

September 2004

Especially for Parents:

- Integrated Technology Services (ITS) conducted a week-long camp at two locations. The camp was called *Write-On!* and was attended by 41 rising 5th grade students currently receiving ITS caseload support for writing. The camp focused on embedding individualized technology accommodations into each student's preparation for the writing section of the SOL test. It is anticipated that the *Write-On!* camp will be featured on Channel 21 beginning the week of September 20.
- The Office of Special Education (OSE) will begin a field test of a reading card at several elementary sites. The reading card will be used as a teacher-to-teacher communication tool to record instructional interventions and individual student progress longitudinally for those students whose special education services emphasize direct and specialized reading instruction. Feedback will be solicited from school staff with respect to the usefulness of this tool to determine future implementation. The reading card was field-tested in the spring of 2004 at two secondary sites and will be implemented county-wide at all secondary levels during this school year.
- The Parent Resource Center (PRC) has posted its new schedule of fall workshops for parents. Coming up this quarter are *Understanding Section 504, Alternate Assessment, Positive Behavior Supports & Functional Behavior Assessment, and Applied Behavior Analysis*. Parents can view the schedule on the PRC website: www.fcps.edu/DSSSE/prc.
- The annual *Survey of Special Education Graduates* provides Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) with feedback from recently graduated young adults. This information is used for planning and evaluation. There was a 71% response to a phone survey (569 out of 770) during the spring of 2004. The results for the 2003 graduating students include:
 - total of 1,386 students with disabilities completed school
 - 96% were in school, employed, or both
 - 61% were in post secondary education
 - 54% were employedA summary has been posted to the website; the complete report is in final stages and will be posted on the website when it is completed
- For the 2004-2005 school-year, two inclusive schools resource teachers (ISRT) will be assigned to each pyramid. The ISRTs, each of whom will be assigned to a base school, will be working collaboratively with principals and pyramid resource specialists to:
 - Address challenging behaviors by conducting functional behavior assessments and supporting school staff members in identifying, implementing, and monitoring behavior intervention strategies.

- Assist in coordinating and conducting school-based professional development activities that support effective instructional and behavioral strategies to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student population.
- Provide on-site modeling/coaching for school teams to build teacher capacity to provide effective programming for a broad range of students with disabilities.
- Maintain a relatively small caseload to support students and teachers in schools throughout their assigned pyramid where teacher endorsements may not match student needs.

Especially for Staff:

- The OSE conducted over 87 workshops attended by 2,569 participants during July and August 2004. Topics included inclusive practices, positive behavior support, literacy, best instructional practices, assessment and evaluation, autism, and technology. Additionally, over 700 staff attended the 35 FCPS Academy classes offered by George Mason University, the University of Virginia, and FCPS staff.
- Over 132 instructional and public health training assistants participated in the Paraprofessional Institute, which offered 4 sessions on strategies for implementing differentiated instruction and behavior in the classroom.
- Ann Delehant, an educational consultant affiliated with the National Staff Development Council, presented the first in a series of trainings, *Tools for Coaches*, for ABA teacher coaches, inclusive schools resource teachers, and positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) coaches on September 2, 2004. This training is designed to ensure that individuals serving in these roles have the skills they need to provide effective coaching support for staff members working with students with disabilities in schools.
- Autism teachers and instructional assistants have participated in core trainings during the months of June and August 2004. One hundred forty (140) staff members attended the 5-day intensive *Hands-On Training* presented by *Autism Partnership* in June and August sessions. Eighty (80) teachers and instructional assistants attended an *ABA Fundamentals* workshop and approximately 325 staff members supporting students with autism attended the *Verbal Behavior Fundamentals* workshop on September 1, 2004. Both of these workshops were presented by Todd Streff of *Great Strides Behavioral Consulting, Inc.*
- The OSE, in collaboration with the Instructional Services Department, sponsored a four-day *It's Never Too Late Literacy Institute* for secondary general education, special education, and ESOL teachers. The institute was held the second week of August 2004 and featured daily keynote presentations by Janet Allen and breakout sessions on literacy-related topics. Approximately 300 general education teachers, special education teachers, and staff members attended the institute.
- The OSE sponsored a four-day *Language Arts Boot Camp* for middle school special education teachers who teach English. The boot camp focused on teaching both language arts reading and writing skills as well as using assistive technology. Follow-up training is planned for fall 2004.
- In July 2004, the OSE sponsored a five-day *Mathematics Institute* for middle school special education teachers. The institute focused on teaching mathematical reasoning skills through hands-on learning experiences. As in the past, follow-up training is planned for fall 2004.

- ITS trained 42 newly nominated Technology Outreach and Program Support (TOPS) teachers in an intensive one week program offered this summer at the Dunn Loring Center.

Other:

- The OSE has hired an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) specialist, Liz Mackie, and seven of nine ABA teacher coaches. Elementary schools have received staffing to provide a pupil/teacher ratio of 2:1 for designated classes, and principals have been hiring instructional assistants throughout the summer to provide this level of support. In addition, 17 of 19 instructional assistants have been hired for the central pool of assistants who will provide 1:1 support on an as needed basis throughout the county.
- The IEP teacher training model is significantly changed for this new school year from prior years. The OSE has planned numerous and varied training opportunities for teachers specifically to reduce new teacher time away from classroom instruction. Direct training will include an overview session at the beginning of the year. Additionally, a series of voluntary training sessions on different aspects of the IEP will be offered at various locations throughout the year. Teachers will also have access to detailed IEP information from two new multi-media training resources (an IEP DVD and an FCPS IEP Blackboard site) developed to provide teachers with comprehensive information and training in the IEP process. Both resources will offer teachers 24/7 accessibility to detailed IEP information. New special education teachers will each receive a copy of the IEP DVD, and all schools will be provided a copy for viewing by other staff members. It is anticipated that the new school-based training model and resources will be more convenient, more accessible, and of significant value in meeting the time and information demands of teachers.
- The IEP on-line vendor selection process is close to completion. When implemented, the IEP on-line will enable teachers to develop IEPs on line and to track the special education process to ensure compliance.

The OSE expresses appreciation to the members of the Advisory Committee who were able to attend the vendor demonstrations at the end of August. Input from all stakeholders is invaluable for selecting a quality product.

- Three staff members from ITS presented at the *Instructional Strategies Academy* at James Madison University on July 30. This academy was sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education. The hands-on presentations featured the graphic organizer programs *Inspiration* and *Draft:Builder* and the use of these programs in an educational setting.
- *Assistive Technology Accommodations for the SOL Assessments* was presented by a staff member of ITS at the *Assessment and Accountability* workshops sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education. These workshops were held in Roanoke, Winchester, and Richmond to address the Virginia assessment system available to students with disabilities.