

Rapport ONLINE

for Fulton County School System employees

Vol. 2, No. 1

August 16, 2004

We're proud of . . .

- **Conley Hills ES**—recognized as an *Outstanding Achievement School* by the state for increasing its percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards on state assessments by 32% from 2003 to 2004. In addition, in 2004 Conley Hills students had a 28% gain on the Georgia Writing Assessment, and 83% of its fifth graders scored in the top two levels.
- **Brookview, Dolvin, Gullatt, Esther Jackson, Manning Oaks, Medlock Bridge, Mountain Park and Shakerag elementary schools**—for having 100% of their third grade students score at or above grade level in reading on the 2004 state CRCT (Criterion Referenced Competency Tests).
- **The Second Step Program**, led by **Therese McGuire**, Coordinator of Health and Physical Education, and **Peter Gaddis**, Program Administrator of Safe and Drug-Free Schools—this year's recipient of the Jeff L. Townsend Award from the Georgia Children's Trust Fund Commission. The Second Step program teaches conflict resolution, mediation and problem-solving skills to elementary and middle school students.
- **Advis Dell Wilkerson**, Business Education teacher at Creekside HS—recipient of the H.M. and Norma Fulbright Scholarship from the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE). Advis was awarded the \$1,000 scholarship as an outstanding PAGE member pursuing an advanced education degree who is advisor of a Future Educators of America chapter.
- **Barbara Hopps**, Science teacher at Northwestern MS—attended a weeklong workshop this summer to learn how to effectively teach behavioral neuroscience. The workshop, "Why They Do What They Do at the Zoo: Animal Behavior and the Brain," was sponsored by the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience in Atlanta.

In the news...

Fulton students increase achievement—

Results from recent student assessments and state reports show that, thanks to the great work by Fulton employees and support of families, our students continue to achieve at higher levels throughout the school system.



Adequate Yearly Progress

(AYP)—The release of the 2003-04 AYP report from the Georgia Department of Education in late July showed continual positive achievement for Fulton schools. According to the state report . . .

- **88% of our schools** (73) made AYP, up from 75% in 2002-03.
- **Only 10 schools** (seven middle and three high) did not make AYP.
- **Four of those schools** achieved goals in reading/language arts and math; they missed AYP status by not reaching the goal on the state Middle Grades Writing Assessment, an assessment that resulted in problems for middle schools throughout the state.
- **All of our elementary schools** made AYP.
- **10 schools** met the AYP goals in 2003-04 that had not made AYP in 2002-03.
- **Three elementary schools** (Love T. Nolan, Palmetto and Evoline C. West) previously on the Needs Improvement list have been removed from that category.
- **All but one of our schools** (an alternative school) met the 95% test participation rate goal.

CRCT results—The recently released results of the 2004 Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) show Fulton students scored higher than the state average in

the Meets and/or Exceeds categories in all core subject areas and, in all but one area, exceeded the state's average scale score.

The CRCT measures how well students are learning the Georgia curriculum in core subject areas. First and second grade students are tested in reading, English/language arts and math; students in grades 3-8 are tested in those subjects and in social studies and science.

Highlights of the 2004 CRCT results include:

- At the elementary level, more than 81% of our students met or exceeded expectations in all areas;
- More than 77% of students in grades 6-8 met or exceeded expectations in all areas;
- 85% of sixth grade students and 90% of seventh and eighth graders met or exceeded expectations in reading;
- More than 79% of students in grades 3-8 met or exceeded expectations in social studies and science;

This was the first year third grade students were required to score at or above expectations in reading in order to be promoted to fourth grade. Ninety-four percent of our third graders scored in levels 2 or 3 in reading on the test taken during the school year. The remaining six percent received remedial help in summer school and another three percent passed the test on the second try. The final result – 97% of Fulton third graders met or exceeded reading standards and were promoted to fourth grade.

More information about Fulton County AYP and CRCT results can be found on our web site.

Coming up...

Committee to review new and significantly changed non-teaching positions—The Fulton County Position

Review Committee (PRC) will meet in September to review new and significantly revised non-teaching positions that:

- Have had significant changes in duties and responsibilities since the last review process, or
- Have not been previously evaluated.

This process is part of the semi-annual review that follows a major realignment of salary schedules and non-teaching positions completed as part of Comp 2001.

Non-teaching employees interested in having their position reviewed must submit a Position Analysis Questionnaire (PAQ), available from their immediate supervisor. The PAQ must be completed by August 23, and must be signed by the employee, the employee's immediate supervisor and the appropriate division head (Cabinet member). For new positions, the supervisor must complete the PAQ and have it signed by the division head.

The review committee will evaluate all PAQs and place each position on the appropriate grade based on the job factors of know-how, problem-solving and accountability. The committee does not address step placement, volume of work, individual job performance, or degree and experience credit.

Non-teaching employees who think their job might be eligible for review should contact their supervisor. It is important for employees to note that reviewed positions may move up in grade, move down in grade, or remain at the same grade.

All PAQs must be submitted by August 23 to be considered during the fall review.

For more information, contact your supervisor or email positionreview@fultonschools.org. Please remember: this applies only to non-teaching positions.

Sick leave bank enrollment period – The enrollment period for eligible employees who would like to join the Employee Sick Leave Bank will be Sept. 1 – Oct. 1. This is for new members only; employees who are already members of the bank do not need to join again.

Employees are eligible if they earn paid sick leave and have completed at least one full year of employment with Fulton County. Employees who become bank members are required to contribute part of their accumulated sick leave, up to a maximum of five days, to the bank. (The current number of required days is two.)

The bank is designed to provide members with paid sick leave after their own sick leave has been exhausted. It is administered by a Committee of Trustees made up of seven employees. For more information, go to Procedure GBRI, Section C (available under the *Policies* button on our web site). To join the bank, access the Employee Sick Leave Donation form through Microsoft Outlook, Public Folders, Personnel Services, Forms.

Behind the headlines...

Construction management company hired to oversee capital programs

The School Board has approved contracting with Parsons, an international construction management firm, to manage the school system's capital programs and oversee the remainder of the building projects outlined in SPLOST I and II. That will include new schools, additions and renovation projects.

The firm was selected by the Board after an extensive search that included the issuance of a Request for Proposal/Request for Qualifications (RFP/RFQ), committee review of responses and determination of the best and final offer. Eight companies responded to the original RFP/RFQ.

During the past eight years, Fulton's Capital Programs Department has been responsible for the construction of 23 schools that serve approximately 25,000 students. The department has successfully managed millions of dollars and hundreds of projects. However, the program has not been reviewed for several years. Therefore, by contracting with Parsons we will gain experience, new perspectives and resources to help ensure that we provide citizens with the highest quality program at the lowest possible cost. In addition, our personnel will be able to devote more attention to our core competency—student achievement.

Now that the RFP has been approved, the next steps are to finalize negotiations and develop a comprehensive transition timeline, which could take 30 to 60 days. Parsons will assume project management responsibilities once the transition is complete. The contract is for one base year with four, one-year optional extensions.

Capital Programs employees are valued members of the Fulton family. A core group will remain with Fulton County, and the others will be hired by Parsons and will continue to work on Fulton projects. Parsons was founded in 1944 and is one of the world's largest planning, construction and engineering firms, with operations in 46 states and 37 countries.



Student discipline recommendations presented to Board

The Fulton County Discipline Review Committee presented its findings and recommendations to the Board on August 10. The committee, which was established in fall 2003 in compliance with the Unitary Status Agreement, included one parent/teacher/administrator from each of the 11 clusters; one representative each from the student services office, police department and social work office, and two parents.

The committee found that data from the nation, the state and Fulton County reflect the same trends—a disproportionate number of black students are disciplined in schools. After studying the data, the committee also found that in Fulton there are:

- Much more disproportionate numbers of black students disciplined in north county than in south county;
- Higher or considerably increased levels of reported conduct problems in 3rd, 6th and 9th grades than other grades;
- Higher levels of reported conduct problems in south county than in north county, and
- More students in need of alternative programs than space available.

The committee presented recommendations to the Board in six major areas.

1. Implementing policies and practices that mandate diversification of faculty and staff, and ongoing diversity training
2. Implementing ongoing proactive behavioral strategies and effective, positive discipline practices
3. Expanding alternative programs
4. Providing annual training to resource officers, teachers and administrators on behavior strategies, classroom management, cross-cultural communications, positive discipline and related topics
5. Providing resources—staff, training, facilities and transportation—to meet students' preventive, rehabilitative and alternative learning needs
6. Implementation of preventive and rehabilitative programs for elementary students and their families

The complete committee report will be available on our web site and in school offices.

Growing from good to great in Fulton County

Editor's note: In this issue of *Rapport Online* we begin a new ongoing feature – *Growing from Good to Great in Fulton County*. This section will offer inspiration and advice on Fulton beliefs, expectations and goals. We begin with words of vision and expectations from Superintendent Michael Vanairsdale, taken from a speech he gave July 23 at the annual leadership conference for Fulton County administrators.

My vision for Fulton County Schools can be boiled down to five words: **High Expectations With No Excuses**. Not only is that my vision—I expect it to be the vision of EVERY employee in our system.

While this is the time to look ahead, I think it is timely to stop and acknowledge what can happen when our expectations are high. I commend those of you who refused to make excuses last year. Because of you:

- 10 elementary schools had a 20% or higher increase in the percent of fifth grade students scoring in the two highest writing levels.
- 93% of our third graders scored at or above grade level on the CRCT reading, compared to 86% two years ago.
- Six middle schools that did not make AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) goals in special education in 2003 met those goals in 2004.
- Our SAT scores continued to climb, with Fulton now 23 points above the national average and 65 points above the state.
- Fulton County became the first system in the nation to receive district wide SACS accreditation, and we blew that team away.
- We're opening five new schools on time, below budget.

One of the many commendations we received during our SACS review was that our staff remained focused, committed and dedicated, even during a period of change and transition, and that the one word that described the character of all our employees from custodians and bus drivers, to principals and administrators, was PRIDE. I have often said that we do not just work in Fulton County Schools, we ARE Fulton County schools. Last year you proved that point.

Just as I have high expectations with no excuses, I have another belief that I constantly repeat -- **Closing the Achievement Gap**. To me, closing the achievement gap means we will raise the achievement of our below-level students at the same time that we continue to meet the needs of high-achieving students.

What makes me confident that now is the time to shine is that we have people in place who have the knowledge, experience, but most all the passion, to get things done.

Yes, I do have very high expectations. That's because I believe in a quote from Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe: "Dream no small dreams for they have no power to move the hearts of men." Let's make all our dreams come true.

Superintendent Michael Vanairsdale
July 23, 2004

On the move...

Congratulations to . . .

- **Chandi Ashmore**, Resource Officer at Riverwood HS, to Deputy Chief of Police to Interim Chief of Police
- **Amy Barger**, Instructional Support Teacher at Hapeville ES, to Coordinator of Talented and Gifted (TAG) Programs
- **John LaForge**, Teacher at Tri-Cities HS, to Coordinator of Music Education
- **Sara Snyder**, Coordinator of Special Education, to Director of Instruction Services for Exceptional Children
- **Darron Franklin**, Assistant Principal at Chattahoochee HS, to Principal of Westlake HS
- **Gregory Middleton**, Assistant Principal of Tri-Cities HS, to Principal of Banneker HS
- **Christine Young**, Assistant Principal at Roswell North ES, to Principal of Spalding Drive ES
- **Dorothy Arnold**, Assistant Principal of North Springs HS, to Assistant Principal of Westlake HS
- **Tiffany Hutchens**, Teacher at Abbotts Hill ES, to Assistant Principal at Abbotts Hill ES
- **Terry Miller**, Curriculum Support Teacher at Hembree Springs ES, to Assistant Principal at Hembree Springs ES
- **Michael Milak**, Teacher at Sandy Springs MS, to Assistant Principal at Sandy Springs MS
- **Dru Tomlin**, Teacher at River Trail MS, to Assistant Principal at Webb Bridge MS

Welcome to . . .

- **Marilyn Conerly-Taylor**, Teacher in Forsyth County, to Coordinator of Title I
- **Cherie Knight-Batey**, Project Manager at the Georgia Technology Authority, to Director of School Technology
- **Robert Leon**, Secretary General Staff, Col. Commanding General, FORSCOM, to Assistant Superintendent of Operations
- **William Quarles**, Transportation Director, Bartow County Schools, to Executive Director of Transportation Services
- **Dawn Melin**, Assistant Principal in Forsyth County, to Principal of River Trail MS
- **Vonnie Thompson**, Principal in Cobb County, to Principal of Randolph ES
- **Vincent Haywood**, Assistant Principal in DeKalb County, to Assistant Principal of Alpharetta HS

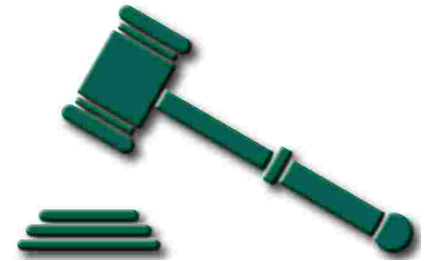
Farewell to . . .

- **Clyde James**, Employment Complaint Examiner
- **Marie Ross**, Warehouse and Supply Services Supervisor
- **Joycilyn Rozelle**, Assistant Principal of Medlock Bridge ES
- **Stephen Sigman**, Executive Director of Financial Services

School Board in action

At a called meeting on July 28, and regular August 10 and 12 meetings, the Board...

- Authorized the superintendent to search for land to purchase for a new high school in south county
- Awarded a contract for construction of a detention pond at South Transportation
- Assumed temporary control of finances for Victory Charter School and authorized identified employees to sign checks
- Approved revisions to the system organization chart (see new chart online)
- Approved a revision to salary schedule language on the non-teaching scale
- Contracted with Parsons, a construction management firm, to manage Fulton's capital programs (see related article)
- Received the report of the Discipline Review Committee (see related article)
- Received for first reading a renewal petition from Victory Charter School to continue as a K-8 charter school
- Approved a change in the 2004-05 year-round calendar, moving the April 22 teacher workday (a day of systemwide testing) to April 29
- Reviewed four options for the 2005-06 school year calendar; (Board action is expected in September; the options are on our web site for review and comment)
- Received an update on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which included the good news that 99.1%



of our teachers and 98% of our paraprofessionals meet the high quality standards required by NCLB

- Approved curriculum for drama education in grades 9-12, and art education and music education in grades K-12
- Reviewed proposed revisions to Procedure IH, Acceptance of Student Course Credit and/or Grades
- Approved a \$1,400/month telecommunications lease with Powertel/Atlanta, Inc. for a cellular tower at Manning Oaks ES
- Approved a one-year lease extension with the YMCA for field use at Northwestern MS
- Approved 2004-05 membership dues for the Georgia School Boards Association

The entire August agenda with back-up information is available on the Fulton web site under the *Board* button.

The following Board meetings are scheduled in coming weeks . . .

August 26, 5-7 p.m. – Roundtable, Administrative Center (tentative)

September 7, 4:30 p.m. – Pre-Board meeting, Dunwoody Springs ES

September 9, 5 p.m. – Workshop, Administrative Center (tentative)

September 9, 6:30 p.m. – Board meeting, Administrative Center

The 2004-05 calendar of Pre-Board and Board meetings, workshops and roundtables can be found on the county web site under the *Board* button at the top of the front page. Please check the web site frequently for updates.

Our Mission

is to educate students to be responsible, productive citizens.

Our Vision

The Fulton County School System is a place where all children learn to their full potential in a safe, nurturing environment supported by involved and committed staff, family, and community in helping to prepare them for a successful future.

We Believe

- Student learning is the primary focus of our school system.
- ALL students can learn.
- Quality staff is imperative for student achievement.
- Behaviors that convey high expectations lead to greater success.
- Successful schools maintain partnerships among the home, school, and community.
- School must prepare students for the changing future.

Rapport ONLINE is produced every two weeks during the school year and once a month during the summer

by the Fulton County Schools Communications Department.

For comments, questions or to submit information:

Ellen Rogalin, 404.763.6830 or Rogalin@fultonschools.org.

It is the policy of the Fulton County School System not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any program, activity or service.

If you wish to make a complaint or request accommodation or modification due to discrimination in any program, activity or service, contact Compliance Coordinator Randy Reece at 786 Cleveland Avenue SW, Atlanta, Georgia 30315, or phone 404-763-4585; TTY 1-800-255-0135.