

December 2004

### Especially for Parents

- Mark your 2005 calendar now. The next *Future Quest* will be held on November 19, 2005. *Future Quest* is a college and career forum for students with disabilities, parents, and professionals that is held once every two years on the campus of George Mason University and sponsored by the *Northern Virginia Transition Coalition*. Participants learn about planning for college, career/technical schools, self-advocacy skills, strategies for employment success, effective networking, and career planning. For more information please visit [www.VaCollegeQuest.org](http://www.VaCollegeQuest.org).
- The *Transition Tool Kit for Parents* and the *Transition Resource Guide* are now posted on the Career and Transition Services website. To access these resources please visit [http://www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/career\\_transition.htm](http://www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/career_transition.htm).
- The Parent Resource Center is revising its website. Following feedback from the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities regarding planned changes, the site will go live in January.

### Especially for Staff

- Nine schools participated in *Step-by-Step for Inclusive Schools: Together is Better* training on November 10 and 11, 2004, provided by *Stetson and Associates*. The training focused on capacity building as an essential element in the ultimate success of inclusive education practices in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). Over the course of three days, school teams were provided with an opportunity to: (1) assess their current practices for including students with disabilities in general education settings; (2) explore ways to use multilevel instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners; (3) identify quality indicators and discuss collaborative strategies of in-class support; (4) address staffing and scheduling issues; and (5) design “next steps” in planning for building an inclusive environment.
- On November 18, 2004, 30 special education teachers attended a newly developed workshop to address student achievement in mathematics. The workshop, entitled *Elementary Math Instruction and Appropriate Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*, was co-presented by Judy Heard, elementary mathematics specialist in the Instructional Services Department, Ann Fulk, elementary special education program specialist in the Office of Special Education (OSE), and Joshua Douds, special education teacher at Westlawn Elementary School. Attendees were provided with strategies for supporting students with disabilities in accessing the general education curriculum in a variety of settings.

- Todd Streff from *Great Strides Behavioral Consulting, Inc.* will visit FCPS classrooms providing *Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Enhanced Services* on December 7, 8, and 9, 2004. He will provide a workshop entitled *ABA Fundamentals* on December 10, 2004, at the Fairfax County Government Center for 80 preschool and elementary staff members.
- On November 30, 2004, in collaboration with Instructional Services, the OSE sponsored a follow-up training day to the summer *Mathematics Institute*. Twenty secondary special education, general education, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers attended the full day workshop. The teachers were presented with strategies and received materials to enhance classroom instruction.
- OSE secondary team members provided a workshop on reading strategies for 20 middle and high school special education reading teachers on November 10, 2004. Each school represented received a copy of the decoding software, *Lexia Strengthening Our Skills*, targeted for older students.
- During the month of November, OSE secondary team members provided school based training on topics such as co-teaching, use of *Make Sense Think Sheets* (graphic organizer software), structured classrooms, behavioral management, behavior plan development, and the use of visuals in the classrooms.
- On November 1, 2004, 268 preschool special education staff members (teachers, instructional assistants, and curriculum specialists) participated in Part Three of a six-part series, the *High/Scope Educational Approach*. The *High/Scope Curriculum* framework is the basis of the Family and Early Childhood Education Program/Head Start classes. Part Four of the series will take place January 31, 2005.

## Other

- Tia Marsili will be joining the staff of the Parent Resource Center as a parent liaison. Tia previously worked for the *Family Network on Disabilities in Florida* as an area training coordinator. She wants to "...enable families to become better advocates for their children so they will feel confident about the informed choices they make for their children's education and future." Welcome, Tia!
- Integrated Technology Services (ITS) case managers continue to monitor the skills of those fifth grade students, currently on ITS caseloads, who attended the *Write-On* camp in August and will be taking the writing Standards of Learning in Spring 2005. Case managers, teachers, and students are completing proficiency checklists for various pieces of assistive technology such as *Co:Writer*, *Draft:Builder*, and *AlphaSmarts*.
- More than 30 FCPS speech/language clinicians attended the American Speech, Language, Hearing Association Convention, *United in Science and Service*, November 18-20, 2004, in Philadelphia, PA. Two FCPS speech/language clinicians presented workshops at the convention. Amanda Carson, Cunningham Park School, presented *Implementing the Language! Curriculum to Improve Reading Fluency*, and Aphrodit Gouvousis, Crossfield School, presented *Using Social Stories to Enhance the Communication of Students with Autism*. Both presentations reflected highly published research in the field today and were well attended by professionals from across the country.

- The *Survey of 2003 Graduates* report is now posted on the Career and Transition Services website. To access this report please visit <http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/DSSSE/careertransition/crtndata.htm>.
- A new cohort for special education paraprofessionals to obtain an associate's degree will begin at the end of January, 2005. The cohort is a cooperative effort between FCPS and Northern Virginia Community College.

## Special

- FCPS will celebrate the fourth annual *National Inclusive Schools Week* from December 6 – 10. *National Inclusive Schools Week* provides an opportunity for schools across the nation to celebrate the diverse abilities of all members of the school community, and the progress that has been made in providing equal educational opportunities for all learners, particularly those with disabilities.
- To help celebrate the successful conclusion of *National Inclusive Schools Week*, over three hundred FCPS staff and community members are expected to attend the Richard Lavoie workshop, *The Hidden Curriculum*, offered at Northern Virginia Community College on December 14 and 15, 2004.
- Schools will be celebrating *National Inclusive Schools Week* by participating in various activities and using a variety of materials. The following is a sampling of ideas (activities and materials) they may be use for celebrating this event:
  - posting idea boards in teacher work areas to share activities and information that promote inclusive practices,
  - holding raffles to recognize staff members who employ inclusive strategies,
  - distributing items to school staff members such as bookmarks, magnets, pencils, and other items imprinted with quotations, reminders, and ideas promoting inclusive practices,
  - awarding blue ribbons, or giving “thank-you” cakes or snacks to staff members employing inclusive practice,
  - making a school chain, with each person in the school contributing one link, to create a visual illustration of how all members of the school are connected.

