



February 4, 2009
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(**Editor's Note:** The full online version of *Supergram* is available at <http://www.fcps.edu/mediapub/publicat/sgm.htm>.)

Community Dialogues Scheduled to Discuss Possible Changes to School Start and Dismissal Times; Online Survey to Be Posted Next Week

In response to a report from its Transportation Task Force, the School Board is discussing the possibility of changing school start and dismissal times, beginning with the 2009-10 school year. Seven community dialogue meetings will be held during the last week in February for families and community members to share their thoughts about the possible changes. Also, an online survey will go live on February 9. Get details at <http://www.fcps.edu/news/start.htm>.

Fairfax County School Board Votes to Change Weighting, Grading Scale

The Fairfax County School Board has voted to increase the grade point weight for Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), dual enrollment college, and honors courses and has directed Superintendent Jack D. Dale to recommend "variants on a basic ten-point grading scale with pluses and minuses" for implementation at the beginning of the 2009-10 school year. Get details at <http://commweb.fcps.edu/newsreleases/newsrelease.cfm?newsid=1058>.

Communications Corner: Inclement Weather Closing Decisions

Do you know how FCPS administrators make the decision to delay or close schools during inclement weather and how the decision is communicated (go to <http://www.fcps.edu/news/emerg.htm>) to staff members, parents, and students? If not, learn more in this short video http://www.fcps.edu/DIT/streaming/ss8_snowdaze.aspx.

Books 24x7 Featured Title—*Self-Confidence Tips You Can Practice Today!*

Helping you to recognize where you shine and where you don't, this handy guide will show you how to find opportunity in adversity, find confidence in the face of uncertainty and have a greater impact on others. Get details at <http://www.fcps.edu/MTS/TrainingServices/elearn/Books24x7/index.html>.

FCPS by the Numbers

3: The number of FCPS high schools to have students named National Gold Key award winners by Quill and Scroll, the International Honor Society of High School Journalists. Get details at <http://commweb.fcps.edu/newsreleases/newsrelease.cfm?newsid=1061>.

Important Notice for *Supergram* Article Submissions

Article submissions for *Supergram* should be sent to Andy Grunig at andy.grunig@fcps.edu. **The next issue will be posted on February 14. Articles for that issue are due no later than Wednesday, February 11.** If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, Grunig can be reached at 571-423-1212. **Please Note:** The *Job Opportunities* publication and web pages are provided by the **Department of Human Resources**.

Quote to Note

"To be persuasive, we must be believable; to be believable, we must be credible; to be credible, we must be truthful."

Edward R. Murrow

About Our People

- **Gary Bender**, history and social studies teacher and yearbook adviser at Westfield, received Special Recognition in the Yearbook Adviser of the Year competition by the Journalism Education Association. The program is designed to honor outstanding high school publications advisers and their work from the previous school year. He will receive his award in April at the Journalism Education Association/National Scholastic Press Association convention in Phoenix.

How Do I Get Mentioned in About Our People?

Submit your good news for **About Our People** to *Supergram* editor Andy Grunig at andy.grunig@fcps.edu. We want to hear from you!

What Type of Information Is Used in About Our People?

The following categories of items will be published:

- Employees who publish articles or books.
- Those who successfully defend doctoral dissertations.
- Employees who receive regional, state, or national awards for their professional accomplishments.
- Employees elected to serve on regional, state, or national education organizations.
- Employees who give presentations at regional, state, or national meetings.
- Those who receive grants or are selected for scholarships that involve travel or sharing ideas.

Editor's Note: Send your electronic photo along with your good news.

Benefits

Employee Assistance Program Available to FCPS Staff Members

The employee assistance program (EAP) is a service available to FCPS staff members in need of help with personal and/or family problems. The program provides short-term confidential counseling and makes referrals (as appropriate) to outside providers, community resources, and support groups. EAP can help with life issues such as stress, depression, anxiety, grief, marital and/or family relationships, and alcohol or drug abuse.

To access the program, call the Office of Equity and Compliance at 571-423-3050 and leave a confidential voice message indicating your interest in EAP services. An EAP request form will be sent to you to complete. You may return the form by mail or by fax. After your completed form is received, a specialist will contact you to schedule an appointment.

For more information, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/DHR/employees/oec/eap.htm>.

Register Now for a Preretirement Workshop

The Educational Employees' Retirement Fund of Fairfax County (ERFC) hosts preretirement workshops throughout the school year to help prepare members who are within two years of retirement eligibility. This year's schedule includes split sessions to address the needs of members in both benefit plan structures: ERFC Legacy (members hired on or before June 30, 2001) and ERFC 2001 (members hired on or after July 1, 2001). Learn more about the specific provisions of the ERFC and VRS retirement plans, as well as the services available to help you determine your own right time to retire.

ERFC Preretirement Workshop Schedule

- Thursday, March 12.
- Tuesday, April 21.

Time: 5-7 p.m.

Location: Robinson Secondary School, recital hall, 5035 Sideburn Road, Fairfax.

Seating is limited and preregistration is required. To register, send an e-mail to ERFCComm@fcps.edu or send a fax to 703-426-3984 and include:

- your name.
- your employee ID number.
- your work location.
- your date of hire.
- the date of the workshop you want to attend.

Upon request, ERFC can also arrange on-site workshops at your work location for ERFC member audiences of at least 25 guests. For more information, contact the retirement office at 703-426-3950, or go to <http://www.fcps.edu/ERFC/index.htm>.

ERFC Retirement Handbooks Available

Member handbooks are available from the Educational Employees' Supplementary Retirement System of Fairfax County (ERFC) for full-time, monthly paid FCPS employees covered under the system. The ERFC provides separate handbooks for the system's two benefit plan structures, which are determined according to the member's FCPS hire date, as follows:

- The ERFC Legacy Retirement Plan covers all full-time, monthly paid FCPS educational and administrative employees **hired prior to July 1, 2001**.
- The ERFC 2001 Retirement Plan covers all full-time, monthly paid FCPS educational and administrative employees **hired on or after July 1, 2001**.

The handbooks are posted on the ERFC web site at www.fcps.edu/ERFC. To request a printed copy, send an e-mail, including your name, work location, and FCPS hire date to ERFCComm@fcps.edu.

Please Note: All part-time and biweekly paid FCPS employees are covered under the Fairfax County Employees' Retirement System (FCERS). For information regarding the FCERS retirement plan, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/redtbrd, or call 703-279-8200.

FCPS Online Classifieds Free for Employees

(**Note:** If you are trying to access the classifieds from your home computer, you will need to use the virtual private network (VPN), because the classifieds are located on the **FCPS intranet**.)

The FCPS Online Classifieds system—which is for employees only and, as such, **can be found on FCPSnet** (the FCPS employee intranet) at <http://commapps.fcps.edu/classifieds>—is a free way for employees to post ads for personally owned items that they are seeking to buy, sell, or give away, such as electronics, real estate, items for children, fitness and sports equipment, furniture, pets, cars, and tickets. It's also a great tool to help an employee **look for someone to share a ride to work, find a roommate, or rent real estate**.

Ads for employee-owned businesses or school or workplace fund-raisers will not be accepted. A complete list of **rules of use** can be found at <http://commapps.fcps.edu/classifieds/Policy.cfm>.

Due to server restrictions, **electronic photos cannot be uploaded along with postings**. Feel free to include information in your posting that a picture is available by e-mail upon request. For answers to some other frequently asked questions, go to <http://commapps.fcps.edu/classifieds/FAQ.cfm>.

The FCPS Online Classifieds system is completely self-service and allows users to post new ads or update or renew existing ads at any time. Highlights and security features of the FCPS

Online Classifieds system include:

- A user must log in using his or her existing FCPS network user name and password.
- A user must agree to the posted conditions before submitting an ad. **A user cannot use his or her FCPS phone number or e-mail address as a listed point of contact.**
- Active ads are searchable by date, category, and keyword.
- Ads will be reviewed by the system administrator before they are posted online. **Ads will be approved or denied within two to three business days** or as soon as resources allow. An automatic e-mail will be sent upon approval or denial to a user who includes a personal e-mail address as part of his or her contact information.
- A user who includes a personal e-mail address as part of his or her contact information will receive an automatic e-mail reminder before the ad is set to expire.

For more information, contact Andy Grunig at andy.grunig@fcps.edu. If you encounter a technical problem, contact Phung Trinh at phung.trinh@fcps.edu.

Send Your Success Stories

Have you used the FCPS Online Classifieds to buy or sell anything or to rent a room or a house, or do you have any other FCPS Online Classifieds success story you would like to share? Send your stories to andy.grunig@fcps.edu.

Did You Know?

Understanding Your 2008 W-2 Form

2008 W-2 forms were mailed to each employee's home address on January 21. A self-sealing mailer was used for the 2008 W-2 forms, a change from previous years when the forms have been inserted into envelopes. Be sure to follow the opening instructions on the back of the form.

The following information will help employees interpret the W-2 when it arrives.

The yearly gross earnings figure reported in each employee's last 2008 paycheck does not appear on the W-2. **W-2s report taxable wages, not gross earnings.** Federal taxable wages in box 1 on the W-2 represent annual gross earnings from your December 2008 pay stub or pay advice (pay period 13 for biweekly employees), minus and plus the following:

Minus:

- Retirement Fund Contributions.

- Tax-Deferred Account/403(b) Contributions (TDA contributions are also indicated in box 12, letter E).
- Section 457 Plan Contributions (Section 457 plan contributions are also indicated in box 12, letter G).
- Flex Fund Contributions (dependent and health care)* (Dependent care contributions are also indicated in box 10).
- Health Insurance Premiums.*
- Dental Insurance Premiums.*

Plus:

- The taxable portion of employee-paid life insurance coverage in excess of \$50,000. (This amount, if any, is included in taxable wages in boxes 1, 3, 5, and 16 and appears as letter C in box 12.)

* These items are also excluded from the Social Security and Medicare wages reported in boxes 3 and 5.

Employees who have had taxes withheld for more than one jurisdiction (e.g., Virginia and Maryland), will receive multiple W-2s (one for each jurisdiction).

Reissues

If you do not receive your 2008 W-2 **by February 6**, you may obtain a W-2 Reissue Request Form (FS73-66) from your work location or on the web at <http://www.fcps.edu/DIT/kam/docmgmt/forms/fs7366.pdf>. A reissue will be mailed or available for pickup approximately five working days after the request is received by the Office of Payroll Management (OPM). Requests may be faxed to OPM at 571-423-3507 or sent through the pony to Payroll Management, Gatehouse Administration Center I, suite 2200. Reissues will be processed beginning February 9 on a first-come, first-served basis.

Review Your Federal Tax Withholding Status

Now is the time for each employee to review his or her federal tax withholding status for the coming year. Employees claiming **total exemption** from federal tax withholding must file a new W-4 form to continue exempt status in 2009; the new Form W-4 must be received by the Office of Payroll Management on or before **February 15**.

Each employee is required by the Internal Revenue Service to withhold an amount equal to his or her taxes or at a rate of at least 90 percent of the current year obligation. If the number of personal allowances that an employee is eligible to claim changes, the employee must file a new W-4 form with the Office of Payroll Management within ten days of the change. Form W-4 may be obtained from work locations, on the web at <http://www.fcps.edu/DHR/forms/forms.htm>, or by contacting the Office of Payroll Management at 571-423-3500.

Review District of Columbia and Maryland Tax Withholding Status

The District of Columbia (Form D-4) and Maryland (Form MW507) require new withholding certificate forms to be filed each calendar year by **February 15** to certify the **exemption** from withholding income taxes. A new withholding certificate must be submitted to the Office of Payroll Management to continue exempt status in 2009. These forms may also be obtained from work locations, on the web at <http://www.fcps.edu/DHR/forms/forms.htm>, or from the Office of Payroll Management at 571-423-3500.

Winter WebStar Winners Announced

The new FCPS WebStar Awards (previously known as the Best Practices Awards) will be awarded three times each year by the Department of Communications and Community Outreach to the web curators of three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school for school web sites that best demonstrate the following criteria:

- Usefulness of content.
- Clarity of design.
- Ease of navigation.
- Adherence to FCPS web policies.

The winter WebStar winners are:

- **Rebecca Boyer**, Kent Gardens Elementary.
- **Elisa Alexander**, Mount Eagle Elementary.
- **Heather Dix**, Terraset Elementary.
- **Mary Reid**, Longfellow Middle.
- **Cris Bradshaw**, Oakton High.

Nominations will be gathered during the months of September, December, and March, and all FCPS school and department web curators will vote on the entire list of nominees. All WebStar winners will automatically be eligible for the Best of the Web awards, to be given in May.

For more information, contact Nancy Moy at nancy.moy@fcps.edu or 571-423-1221.

Support Services Employees' Advisory Council Representatives Needed, Nominations Due March 6

The next Support Services Employees' Advisory Council (SSEAC) election will be held March 30 through April 1 to fill the following two-year term representative vacancies:

- group 1—bus drivers and attendants

- group 3—food and nutrition services
- group 4—custodial and plant operations
- group 7—management and administrative
- group 8—educational support

An *HR News petition*, issue no. 94, to nominate candidates is available on the SSEAC's advisory council web site <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/supt/sseac/index.htm>. Interested candidates must submit a petition signed by 20 employees who work in their specific community-of-interest group (i.e., food and nutrition employees should sign for group 3 candidates.) and must also submit a statement of no more than 50 words as to why they would best serve in these positions.

Petitions and statements must be returned to Gatehouse Administration Center I, Office of Employee Performance and Development (OEPD), suite 2512, **by 4:30 p.m. on March 6.**

If you have questions, contact the OEPD office at 571-423-3252.

Application Deadline for Supporting Success Is February 9

Supporting Success is a professional development program for support employees US-19 and below. The ten-session program will give an overview of the functions of FCPS departments and the offices within these departments. Sessions will be held at various locations throughout the county. Supporting Success will begin on March 10.

The application is available online at <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/plt/supportingsuccess.htm>. Interested candidates must have at least one year of service with FCPS.

Questions regarding the program may be directed to Delores Herndon, Department of Professional Learning and Training, at 703-204-4054. Send completed applications by pony to Delores Herndon, Department of Professional Learning and Training, Dunn Loring Center, or by fax to 703-204-3861 **no later than February 9.**

Russell Nadel Named December News Liaison of the Month

Russell Nadel, music teacher at Mount Vernon Woods Elementary School, has been named the News Liaison of the Month for December by the Department of Communications and Community Outreach (DCCO). This new recognition program rewards school news liaisons for submitting newsworthy media tips and creative photographs. Nadel successfully placed news about Mount Vernon Woods in the Spanish-language newspaper *El Pregonero* on January 1, complete with a photo about the school's silver recognition in the USDA Healthier Schools challenge.

Nadel also submitted news to local papers about Mount Vernon Woods Elementary being the recipient of an offering at Christ Church of Old Town Alexandria. He also submitted photos for the FCPS home page that related to the Healthier Schools award as well as photos from the school's Partners in Print night. Nadel, who has been employed by FCPS and at Mount Vernon

Woods for three years, received a \$25 gift card from Starbucks for being named December's News Liaison of the Month.

Nominations Deadline Is February 27 for Support Employee of the Year Award

Nominations are now open for the 2009 FCPS Support Employee of the Year Award. This award recognizes one school-based support employee and one nonschool-based support employee.

A nominee must be a contracted support employee and provide a unique and exceptional contribution to FCPS through his or her work, demonstrate commitment and leadership in his or her field, and foster cooperative relationships with colleagues and/or the community. Winners, finalists, and nominees for this award will be honored at a Support Employee of the Year reception and School Board ceremony to be held in April 2009 during Support Employee Week.

The deadline for Support Employee of the Year Award nominations is **Friday, February 27**. The nomination form and instructions are available online at <http://www.fcps.edu/DHR/employees/awards/seoy.htm>.

For more information, contact Shannon Watson at 571-423-3278.

Information for Educators

Plans Begin to Emerge for Summer School 2009

While many details for summer school 2009 are still in discussion, the special education extended school year (ESY) program has announced dates and information for teachers and related service providers who are interested in participating in the summer program.

ESY learning community programs will be offered in July and early August. Extended contracts will be available at all grade levels. Those interested are encouraged to apply online. A list of positions and online interest forms is available at <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/ssse/SpecialEducation/summerservices/application.htm>.

Positions will be open until filled, with preference given to qualified applicants who **apply prior to February 20**.

Information about school-based summer school programs, including credit recovery, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), SOL testing, and remediation courses; online campus courses; and test-only classes for FCPS term graduates will be available soon.

For more information about extended school year contracts, contact Mary Ann Panarelli at maryann.panarelli@fcps.edu or 571-423-4190. **Note:** ESY contracts are contingent upon student enrollment.

Reading Recovery Training Offered for Fall 2009, Information Meetings Scheduled for March 2, 9

Reading Recovery is a short-term, early intervention of one-on-one tutoring for low-achieving first grade students. Training is available for teachers with successful literacy experience at the primary level who can devote two and one-half hours each day to individual instruction. Recommendation by the principal is required. Priority will be given to Title I schools. Applications may be obtained by calling 703-846-8635. Applications must be **submitted by April 17.**

Interested applicants and/or administrators may want to attend a Reading Recovery Awareness session on **March 2 from 3 to 4 p.m. or March 9 from 4 to 5 p.m. at the Lacey Instructional Center.**

To register for either session, or for more information, call the Title I office at 703-846-8635.

School-Based Representatives Needed for Office Personnel Advisory Council, Deadline for Nominations Is March 13

An election will be held in April for school-based office personnel to join the Office Personnel Advisory Council (OPAC). Five representatives will be elected from each of the eight clusters for two-year terms from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2011. (It is preferred to have at least one representative from each school level: elementary, middle, and high school).

A school-based office employee (clerical, office assistant, administrative assistant, finance technician, SASI, SIA) can nominate themselves or another school-based office employee who accepts the nomination. OPAC meets September through May on the third Thursday of each month, from 8 a.m. until approximately 10 a.m. at Gatehouse Administration Center I.

Nomination forms are available at <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/supt/opac/index.htm> and should be returned to Gladys Hatchl at Stuart High School no **later than March 13**. For more information, send an e-mail to gladys.hatchl@fcps.edu.

Nominations Now Open for Outstanding First-Year Teacher Award and Nancy F. Sprague First-Year Administrator Award

Nominations are now open for the 2009 FCPS Outstanding First-Year Teacher Award and the Nancy F. Sprague First-Year Administrator Award.

The Outstanding First-Year Teacher Award recognizes outstanding performance during the first year of teaching. Principals may nominate teachers who have begun their teaching careers on or after January 1, 2008. The nomination form and instructions are available at <http://www.fcps.edu/DHR/employees/awards/fytoy.htm>.

The Nancy F. Sprague First-Year Administrator Award recognizes exemplary performance during the first year of principalship. Any FCPS employee or community member may nominate a first-year principal for this award; for more information go to <http://www.fcps.edu/DHR/employees/awards/fypoy.htm>. The deadline for both awards is **March 13.**

Nominations also remain open for the Support Employee of the Year Award until **Friday, February 27**. The nomination form and instructions are available online at <http://www.fcps.edu/DHR/employees/awards/seoy.htm>.

For more information, contact Shannon Watson at 571-423-3278.

Pathways to Leadership Conference Set for March 10, Online Registration Begins February 9

The Department of Professional Learning and Training will host the annual Pathways to Leadership Conference on **March 10 from 4 to 6 p.m. at Falls Church High School** for instructional employees (teachers, assistant principals, and central office personnel) wanting to explore school-based leadership opportunities.

General session speakers will include Jack Dale, Division Superintendent; Terri Breeden, assistant superintendent, Department of Professional Learning and Training; and Nardos King, principal, Mount Vernon High School. During concurrent sessions, information concerning the LEAD Fairfax Administrative Intern program, the LEAD Fairfax Accelerated Certification Cohort, Instructional Coaching, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the Assistant Principal Portfolio program will be presented along with other programs provided by the department.

Participants should register for the general session as well as two concurrent sessions. To register, log on to My PLT at <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/plt/MyPLT/index.html> between **February 9 and February 20**.

For more information, contact Stephanie Hicks at 703-204-4087 or Stephanie.Hicks@fcps.edu.

Summer Curriculum Development Web Site Now Available, Deadline to Apply Is February 13

The web site listing summer curriculum development projects from the Instructional Services Department and the Department of Special Services will be available **February 2**. Interested teachers are encouraged to apply online. Projects begin as early as the latter part of June 2009 and vary in length. The deadline to apply is **February 13**. For more information and a link to the summer curriculum development web site (when available), go to <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/is/scd/index.htm>.

Note: Summer curriculum development projects are contingent upon FY 2010 budget approval.

People on the Move

Editor's Note: Information for **People on the Move** is provided by the Department of Human Resources, Office of Employment Services.

Promotions

- **Madeline Brown** from assistant principal at Westbriar to principal at Westlawn.

- **Edmund Stoy** from teacher at Chantilly High to director of student activities at Edison.
- **Abe Jeffers** from assistant principal at Stuart to principal at Lee.
- **Jay Nocco** from assistant principal at Mosby Woods to principal at Lane.
- **James Quinn** from assistant principal to principal at Timber Lane (effective 3/2/09).
- **Gail Porter** from assistant principal at Hunters Woods to principal at Floris.
- **Llexell Evangelista** from teaching materials preparation center technician to teaching materials preparation center supervisor at Sprague Center.
- **Dien Suong Le** from custodian I to custodian II at McLean.
- **Creighton Frizzell** from IT operations center supervisor at Wilton Woods Center to network security specialist at Woodson IT.

Staff Development

- **Willisa Toney** from teacher to assistant principal at Woodley Hills.

New Hires and Appointments

- **Aaron Newman** to field information systems technician I at Woodson IT.
- **Cherise Crawford** to public health attendant at Hybla Valley.
- **Sukhwant Johal** to public health training assistant at Lorton Station.

FCPS Remembers

About FCPS Remembers

Information for FCPS Remembers is provided by the Educational Employees Retirement System of Fairfax County (ERFC) for its members and by the Department of Human Resources for members of the Fairfax County Employees Retirement System (FCERS). In the event of the death of any active employee who is now contributing to the ERFC and/or the VRS retirement systems, or any retiree who retired from these systems, **notify the ERFC retirement office by calling 703-426-3900**. The retirement office will provide the names to *Supergram* with details of the deceased's employment with FCPS. In the event of the death of an active member or retiree of **FCERS, notify Benefit Processing at 571-423-3200**.

- **Rose Fagerli**, educational secretary III at Great Falls, who retired September 1, 1992, and who died January 8.
- **Michelle Parker**, teacher at Pine Spring, who died October 27, 2008.

- **Mary Ruth O'Neil**, teacher at Mt. Vernon, who retired July 1, 1977, and died January 27.