normal walking boundary will not be bused.

■ Morning preschool (special education) and Family and Early Childhood Education (Head Start) programs are dismissed at approximately 11 a.m. Full-day preschool (special education) and Family and Early Childhood Education (Head Start) classes are dismissed two hours earlier than the regular schedule. Afternoon preschool (special education) and Family and Early Childhood Education (Head Start) classes are canceled.

■ Extended day care and school age child care (SACC) centers will stay open until 6:15 p.m.

■ Extracurricular activities, interscholastic contests, team practices, field trips, middle school after-school programs, adult and community education classes, professional learning and training courses, and recreation programs in schools and on school grounds are canceled.

FCPS Emergency Notification Systems

In every case of a schedule change:

- tune in to local TV and radio stations, including cable Channel 21, which is programmed by FCPS.
- check www.fcps.edu.
- call the FCPS hot line at 800-839-FCPS (3277).

To receive this information via e-mail, sign up for the FCPS Keep in Touch (KIT) e-mail notification system. See the article on page 8 for information on how to subscribe and update your account.

Want to Learn More About How School Closing Decisions Are Made?

If you want to learn more about how FCPS administrators decide to delay or close schools during inclement weather, you can check out a short video, which is available online by going to www.fcps.edu/DIT/streaming/ss8_snowdaze.aspx.

Effects of Inclement Weather on Kindergarten Transportation

Two-Hour Late Opening—A.M. Kindergarten

Students will report two hours later than their regular schedule, are released approximately one hour later than the usual Tuesday-through-Friday time, and are transported to their midday kindergarten stops. **P.M. kindergarten (half-day only)** students are picked up at their midday kindergarten stops approximately one hour later than the usual Tuesday-through-Friday time. If a late opening occurs on a Monday, elementary schools will not close early but will observe the usual Tuesday-through-Friday schedule.

Two-Hour Early Closing—A.M. Kindergarten

Students will be given lunch at no cost and released with other students. Those a.m. kindergarten

students who rode buses to school in the morning will ride on those same buses to the same stops at which they were picked up. **The buses will not stop at the special midday kindergarten bus stop locations. Kindergartners who live within the normal walking boundary will not have transportation and must walk home.**

If your kindergartner goes to a day care provider who lives in a location to which older students are transported, talk with a school staff member to determine which bus your child should ride on during the days of a two-hour early closing. **P.M. kindergarten (half-day only) classes will be canceled.** If early closing occurs on a Monday, elementary schools will close two hours earlier than the Tuesday-through-Friday schedule.



Community members are invited to provide feedback on program and service priorities as both Fairfax County and FCPS develop plans to deal with expected shortfalls in the FY 2010 budget.

Superintendent's Message, continued

staff members, support functions, and school leaders. In this ongoing review, we are examining program and service priorities as they help us sustain high-quality education for all children and meet the School Board's student achievement goals, as well as federal and state mandates.

We invite you to be part of this effort. Twenty community dialogue sessions are being held throughout the county this fall to hear the public's view on budget priorities and cuts. Information about these sessions is available at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/budget/publicmeetings.htm>.

You can also provide suggestions and comments online at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/survey/fy10suggestions.htm> and by phone (call the budget hot line at 703-324-9400, TTY 711). Suggestions and comments from these community dialogues will be used by the school system and the county government as the FY 2010 budget is developed.

Subsequent to the release of the Superintendent's FY 2010 proposed budget plan on January 9, 2009, the public will also

have the opportunity to comment on the specifics of the proposed budget. The FCPS budget calendar (available at <http://www.fcps.edu/fs/budget/calendar/index.htm>) includes the dates for public hearings and budget work sessions. The Board of Supervisors will then hold hearings and determine the amount of the county transfer to the school system. Using this revenue information, the School Board will then determine the final schools budget. Final budget decisions will not be determined until May 21, 2009, when the School Board adopts its approved budget for FY 2010.

This year, more than ever, it is critically important that you, our parents and community members, make your views known to our elected representatives. For more information, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/news/fy2010.htm>.



Jack D. Dale
Superintendent of Schools



FCPS Grading Policy, continued

and Fairgrade began the research to address the following questions:

- Is the distribution of grade point averages (weighted and unweighted) for FCPS high schools significantly different from those in comparable school systems that use a ten-point grading scale?
- What is the impact of different grading policies on college admissions, merit scholarships, and honors placement?
- What are the potential consequences of changing the FCPS grading policies? What evidence supports the current grading policies?

"A variety of different grading scales and weights are used across the country. There is no universal policy that is applied by all schools," said Pat Murphy, assistant

superintendent of accountability, who is leading the FCPS research team. "In the meantime, our students and parents realize that we have high expectations for students' performance. And we need to look objectively at how our policy might influence our kids' admission as well as their access to honors and scholarship awards."

Murphy will present the report to Dr. Dale, who will decide next steps. A DVD copy of a round table discussion on the topic is available for parents and students to view at all high schools, and a video-streamed interview with Pat Murphy about the study from "Insight" on Red Apple 21 is available at <http://www.fcps.edu/mediapub/cable-tv/archive/0809/in0809.htm>. Frequently asked questions about the FCPS grading policy will be posted soon at <http://www.fcps.edu/news/grading.htm>.



FCPS Schedules Town Meetings to Help Determine Boundaries for Two New Elementary Schools

Fairfax County Public Schools will hold four town meetings to solicit citizen input in order to determine boundaries for two new elementary schools scheduled to open in September 2009.

The new elementary school under construction at the Coppermine site is located on River Birch Drive in Herndon and will be a 32-classroom school serving students in grades K-6.

Schools involved in the boundary study include **Floris, Herndon, Hutchison, McNair, and Oak Hill Elementary Schools**. Town meetings for this study will be held:

■ Thursday, November 13, 7 p.m., at Carson Middle School.

■ Wednesday, December 10, 7 p.m., at Franklin Middle School.

The new elementary school under construction at the Laurel Hill site is located on Laurel Crest Drive in Lorton and will be a 38-classroom school serving students in grades K-6. Schools involved in the boundary study include **Gunston, Halley, Lorton Station, Newington Forest, and Silverbrook Elementary Schools**. Town meetings for this study will be held:

■ Tuesday, November 11, 7 p.m., at South County Secondary School.

■ Monday, December 1, 7 p.m. at South County Secondary School.

Note: Carson Middle School is located at 13618 McLearen Road in Herndon. Franklin Middle School is located at 3300 Lees Corner Road in Chantilly. South County Secondary School is located at 8501 Silverbrook Road in Lorton. For more information, contact Denise James at 703-246-6920 or denise.james@fcps.edu.

Fairfax County Public Schools Introduces FCPS eCART

Fairfax County Public Schools is proud to launch a new initiative called **FCPS electronic curriculum assessment resource tool or eCART**. FCPS eCART is a web-based teacher resource that gives elementary, middle, and high school teachers access to instructional materials at their desktops. It contains an assessment engine, which is a piece of software that allows teachers to create and give tests that prepare students for the Virginia Standards of Learning tests (SOLs). This tool will allow teachers to create assessments that may be used with students either online or with paper and pencil.

These assessments will help teachers measure student performance against the SOLs. These Virginia standards are tested at the end of the year. Students in elementary and middle school will take one required eCART assessment in mathematics and reading in the second semester. High school students will also take assessments in SOL-tested subjects. In addition, schools will have an option to use eCART assessments throughout the course of the school year to help measure the effectiveness of instruction and provide feedback to students about their progress.

The required assessments will not be used for classroom grading. FCPS eCART is one tool for both the student and teacher to use as part of the learning process. The detailed reporting system in FCPS eCART will allow teachers to review student performance by skill or concept and will give teachers electronic access to additional instructional resources. This information will help teachers plan for instruction to best meet the needs of all students in the classroom. Currently, FCPS eCART contains instructional resources and assessments for four subject areas—mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies. Plans are under way to include instructional materials and assessments for all other curricular areas to include fine arts, career and technical education, health and physical education, and foreign language.

To learn more about FCPS eCART, contact your local school or go to <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/FCPSeCART/>.



FCPS Gifted and Talented (GT) Center Information

The GT center program for students in grades 3 through 8 offers identified students a highly challenging instructional program that follows the FCPS Program of Studies. Differentiation in the depth, breadth, and pace of instruction is designed to meet the needs of

advanced learners with a strong emphasis on higher level thinking skills.

In order to provide an appropriate level of challenge for gifted learners, adaptations are made to the curriculum with a strong emphasis on critical and creative

thinking, problem solving, and decision making. Students participate with the entire student body in school-based activities such as student government, physical education, band and strings, chorus, and other electives.



GT Center Eligibility

A countywide central selection committee determines eligibility for GT center placement using test data, the Gifted Behavior Rating Scale With Commentary (GBRSw/C), progress reports, and other available information. The committee consists of administrators, teachers, psychologists, social workers, and other school professionals. Decisions are made using a holistic approach. Parents and guardians are notified of eligibility decisions by U.S. mail.

An eligible student is assigned to a GT center based on the geographic location of his or her base school, and transportation is provided for a student within his or her school boundary area. Parents may appeal an ineligible decision through a process that is outlined in the ineligibility letter. A student remains eligible for GT center placement through eighth grade.

Currently Enrolled Students: Second Grade Identification

Second grade students are considered for placement in a GT center using the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAt) and the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT). These tests are administered during October and November to currently enrolled and attending FCPS second graders. A review of the scores from these tests is used by the school system to select a screening pool for center consideration.

The benchmark score for selection fluctuates each year in response to the makeup of the second grade population. This score is available to parents and guardians once it is determined. With parent permission, GT center screening files are created for these students and then forwarded to the central selection committee. Using the gifted and talented center referral form (available in all schools), parents and guardians may refer second graders who are **not** in the screening pool. Referrals may be submitted at any time, but no later than **February 6, 2009**. Parents will be mailed eligibility decisions in **May 2009**.

Currently Enrolled Students: Third Through Seventh Grade Identification

The gifted and talented center referral form initiates the screening process for students in grades 3 through 7. Parents and guardians or school personnel complete and sign this form. Referrals may be submitted at any time **but no later than February 6, 2009**. The completed gifted and talented center referral form is submitted to the local school principal. The local school GT screening committee determines if further review is indicated.

More Information

For additional information, contact your local school principal or GT resource teacher, call the gifted and talented programs section at 703-846-8670, or visit the GT web site at www.fcps.edu/DIS/gt.



Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences Information Night

Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences has been a magnet school since 1992. The school integrates arts, sciences, and technology as students learn through an active process of creating, inquiring, and connecting. The school is focused on each student meeting goals in three areas:

- academic proficiency and growth.
- learning that is well-rounded in the arts, sciences, technology, and multiple languages (for the Spanish partial-immersion and ESOL programs).
- connecting with others and communities.

Bailey's is unique in its spaces and teachers for supporting learning in science, technology, and the arts. Additionally, partnerships with the Kennedy Center, the U.S. Forest Service, and Capital One strengthen the resources for both student and teacher learning. After-school opportunities in the school's theater program and the PTA-sponsored classes are extensive.

Applicants for admission must be entering grades kindergarten through 5 in the 2009-10 school year, be working on or above grade level in language arts and math, and demonstrate positive interpersonal and school behaviors. Applications are available in all Fairfax County elementary schools beginning in January or can be downloaded from the Bailey's web site at www.fcps.edu/BaileysES/. Applications must be completed and postmarked by **March 1, 2009**, and submitted to the Office of Elementary Instruction and Administrative Services.

An information night will be held at the school on **Thursday, February 5, 2009, at 7 p.m.** (snow date February 12).

For information, contact Marjorie McCarthy at Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences at 6111 Knollwood Drive, Falls Church, VA 22041, 703-575-6836.

Hunters Woods Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences Information Night

Hunters Woods Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences magnet program will have openings for qualified students in grades 1 through 6 for the 2009-10 school year. To be selected, students must be working on or above grade level in language arts and mathematics and must possess good citizenship and study skills. The magnet program weaves the arts, sciences, and technologies into all areas of the curriculum in order to stimulate and extend the educational potential of all students.



Each year, students are selected by a computer-generated lottery. The number of students chosen varies from year to year according to the number of openings at each grade level. This is not determined until the actual time of the lottery. Students not selected through the lottery are placed on a wait list.

Applications will be available in all Fairfax County public schools beginning in January 2009 or can be downloaded from the Hunters Woods web site www.fcps.edu/HuntersWoodsES/. Applications must be completed and submitted to: Magnet Lottery, Office of Elementary Instruction and Administrative Services, 3705 Crest Drive, Annandale, VA 22003. **Applications must be postmarked no later than March 2, 2009.**

Parent Information Night

An information meeting will be held at Hunters Woods on **Tuesday, February 3, 2009, at 7p.m.** In the event of inclement weather, the meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 10, 2009, at 7p.m. For additional information, contact Diane Beers, parent liaison, Hunters Woods Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences, 2401 Colts Neck Road, Reston, VA 20191, 703-262-7405.



Frequently Asked Question: How Do I Update My Keep in Touch Account?

Fairfax County Public Schools has a new vendor for the Keep in Touch (KIT) notification system, Blackboard Connect (formerly NTI, Connect-ED).



Blackboard Connect is an award-winning company with years of experience with K-12 education systems, many as large as or larger than FCPS. The system will still be called Keep in Touch or KIT.

Since KIT is used to deliver school system emergency messages such as school closings due to inclement weather, it is critically important that your contact information (e-mail addresses, home phone, cell phone, etc.) be kept up to date so that you do not miss out on any important messages.

A frequently asked question from many parents is: **How do I update my Keep in Touch account information?**

Families have two options:

1. Fill out or update your child's emergency care information form and return it to the school.
2. Update your child's emergency care contact information via weCare@School (you must have a Parent View account). To learn more about Parent View, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/fcps247.htm>. For assistance with Parent View, call 1-866-434-8880.

The new KIT system uses your child's student registration information.

If you are new to Fairfax County Public Schools, all you have to do is complete the emergency care information form when you register your child.

For information on how to add KIT messages to your e-mail "friends list," go to <https://www.fcps.edu/kit/whitelist.htm>.

Parents can update their KIT account information by using the emergency care information form or through the Parent View feature of FCPS 24-7.

Alternate Transportation Plans

In case of emergencies such as road closures, accidents, or weather-related road problems, school bus drivers may use safe transportation-approved alternate locations to pick up or drop off students.

Bus drivers will return children to their schools:

- If there is no safe transportation-approved alternative stop.
- If a child expresses concern, for any reason, about getting off of the bus.
- If the driver has any other concerns

regarding the safety of releasing a student at a regular stop.

Office of Transportation Services Emergency Telephone Number

The after-hours emergency number, 703-764-2400, is available 24 hours a day. This is best used after regular business hours (5 p.m. or later) when your child has not arrived at his or her designated bus stop at the usual time. Before 5 p.m., please contact your child's school.



Help Those in Need, Adopt a Family for the Holidays This Year

Times are tough for everyone these days. But for thousands of families in Fairfax County who are already on the brink of poverty, times are even tougher. For these families, even the basic necessities of life are slipping out of reach. And when the holidays are here, children in these families may not have presents or even a holiday meal to celebrate the season—unless you can help.

Through a grant from Fairfax County, local nonprofit Our Daily Bread, Inc., (ODB) administers a holiday program that matches local families with donors who provide Thanksgiving and December holiday meals, as well as gifts for children in the families.

Families are referred to the program by **Fairfax County Public Schools social workers and counselors**, as well as local social services agencies. Many of the families served by ODB work multiple jobs to make ends meet but still are unable to keep up with the high cost of housing, food, transportation, and utilities in the county. Others are unable to work because of illness or injury.

When you adopt a family, you will feel the true spirit of the season. Participating

in the holiday program is a wonderful group or family activity. And it's a great way to give back to the community, because your help goes directly to a local family in need.

How Can I Help?

When you choose to adopt a family, you simply purchase food for a holiday meal and arrange to deliver it to the family. For December holidays, you also purchase gifts or gift cards for the children in the family. The process is simple. You can also make a contribution of cash or gift cards directly to Our Daily Bread, which will distribute them to families that are not adopted.

How Do I Sign Up?

Simply log on to www.our-daily-bread.org and fill out a donor form. The organization will match you up with a family and send you all the information you need. You can also send an e-mail to holiday@odbfairfax.org, or call 703-273-8829.

If you prefer to make a donation, just visit the web site and click on Donate Now, or mail your contribution to Our Daily Bread Holiday Program, 10777 Main Street, suite 320, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Help Us Shape the Future of *FamilyGram* Complete Our Online Survey—We Want to Hear From You!

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) wants to hear whether or not *FamilyGram* is meeting your needs and what could be done to improve it. Specifically, we are looking for your thoughts on:

- **Content**—Do you see *FamilyGram* as a valuable source of information? What type of information about FCPS do you like to receive in *FamilyGram*? Is there information you are not receiving that you would like to see included?
- **Delivery**—Do you prefer to read *FamilyGram* in print or electronically?
- **Frequency**—How often do you want to receive *FamilyGram*?

Please take a minute to complete a brief online survey at www.fcps.edu/familygramsurvey.htm. We appreciate your input, which will be completely anonymous.



FCPS Nondiscrimination Policy Notice

No student, employee, or applicant for employment in Fairfax County Public Schools shall, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity.

Compliance is coordinated by the directors of the following offices:

■ **Office of Equity and Compliance**, Department of Human Resources, suite 2100, 571-423-3050 or TTY 1-800-828-1120 or dial 711, regarding equal employment opportunity, discrimination, and sexual harassment issues.

■ **Office of Monitoring and Compliance**, Department of Special Services, suite 3600, 571-423-4210, regarding programs and activities for students with disabilities.

Correspondence may be addressed to the above offices and sent to **8115 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22042**.

For facilities access issues, contact the **Office of Design and Construction Services**, 703-246-3632, 10640 Page Avenue, suite 100, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

Risk Management Questions?

If you have questions on any of the topics listed below, contact Risk Management by phone at 571-423-3620/3621 or by e-mail at riskmanagement@fcps.edu.

- Field Trip Rules
- Insurance Provided for Authorized Volunteers
- PTA and Booster Club Insurance and Incorporation Recommendations
- Sponsorship of Activities and Events Related to FCPS
- Sports-Related FCPS Insurance Requirements
- Student Accident Insurance
- Student Personal Property Brought to School.

Guidelines on Religious Accommodations

Fairfax County Public Schools makes reasonable accommodations so individuals are able to meet their personal religious obligations. Parents, teachers, and administrators are encouraged to consult FCPS Guidelines for Religious Activities for Students. These may be accessed directly from the Calendar of Religious and Cultural Observances on the Calendars menu from the FCPS web site at <http://www.fcps.edu>.

If you have questions, call the Office of Equity and Compliance at 571-423-3050.

Public Notice—Virginia State Police Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry Web Site

The Virginia State Police Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minors Registry web site can be found at <http://sex-offender.vsp.virginia.gov/sor/>. This web site, which includes the public notification database, provides access to publicly available information about persons convicted of specified violent and sexual offenses. Members of the public can use this web site to educate themselves about the possible presence of such offenders in their local communities.

School Building Asbestos Management Plans Available for Public Review

Fairfax County Public Schools has completed the required **Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (A.H.E.R.A.)** asbestos reinspection and surveillance of all school buildings for FY 2009.

Updated asbestos management plans for each building are available for review in the main office of each building during regular school hours.

Prefer to Read FamilyGram Online?

An electronic version of this newsletter can be downloaded for printing or viewing by going to www.fcps.edu/mediapub/publicat/familygram/fall2008.pdf. (Requires Adobe Acrobat Reader.)



2008-09 School Calendars

Modified Elementary Schools

(Annandale Terrace, Dogwood, Franconia, Glen Forest, Graham Road, Parklawn, Timber Lane)

Nov. 4	Student holiday
Nov. 26	Students released two hours early
Nov. 27-28	Thanksgiving holidays
Dec. 23	Second grading period ends*+
Dec. 24- Jan. 2, 2009	Winter vacation
Jan. 5-9	Optional intersession
Jan. 19	King's birthday holiday
Jan. 20	Inauguration Day holiday
Jan. 27	Student holiday
Feb. 16	Washington's birthday holiday#
March 20	Third grading period ends*+
Mar. 23- April 3	Optional intersession#
April 6-10	Spring vacation
May 25	Memorial Day holiday
June 17	Last day of school*+ #N

* Schools are open.

+ Report cards are provided to parents at the end of each grading period and at the end of the school year.

Date subject to change if more than three school days are lost because of inclement weather.

N Early release on the last official day of school.

<u>Days Missed</u>	<u>Makeup Days</u>
1, 2, and 3	Will not be made up
4	Feb. 16
5	March 23 (intersession day)
6	Will not be made up
7	March 24 (intersession day)
8	Will not be made up
9	March 25 (intersession day)
10	Will not be made up

Modified Middle and High Schools

(Glasgow Middle, Falls Church High, Stuart High)

Nov. 3-4	Student holidays
Nov. 26	Students released two hours early
Nov. 27-28	Thanksgiving holidays
Dec. 24- Jan. 2, 2009	Winter vacation
Jan. 12	Second grading period ends*+
Jan. 19	King's birthday holiday
Jan. 20	Inauguration Day holiday
Jan. 26-27	Student holidays
Feb. 16	Washington's birthday holiday#
March 20	Third grading period ends*+
April 3	Student holiday#
April 6-10	Spring vacation
May 25	Memorial Day holiday
June 1	Graduation on or after this date*
June 4	Last day of school*+ #N

* Schools are open.

+ Report cards are provided to parents at the end of each grading period and at the end of the school year.

Date subject to change if more than three school days are lost because of inclement weather.

N Early release on the last official day of school.

<u>Days Missed</u>	<u>Makeup Days</u>
1, 2, and 3	Will not be made up
4	Feb. 16
5	April 3
6	Will not be made up
7	June 5
8	Will not be made up
9	June 8
10	Will not be made up

Standard School Calendar

Nov. 3-4	Student holidays
Nov. 26	Students released two hours early
Nov. 27-28	Thanksgiving holidays
Dec. 24- Jan. 2, 2009	Winter vacation
Jan. 19	King's birthday holiday
Jan. 20	Inauguration Day holiday
Jan. 23	Second grading period ends*+
Jan. 26-27	Student holidays
Feb. 16	Washington's birthday holiday#
April 2	Third grading period ends*+
April 3	Student holiday
April 6-10	Spring vacation
May 25	Memorial Day holiday
June 15	Graduation on or after this date*
June 18	Last day of school*+ #N

*Schools are open.

+Report cards are provided to parents at the end of each grading period and at the end of the school year.

#Date subject to change if more than three school days are lost because of inclement weather.

N Early release on the last official day of school.

Makeup Days

<u>Days Missed</u>	<u>Makeup Days</u>
1, 2, and 3	Will not be made up
4	February 16
5	April 3
6	Will not be made up
7	June 19
8	Will not be made up
9	June 22
10	Will not be made up

Do You Have a Nominee?

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) sponsors several award programs to recognize excellence among employees. Now is the time to start thinking about potential nominees for the following award programs:

■ **Principal of the Year and the Distinguished Educational Leadership Award** (cosponsored by the Washington Post): The nominee must have at least five years' successful experience as a principal, including at least three years with FCPS. The deadline for nominations is **December 12, 2008**.

■ **Teacher of the Year and the Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award** (cosponsored by the Washington Post): The nominee must have at least three years of successful full-time teaching experience in FCPS. The deadline for nominations is **December 12, 2008**.

■ **Support Employee of the Year:** The nominee must be a support employee with at least three years of successful full-time or part-time experience with FCPS. The deadline for nominations is **February 27, 2009**.

■ **Outstanding First-Year Principal Award:** The nominee must have begun his or her first assignment as a principal on or after January 1, 2007. The deadline for nominations is **March 13, 2009**.

Any FCPS teacher or staff member, student or former student, parent, administrator, or Fairfax County employee or citizen may nominate a candidate for an award. Nomination forms and instructions are available on the FCPS web site at www.fcps.edu/DHR/employees/awards/.

For more information, call **571-423-3278**.

FCPS by the Numbers

Fairfax County Public Schools reports an **on-time graduation rate of 91 percent for members of the class of 2008**—which includes students who entered ninth grade for the first time during the 2004-05 school year—as part of the Virginia Department of Education's new on-time graduation rate report.

FCPS Offers Parent Orientation to New Families

Fairfax County Public Schools is offering a parent orientation seminar to families new to the school system in the 2008-09 school year. **Getting to Know Fairfax County Public Schools: A Parent Orientation** is taught by community liaisons and is offered in English, Arabic, Korean, and Spanish. This interactive seminar provides information about the school system and the importance of parental involvement in a child's educational achievement, suggestions for how parents can get involved with their children's schools, and a cultural discussion component that helps accelerate a family's acculturation to the United States.

The seminar is presented on the last Friday of each month in each language on a drop-in basis at the following locations:

■ **South County Government Center**, 8350 Richmond Highway, in the Alexandria area of Fairfax County, 703-704-6002. Presentation is in English from 6 to 8 p.m.

■ **Annandale Neighborhood Center**, 4700 Medford Drive, Annandale, 703-219-2420. Presentation is in Korean from 10 a.m. to noon.

■ **Devonshire Center**, 2831 Graham Road, Falls Church, 703-208-8017. Presentation is in Spanish from 10 a.m. to noon.

■ **Lake Anne-Reston**, 11484 Washington Plaza West, Reston, 703-668-0583. Presentation is in Spanish from 10 a.m. to noon.

For times and locations of presentations in Arabic, call 703-277-2637. For more information, contact Robin Hamby at **703-277-2626** or robin.hamby@fcps.edu.

Final Thought ...

“Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education, without which neither freedom nor justice can be permanently maintained.”

James A. Garfield