

**September, 2007**

### **About Our Students**

- The Survey of 2006 Special Education Graduates report indicates that ninety-three percent of all school leavers are employed or in post-secondary education. For the first time, this survey included all school leavers in 2006, including students who dropped out. Fifty-one percent were in paid employment and sixty-seven percent were in postsecondary education. Staff follows up with all school leavers who are not engaged in meaningful activities to facilitate their connection with adult service providers.

### **Especially for Parents**

- New initiative for students with low incidence disabilities:
  - The Chantilly Secondary Transition to Employment Program (STEP) is a new program that will begin this school year for selected students over age 18 from four high schools in western Fairfax County. Students will be based at Chantilly High School and will receive instruction and work experience at Dulles Airport five days a week.
- Assistive Technology Services (ATS) offered three summer writing camps for rising fifth, eighth and eleventh grade students currently receiving ATS support for writing
  - Write-On! for rising fifth graders was held from August 6 – August 10 at Dunn Loring Center and West Potomac High School
  - Rock-On! for rising eighth graders was held from August 13 – August 17 at Dunn Loring Center
  - Blog-On! for rising eleventh graders was held from August 13 – August 24 at West Potomac High School

Students participating in these camps will be taking SOLs or end-of-course tests during the 2007-08 school year. Previous writing camp students were junior counselors at Write-On! and Rock-On! School Scene on Channel 21 will feature Rock-On! everyday from September 17 – 30 at 1:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 9:00 p.m.

- Save the date! ATS will be sponsoring the Real Assistive Technology for Everyone (R.A.T.E.) conference for staff and parents on Saturday, November 10 from 8:00 a.m.– 1:00 p.m. at Rachel Carson Middle School.

### **Especially for Staff**

- Positive Behavior Support (PBS) staff facilitated a variety of trainings across the county during August. Coaches, new and returning, were provided with data to assist teams in determining an action plan for the 2007-08 school year. Returning teams heard Dr. Teri Palmer-Lewis speak about a variety of topics, including sustaining PBS in the school setting. Dr. Terry Scott provided training for eighteen schools that will be beginning PBS this school year.

- This summer, over 140 teachers participated in one of seven weeks of Cognitive Reading Strategies training workshops. This program is for students who are working on grade level curriculum, but who are reading significantly below grade level because of difficulty with decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and/or comprehension. The strategies taught through this program foster higher order thinking skills, particularly in the area of reading comprehension.
- On August 29, 2007, Dr. Jed Baker presented a workshop, *Social Skills Training and Behavioral Supports for Students with High Functioning Autism/Asperger's Syndrome or Other Social/Communication Problems*, to an audience of 282 that included teachers, instructional assistants, psychologists, related service providers, administrators, and parents. Dr. Baker will be making recommendations to assist in the development of a systematic plan to follow up on his presentation. OSE has identified teams to support schools and has made social skills a focus consistent with the School Board's essential life skills goal. On October 26, 2007, OSE staff will be offering a social skills workshop for staff members to reinforce and apply the concepts presented by Dr. Baker.
- In addition to the Jed Baker workshop, the elementary OSE team offered the following back-to-school workshops on August 29:
  - Social Skills Workshop for Early and Intermediate Learners
  - Using Technology to Support Students with Intellectual Disabilities
  - ABA Fundamentals
- *Teaching Reading to Children with Intellectual Disabilities* will be offered for selected elementary teachers on October 12, 2007. This full-day session will target strategies for teaching sight words, the alphabet, phonics, word families, reading of passages, and will provide technology to support a reading curriculum for students with intellectual disabilities. This workshop is for teachers with students who need a more functional approach to reading that uses familiar vocabulary and meaningful daily activities. Teachers may register through My PLT.
- Over 100 staff attended inservice training on research-based practices and strategic planning at the Career and Transition Services (CTS) Inservice and Planning Days. Debbie Mossburg, secondary special education services manager, presented a fun and thought-provoking keynote on research-based and evidence-based practices and tools to use. Break-out sessions and team planning provided teachers with opportunities to learn and use information to plan for the year. Review of updated curriculum for each team was integrated into strategic planning.
- Special education and career and transition teachers participated in several curriculum projects during Summer 2007:
  - Work Awareness and Transition (WAT) curriculum was expanded to include more lessons for low incidence students
  - Secondary Transition to Employment Program (STEP) curriculum was developed for anew initiative at Chantilly High School
  - Northern Virginia Community College Collaboration (NVCC) Handbook was drafted for replication in other community sites
  - Office Technology and Procedures (OTP) curriculum was completed
  - Revisions were started on Employment and Transition Representatives (ETR) Handbook and will continue throughout the school year
- On August 2, Office of Special Education (OSE) Secondary Team members provided update information for secondary school administrators at the annual countywide leadership conference.

Topics discussed included implementation of inclusive practices and the importance of distribution of Individualized Education Program (IEP) information to teachers by the first day of school.

- On August 23, over 180 new secondary special education teachers attended sessions led by members of the secondary team at the new instructional employee orientation. Members of the team also visited sessions for all new general education middle and high school science, social studies, math and English to share information on inclusive practices, implementation of IEP goals and accommodations, and general and special education co-teaching.
- Members of the OSE Secondary Team provided training and support for administrators, teachers, and instructional assistants at summer school sites that offered courses for students with disabilities. Focused support was provided by Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) coaches for the new summer school course, *Foundations of Learning for Middle School Students*, designed for rising seventh graders and middle school students with autism who receive ABA programming during the school year. The team also supported *Life Skills*, *Targeted Language Arts and Math*, as well as special education content class teachers at central special education middle and high school summer school sites.
- Members of the elementary and secondary teams coordinated efforts to support teacher administration of the Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA) assessment, for students in grades three through eight, through the VGLA Summer Curriculum Development project.
- Members of the OSE Secondary Team made numerous professional development presentations to teachers, administrators, and students during the summer:
  - On August 6, 7, and 8, middle and high school general and special education co-teaching teams attended a *Co-Teaching Mathematics Institute* presented by Instructional Services and special education staff.
  - Members of the OSE secondary team collaborated with school administrators to provide staff development on co-teaching at opening of school sessions at Glasgow Middle School, Stuart High School, Hughes Middle School, and South Lakes High School.
  - On August 20, eight new middle and high school special education reading teachers attended a full-day orientation conducted by Beth Bailey, special education reading teacher at Poe Middle School, and a member of the secondary team.
  - On August 21, a member of the secondary team provided instruction in note-taking and study skills to approximately thirty McLean High school students as part of a Boot Camp for students participating in AP courses.
  - On August 30, all FCPS middle school staff attended a Middle School Summit that was organized by middle school principals. Teachers of students with high incidence disabilities attended content sessions with general education colleagues while teachers of students with low incidence disabilities attended a session on literacy options for students. At the high school level, special education teachers attended content sessions in the morning and had the opportunity to attend *Basic Skills* or *Personal Development* course sessions led by members of the secondary team.
- Members of the OSE Secondary Team worked actively in July and August to expand and enhance the implementation of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in secondary schools:

- OSE is pleased to welcome two new members. Matthew Osborne, secondary ABA specialist, joins us with a wealth of ABA knowledge and experience in private consultation. He is a board certified behavior analyst and holds a masters degree in Applied Behavior Analysis. Michele Mooney, the third secondary ABA coach to join our team, has experience implementing ABA as a teacher at Poe Middle School. Prior to that, she was the education specialist at Matthew Center for Visual Learning where she oversaw five ABA classrooms. Michelle is currently working on her graduate certificate in Behavior Analysis.
- Secondary ABA staff members attended a Verbal Behavior Conference in Reston with speaker Dr. Vince Carbone, on July 11, 12, and 13. They also attended the 2007 National Autism Conference, held at Penn State University, from July 30 through August 3.
- On August 7, a member of the OSE Secondary Team presented two half-day sessions for general and special education teachers and administrators: *High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome: Overview of Characteristics and School Needs* and *High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome: Strategies to Support Academic and Social Skills Instruction*.
- Members of the OSE Secondary Team continue to work with *Autism Partnership* consultants. Over the summer training was provided for secondary teachers and instructional assistants on *Fundamentals of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)*. There was also a week-long *Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Hands-on Training* for teachers of students with autism. Teachers at all secondary sites will receive ongoing support and site-based consultation focused on implementation of ABA strategies throughout the year.