

September 2005

Especially for Parents

- Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) individualized education program (IEP) forms have been revised this year to incorporate the changes within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which was reauthorized in November of 2004. IEP training was conducted for special education staff members and new teachers in July and August 2005. School-based training will be conducted for all other teachers and school staff on the use of these new forms during the month of September. The new forms are posted on the FCPS intranet site for teacher use and will be available the week of September 12 for parents' viewing on the FCPS internet site at <http://www.fcps.edu/forms.htm>
- Dr. Maria Trozzi, director of the Good Grief Program at the Boston Medical Center, will be presenting a workshop for parents on September 22, 2005, at 6 p.m. at Thoreau Middle School. She will discuss the journey parents embark upon in raising a special needs child and some of the challenging moments that parents encounter along the way. She will also share her own experiences and insights as she spends an evening with FCPS parents. To register for this workshop, please contact Debbie Collins by phone at 703-246-8102 or by email at Deborah.Collins@fcps.edu
- The next meeting for parents of students who use alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices will be on September 16, 2005, at 9:30 a.m. in Room 11 at Dunn Loring Center. This group was started by a parent in late spring 2005 and was a collaborative effort between Integrated Technology Services (ITS), the Parent Resource Center, and parents. For more information or to put your name on an email list, call Marsha Goldberg at 703-204-3941 or email her at Marsha.Goldberg@fcps.edu.
- The Blind/Vision Impairment website for teachers and parents is now available at <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/SpecialEd/vision>.

Especially for Staff

- Selected school administrators, teachers, and central special education staff will receive training by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) on the newly revised Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP) on September 23, 2005. The new assessment will be administered annually in grades three through eight and in grade eleven. Participants will also receive training on instructional strategies to address the content areas of the assessment targeted for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Staff from the Office of Special Education (OSE) will provide turn-around training in October for those teachers and other school staff unable to attend the September 23 session.
- Teams of elementary special education and general education teachers developed three summer curriculum website projects in July and August 2005. The teachers differentiated web activities for students with special needs to address instructional skills at the following levels: *Essential Knowledge*, *Extra Support*, *Intensive Support* and *Challenge*. This year's website projects focused on grade level curricula in science and language arts. Activities in social studies and mathematics were developed during the previous two summers.
- The OSE offered six sessions during the *Summer of Learning* professional development program June through August 2005, and these sessions were available to both general education and special education teachers. The fully enrolled sessions included: *Comprehension Strategies That Work for All*, *Using Kidspiration to Facilitate Writing*, *On the Move: MultiSensory Instructional Strategies for Tactile and Kinesthetic Learners*, *Practical Reading and Writing Strategies for ESOL Students with Learning Disabilities*, *Math Instruction for Students with Disabilities in the General Education Classroom*, and *The Student Who Can't Sit Still*.

- The *Academic Diversity Institute* was held on August 16, 2005, at Hayfield Secondary School. This Institute was designed to further develop the expertise of school staff members in differentiating instruction to meet the diverse needs of all students. This year's theme was *Within Our Reach: Challenging All Children*. Special education staff members presented a variety of sessions that provided instructional strategies for the specific needs of students in preschool through high school.
- OSE staff provided a variety of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and verbal behavior (VB) workshops including two *ABA Fundamentals* workshops, two week-long beginning hands-on trainings, four week-long sessions of advanced hands-on training, a five-day intensive behavioral workshop, a *Verbal Behavior* course, and an *ABA* course. Over 200 elementary staff members, including teachers and instructional assistants, participated in these workshops.
- Secondary special education staff members collaborated with the Office of Middle School Instruction to offer a section of the academy course *Middle School Reads* specifically for special education teachers. Over twenty special education teachers participated.
- The secondary team finalized a supplemental guide for classroom teachers and support staff members entitled *Asperger's Syndrome and High Functioning Autism: Recognizing and Teaching Secondary Students with Asperger's Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism*, which will be distributed to schools in the fall.
- Secondary special education staff members provided *Effective Teacher* training for selected teachers of students with low incidence disabilities. This half-day workshop described strategies for optimizing the classroom learning environment. Topics included classroom design and management, scheduling options, lesson construction, and the importance of developing and maintaining positive expectations for students and staff.
- The OSE provided a week-long intensive hands-on workshop for teachers and instructional assistants who will be working in the middle school and high school classrooms serving students with autism. The workshop entitled *Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Hands-on Training: A Framework for Teaching Students with Autism and Related Disorders* was conducted by ABA consultants from *Autism Partnership*. Workshop participants had the opportunity to apply the techniques learned directly with secondary students with autism and to receive immediate direct feedback in order to refine their skills.
- The OSE offered a workshop to secondary autism teachers on September 1 on classroom set-up, scheduling, data collection, and procedures for analyzing and implementing behavioral principles in a classroom setting. Ron Leaf, co-director of *Autism Partnership*, presented this full-day workshop to teachers.
- This summer, teams from 23 schools with established Positive Behavior Support (PBS) programs met to revise, revamp, and revitalize their models. Meanwhile, an additional 18 schools participated in the intensive three day initial training to become PBS schools. A total of 41 schools will be implementing PBS models in the fall.
- Speech and language clinicians participated in the design of a series of learning opportunities, *Building Language Skills for Classroom Success*, that are now available on the FCPS 24-7 Learning Site that will offer support to clinicians, teachers, instructional assistants, and parents in the area of communication disorders.
- Physical and occupational therapists collaborated with Psychological Services to offer training on the *Merrill-Palmer-Revised Scales of Development*, a new assessment tool for FCPS physical and occupational therapists and psychologists. The day-long training was offered by Greg Anderson, one of the authors of the test developed for use with children ages 1 month to 6 years.

Other

- The Department of Special Services, in collaboration with the Target 9 committee, has been involved in the divisionwide implementation of PBS. Carl Sandburg Middle School and Woodlawn Elementary School have been PBS schools since their initial school team training in 2004. Based on the high levels of staff support and positive results this year, both schools have been recognized as exemplar schools for implementing their own unique schoolwide PBS systems. This is a real accomplishment resulting in significant gains in promoting positive student behavior as they work towards implementation of the division's strategic goals for safe schools.

- Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) Collaboration for students 19-21: nine students from Davis and Pulley Centers, ready for more independence, began their first day of school at the NVCC Annandale Campus. These students will receive instruction from their FCPS teacher at the campus site this year and will participate in work experiences located at NVCC. NVCC and OSE are very excited about this collaborative effort.
- Integrated Technology Services (ITS) offered a week-long writing camp “*Rock On!*” that was attended by 16 students. Campers were students with disabilities who 1) receive assistive technology (AT) support for writing from ITS, 2) will be taking the writing Standards of Learning (SOL) test in grade eight this year, and 3) are projected to have difficulty passing the SOL writing test. During camp, students explored a variety of self-advocacy skills while focusing on improving their skills using specific assistive technology that would best support their writing achievement. They also created portfolios to share with their eighth grade teachers that illustrated the AT they will be using this year and detailed how it benefits them.
- Barbara Fee, communication disorders specialist, was awarded the Annie Glenn National Leadership Award in Monterey, California on August 3, 2005. This is a nationally recognized honor presented to an outstanding leader in the field of speech-language pathology for developing and promoting best practices in the provision of speech-language services. Ms. Fee was selected for her leadership in guiding the speech-language program as it has grown into a collaborative partnership with special education and general education teachers at all levels. The innovative intervention initiatives promoted by the clinicians ensure that speech-language services offered within FCPS are curriculum-based and support acquisition of the core knowledge concepts of the SOLs.