

October, 2007

About Our Students

- Students who attended the Rock-On summer writing camp, sponsored by Assistive Technology Services (ATS), were featured recently on the Channel 21 program "School Scene". Rock-On is a week-long program for rising eighth grade students currently receiving ATS support for writing who will be taking the Virginia Standards of Learning writing test during the following school year. The School Scene clip is titled "ATS Rock-On Adventure Camp" and can be viewed at <http://www.fcps.edu/mediapub/cable-tv/archive/0708/ss0708.htm>.
- Evelyn Aguirre, a twelfth grader at Fairfax High School, will be competing in track and field at the Special Olympics World Games in Shanghai.
- Davis Career Center is starting a new worksite this year at the Safeway located at the Pan Am Shopping Center. Currently there are six students working, with more expected to join the team. The students will rotate in each of the departments: produce, frozen foods, dairy, salad bar, deli, customer assistance, and bakery. The store manager is very enthusiastic and provided a two-day job orientation for the students which included a presentation by the district manager.
- Pulley construction students are beginning their first experience building a home at the new Springfield job site. They will be working with FCPS general education students enrolled in Construction Trades.

Especially for Parents

- FCPS is planning Regional Spring Parent Meetings. Bill Reeder, Cheryl Temple and Jane Thatcher are representing the Office of Special Education. Proposed date and locations are:
 - Tuesday, March 4, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Hayfield Secondary
 - Wednesday, March 12, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Marshall HS
 - Thursday, April 3, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Robinson Secondary
 - Saturday, April 5, 8 a.m. to noon at Chantilly HS
- The Office of Special Education (OSE) team continues to provide training opportunities for parents of children enrolled in the enhanced autism elementary classrooms and preschool autism classes. On September 11, 2007, "Facilitating Language in the Home" was offered and 42 parents attending this training. The next parent training will be held on October 23, 2007, with two sessions being offered: 9:00-10:30 a.m. at Devonshire and 7:00-8:30 p.m. at Virginia Hills. For additional information on registration for these workshops, contact Liane Sprunk at 571-423-4114, or visit the following website: <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/ABA/>. Information on this workshop will also be sent out through Keep in Touch.

- The Office of Special Education Early Childhood Programs will be offering a preschool parenting support series on the second Thursday of each month, beginning Thursday, October 11, 9:45-11:15 a.m. at the Mason District Government Center, and then again that same evening in Spanish from 7:30 to 9:00 pm at Baileys Elementary School. Child care will be provided for the evening session. The topic for the sessions will be *Understanding Special Education*. Additional information about this and subsequent workshops can be obtained by calling the Parent Resource Center (PRC) at 703 204-3941.
- Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Career and Transition Services (CTS) is sponsoring two upcoming events for high school special education students and their parents:
 - *Considerations for Students with Disabilities in the College Admissions Process*, a presentation that is part of FCPS College Night on October 15, 2007, at Hayfield Secondary School in Alexandria
 - *Future Quest: A College and Career Forum for Students with Disabilities*, Saturday December 1, 2007, at George Mason University in Fairfax.
 For more information on any of these events, please visit Career and Transition Services website: http://www.fcps.edu/ss/career_transition.htm
- The Parent Resource Center of Fairfax County Public Schools, in collaboration with CTS and local agencies, announces the following workshops:
 - “Moving on to Life in the Community, Independent Living/Vendor Resource Fair” is a free resource fair for individuals eligible for ongoing supports after graduation through Fairfax/Falls Church Community Services Board Mental Retardation Services. The fair will be held at Falls Church High School on Saturday, October 20, 2007.
 - “Life Planning Tools: Options for Children with Disabilities” is a free workshop offered by The Special Education Parent Resource Centers of Fairfax County Public Schools, Alexandria City Public Schools, Arlington Public Schools and The Arc of Northern Virginia. The workshop will be held at Luther Jackson Middle School, Falls Church on Saturday, November 17, 2007.

To register for these programs, or for more information, please visit the Parent Resource Center website at www.fcps.edu/ss/prc and choose “Workshops.”

- ATS will be sponsoring the Real Assistive Technology for Everyone (R.A.T.E.) conference for staff and parents on Saturday, November 10, from 8:00-1:00 at Rachel Carson Middle School. This conference will feature presentations on a variety of assistive technology topics. Look for information regarding registration for R.A.T.E. in ‘Keep in Touch’ or on the ATS internet site at <http://www.fcps.edu/ss/its/>
- ATS is offering a series of five trainings focused on the integration of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) into the daily routine of students. This training is open to both staff and parents. Details about the sessions as well as registration information can be found in ‘Keep in Touch’. Sessions will include the following topics:
 - First Steps
 - Integrating AAC Into Your Day
 - Visuals to Foster Communication
 - AAC Templates
 - AAC and Literacy

- FCPS Preschool Special Education Services and the Fairfax/Falls Church Community Services Board Infancy and Early Childhood Program are continuing their collaborative project to provide mental health services to children in the preschool special education program. Referrals may be made by parents, preschool teachers, a school social worker, or the school psychologist. With parent permission, a mental health therapist will visit classrooms and provide individual, family or group mental health services at school. A fee is charged using as a basis either the child's private medical insurance or a sliding scale. For more information, parents should contact their child's preschool teacher.

Especially for Staff

- On September 13, members of the Office of Special Education (OSE) secondary team held an orientation for new special education department chairs and school-based administrators who supervise the special education department. Topics addressed included: roles and responsibilities of special education chairpersons and low incidence lead teachers, *Factors to Consider for Transitioning Secondary Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)*, distribution of IEP and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) information, case management, communication with parents, career and transition services, and secondary reading instruction.
- On September 13, members of the secondary low incidence team conducted a *New Teacher Roundtable* for new teachers of middle and high school students with autism, mental retardation, and severe disabilities. Topics discussed include life skills curriculum planning, the development of classroom and individual student schedules, methods for conducting formal and informal assessments, and literacy instruction options for students cognitive disabilities. Monthly roundtable meetings are scheduled to provide support to new low incidence teachers.
- On September 20 members of the secondary team conducted the first quarterly Low Incidence Lead Teacher Meeting for the 2007-08 school year, at the Virginia Hills Administration Center. Sixty secondary teachers, inclusive schools resource teachers (ISRTs), and pyramid resource specialists (PRSs) attended the full-day meeting. Participants received updated information on the requirements of the Virginia Accountability System (VAS) to include the Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP), the Virginia Grade Level Alternative Assessment (VGLA) and the Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP). Additional presentations included speakers from Career and Transition Services, SEASTARS, Assistive Technology Services (ATS) and the Virginia Training and Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC.)
- On September 25, members of the OSE secondary team met with teachers of the special education elective, *Reinforcing Foundations*, to provide them with resources, including released Standards of Learning (SOL) tests and SOL blueprints. The course is intended to provide remediation for grade eight reading and mathematics SOL tests. It is recommended primarily for students in grades 11 and 12 who may not earn the verified credits required for a standard diploma.
- Members of the OSE secondary team conducted workshops for middle and high school special education reading teachers on implementing the *REWARDS* reading program on September 26 and the *REWARDS Plus* reading program on September 27. *REWARDS* is an acronym for "*Reading Excellence: Word Attack and Rate Development Strategies*," a research-validated reading intervention program developed by Anita Archer, Mary Gleason, and Vicky Vachon. In addition, OSE staff provided training to new middle and high school special education reading teachers in administering the pre- and post-assessments used to measure student progress in secondary special education reading classes.

- Members of the secondary team collaborated with instructional services high school literacy specialist to provide professional development to general and special education teachers of high school remediation courses, including *Developing Literacies* on September 13, *English 12 SOL* on September 18, and *Expanding Literacies* on September 20.
- On September 27 and October 9, members of the OSE secondary team will provide training to teachers on Community-Based Instruction (CBI) and Community Work Experience (CWE) for students receiving instruction in a functional life skills curriculum. The philosophy and framework of CBI and CWE, FCPS guidelines for implementation, curriculum content, and the development of appropriate lessons to address skill-development in community environments will be addressed during the training. Participants will receive an updated CBI manual.
- The Office of Special Education is offering two leadership academy courses focusing on reading and math instruction for school teams including administrators, special education teachers, and general education teachers.
 - *Balancing Instruction with Specialized Reading Programs and Balanced Literacy for Students with Reading Disabilities* will be offered on October 19, 2007, from 8:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. at Gatehouse Administration Center. The presenters will demonstrate how school teams can use reading assessment data to identify the specific needs of students with reading disabilities and how to identify specialized reading programs and/or strategies that can be used to support students within a balanced literacy framework.
 - *Elementary Mathematics Instruction That Meets the Learning Needs of All Students* will be offered on November 14, 2007, from 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at Gatehouse Administrative Center. The presenters will demonstrate how teachers can use co-teaching and/or co-planning during mathematics instruction to address the needs of all students. Teams will also learn strategies and practices for delivering mathematics instruction in small and large groups.
- ATS staff members will present two sessions at the Closing the Gap conference in Minneapolis on October 18-20. The titles of the sessions are "Using Interactive Tools to Create Activities for Students with Severe Disabilities" and "Empowering Students Through Alternate Access!" For more information about the Closing the Gap conference, go to <http://www.closingthegap.com/> and click on the 'conference' link.
- Career and Transition Services (CTS) is pleased to support the School Board's Student Achievement Goals for essential life skills and responsibility to the community. The services that are provided through CTS help students develop essential skills for self-determination, independent living, further education, and employment in order to maximize participation in their communities. ***Taking Charge of My Future: Tools for Self-Advocacy***, available to all special education teachers on the Career and Transition Services intranet website, is a curriculum designed to teach self-advocacy skills and to increase understanding of the IEP process. For the 2007-08 school year, CTS staff will focus on training middle school staff and students on the role of self-advocacy in transition planning and setting goals for their future.