

January 2005

Especially for Parents

- ***Supporting Your Child's Reading Development***, a workshop designed for parents of struggling readers, will be offered at Dunn Loring Center on January 12, 2005, in two repeat sessions, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. or 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Over 100 parents have registered to attend this workshop which was developed through a collaborative effort by the Office of Special Education (OSE) elementary literacy team and the Parent Resource Center (PRC). Parents will be introduced to the basics of early reading instruction (Pre-K through Grade 3) and learn ways to support their child's progress in developing literacy skills. Resources such as handouts, videos, and books will be shared. Parents may register for either session through the PRC at (703) 204-3941. The same workshop will be offered in Spanish at a later date.
- Ron Leaf, ***Autism Partnership***, will present a parent workshop, ***Toilet Training in the Home***, at the Belle Willard Administrative Center, on February 8, 2005, from 7-9 p.m. To sign up for the class contact Liane Sprunk at 703-246-7774.
- Integrated Technology Services publishes an online quarterly newsletter which is now featuring a Parent Corner. The fall 2004 issue has an interesting article written by Mrs. Robyn Feuerberg sharing her daughter's experiences in using a communication device in all aspects of her life. The Tech Talk newsletters can be viewed at:
<http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/DSSSE/its/techtalk/techtalk.htm>

Especially for Staff

- On the January 31, 2005, teacher workday, an array of workshops will be offered for special education teachers. Topics include: ***High/Scope Curriculum*** (preschool teachers), literacy (including assessment, comprehension strategies, and writing), mathematics workshops (including assessment, tiered instruction, and the use of manipulatives), and adaptations for students with moderate and severe disabilities. All preschool and elementary autism staff will attend a full-day workshop, ***Advanced Behavior Strategies Including Verbal Behavior***, presented by Ron Leaf, ***Autism Partnership***, and Todd Streff, ***Great Strides Behavioral Consulting, Inc.***
- ***Sign Language as an Instructional Strategy for Special Populations***, will be offered through the FCPS Academy beginning February 2, 2005. This five-session course focuses on using sign language paired with verbal communication as an instructional strategy for students who have significant language impairments.

- Members of the secondary team visited schools in November and December 2004 to observe and support teachers who had participated in the Instructional Strategies Academy offered by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) this summer in Harrisonburg, VA. General and special education teachers at the academy learned *Content Enhancement Routines* that make challenging content more accessible to diverse learners. The purpose of the school visits was to help teachers successfully implement those routines in their classes.
- During early December 2004, an updated version of the instructional strategies and graphic organizer CD, *Makes Sense Strategies and Think Sheets*, was distributed to all middle and high school school-based technology specialists and new features were highlighted. Workshops on the use of the strategies and graphic organizers from the CD were also presented to middle school English department chairs and reading teachers.
- Approximately 20 middle and high school special education reading and English teachers attended a training provided by the Office of Special Education (OSE) secondary team on *Read Naturally*, a supplemental reading program that builds reading fluency in order to improve comprehension.
- Over 300 FCPS teachers, administrators, and assistants, as well as representatives from local colleges and universities, other agencies, parents and grandparents of FCPS students attended the Richard Lavoie presentation, *The Hidden Curriculum*, on Dec. 14 and 15, 2004. A true friend of inclusive practices, he described some of the social pitfalls our students face and ways to help support them as they develop positive relationships with peers and adults. The feedback was extremely positive, with a strong recommendation that he return for an encore performance in the future.
- New cohorts have been established to enhance teacher quality!
 - Two additional cohorts with George Mason University for special education teachers will start in January and March 2005 to support licensure in emotional disabilities (ED) and learning disabilities (LD) as teachers work towards a master's degree in special education. A new cohort for general education teachers who want to become endorsed in special education (LD/ED) is starting with UVA in January 2005.
 - A cohort will be starting in January 2005 with Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) for our highly valued paraprofessionals. They will be working towards an associate's degree in Child Development. Plans are also in process for providing support through NVCC for paraprofessionals to take classes in preparation for the ParaPro Exam. Both programs will support them in becoming highly qualified under the mandate of No Child Left Behind 2001 (NCLB) legislation.

Other

- Transition Services will be highlighted in this month's *Solving the Puzzle Together*, the Apple 21 program hosted by Dr. Alice Farling. Career and transition teachers, Ann Deschamps and Neil Costello, will provide an overview of Career and Transition Services and McLean High School students will share their transition experiences and goals for the future.
- The Virginia Autism Council has presented the *Virginia Autism Competencies* project to several nationally recognized experts for review. Local reviews will be held in four sites

around the state. On January 28, 2005, the Department of Special Services will host the reviewing stage of the interventions section of this project for the Northern Virginia region of the state. School divisions represented will include Fairfax, Arlington, Fauquier, and Loudoun counties. Recommendations from the review committee will be forwarded to the council for further consideration at its next meeting on February 16, 2005.

- Bright Beginnings for Babies Parent/Infant Program for deaf and hard of hearing children was awarded a grant through the Rehabilitative Services Incentive Fund. This fund addresses the unmet needs of persons with physical and/or sensory disabilities. The grant money will be used for special programs for parents, speakers, equipment/technology for teachers, and assistive technology for babies. The grant contract is for fiscal year 2005 which will end in June 2005.
- Shelly Lawrence, Christine Lee, and Cheryl Temple from Integrated Technology Services (ITS) presented at the Assistive Technology Academy in Hampton, VA, on Wednesday, January 12, 2005. Their presentation was entitled *Assistive Technology and the SOLs: Finding the Right Tool to Support Literacy Success*. This academy is sponsored by the Training and Technical Assistance Center at Old Dominion University.
- Kerry Litonjua, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) coach, has achieved National Board Teacher Certification and Elaine Allsup, ABA coach, has passed the examination and completed all the requirements to be a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

Special

- GREAT NEWS! FCPS has signed a contract with Edupoint to put the IEP into an electronic format that will be accessible using a secure web browser. Project staff members will be meeting with the vendor in January 2005 to determine technical requirements for the software. This is the first phase of the project. The new web-enabled IEP should be available some time in 2006.
- NCLB allows the creation of "one or more" alternate assessments for students with disabilities. VDOE has offered the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) for students with significant cognitive impairments. Recognizing that there are students with disabilities for whom the regular Standards of Learning (SOL) tests are not appropriate even with accommodations, and who are not eligible for the VAAP, VDOE has developed the Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA). For selected special education students in grades 3-8, the VGLA may be used as a substitute for an SOL test to demonstrate a student's proficiency of SOL **grade level** content. A body of evidence/work portfolio must be submitted to demonstrate the student's proficiency on the SOL for a given content area. This evidence may include work samples, audiotapes, videotapes, interviews, and other forms of student-produced evidence that demonstrate proficiency for a specific eligible grade level content area. A student's work portfolio will be scored by a designated FCPS scoring team using a standardized rubric that reflects the essential skills for each grade level and standards addressed. The decision regarding a student's participation in the VGLA is made by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team.

Designated staff members from the Office of Student Testing and the Office of Special Education will receive training by the VDOE in this assessment in January or February 2005.

The most current information regarding the VGLA can be obtained at the VDOE website at the following link: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/home.shtml#VGLA>

