

Rapport ONLINE

for Fulton County School System employees

Vol. 2, No. 12

February 8, 2005

We're proud of...

- North Springs HS Teacher **Brian Kimmel**—winner of the “best director” award at the Georgia Theatre Conference.
- Alpharetta HS Counselor **Dee Webb**—featured with her husband in Bob Greene’s (fitness trainer to Oprah) newest book, *Total Body Makeover*.
- **Banneker HS** concert band and Director **John Williams**—invitation to perform at the American Musical Salute to the Veterans, commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII, this April in Washington, D.C. Banneker is the only high school in Georgia to be invited.
- Abbotts Hill ES Principal **Roytunda Stabler**—recently earned her Doctoral degree in educational leadership from Nova Southeastern University.
- Music teachers **Sharon Anderson** (Shakerag ES) and **Barbara Colaianni** (New Prospect ES) organized and conducted the north Fulton elementary school and middle school honor orchestras; **Tim Aucoin** and the **Northview HS** orchestra for performing at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Convention in Chicago in December 2004; **Young Kim** and the **Centennial HS** orchestra for performing at the Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service Conference in Savannah in January 2005; and **James Palmer** and the **Chattahoochee HS** orchestra for being selected to perform at the American String Teachers Association National Conference in Reno in February 2005.
- Students and staff at **McClarín HS**—created boxes of food for the South Fulton Senior Services “Meals on Wheels” program.



Coming up...

February 21: Make-up day for schools closed by the East Point chemical spill – Employees in schools closed on December 16th due to the chemical spill in East Point (Conley Hills ES, Hamilton E. Holmes ES, Oak Knoll ES, Paul D. West MS, Tri-Cities HS, KIPP South Fulton Academy, and Victory Charter) must make up that day on Monday, Feb. 21. This is for 190-day employees only.

February 24: Education Fair 2005 for FCSS Employees – For the third consecutive year, our Professional Learning Department is collaborating with the Georgia Higher Education Alliance (GAHEA) to offer the **FCSS Education Fair** for certified and classified employees. GAHEA colleges and universities will have information available and representatives present at the fair waiting to meet FCSS employees. These schools offer Associate, Bachelor, Masters, Specialists and Doctoral degrees, as well as certificate program opportunities, on their campuses.

Information will also be available about the FCSS classified leadership programs: Secretarial Efficiency Program (SEP), Supervisory Development Program (SDP) and the Supervisory Development Program Cohort.

Many Georgia schools of higher education have been invited to participate, including:

- American International University
- Brenau University
- Capella University
- Central Michigan University in Atlanta
- Clayton College and State University
- Covenant College Quest Program
- DeKalb Technical College
- DeVry University
- Embry Riddle Aeronautical University

- Georgia Perimeter College
- Georgia State University
- Georgia Tech EMBA
- Georgia Virtual Technical College
- Gwinnett College of Business
- Keller Graduate School of Management
- Kennesaw State University
- Leslie University
- Mercer University
- Oglethorpe University
- Reinhardt College
- Shorter College
- Southern Polytechnic State University
- Strayer University
- Troy State University
- University of Phoenix
- University of St. Francis

The FCSS Education Fair will be held from 3:30-7 p.m., Thursday, February 24, in the cafeteria at Riverwood HS. Refreshments will be available. For more information, contact Barbara McGuire in Professional Development by email or by telephone at 404-669-8090, ext. 135.

March 12: Parent University – The second Parent University session of the 2004-05 school year is scheduled for Saturday, March 12. The first Parent University, held December 4, drew 111 participants from 30 different FC schools attending 17 different courses designed to help parents improve their children's academic performance. The Parent University graduation will be held in April.

March 25 and May 7: Spring job fairs planned for prospective teachers — Job fairs for prospective FCS teachers are planned for March 25 and May 7 at the Georgia International Convention Center in College Park. At the job fairs, teaching candidates will have the chance to meet principals and other school leaders and interview for potential employment. The March 25 fair runs from 1-5 p.m.; the May 7 fair is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Fulton expects to hire approximately 850 new teachers for the 2005-06 school year. If you or someone you know is interested, tell them to bring at least 35 cover letters and resumes and be prepared for brief interviews with FCSS representatives. Pre-registration is not required.

In the news...

Dunwoody Springs ES charter status to add unique features to school –



In January the School Board approved Dunwoody Springs ES as one of Fulton's newest conversion charter schools. That means the school, which remains a public school, can now alter its curriculum according to the charter agreement approved by the school, our Board and, eventually, the Georgia Board of Education.

The curriculum's unique features include becoming the state's first Designated Professional Development Focus School. In partnership with Georgia State University, Dunwoody Springs will become a laboratory school to develop and implement best practices for teaching diverse, transient and urban students. These best practices will be shared with other Georgia schools and will be a model for teacher training and development. Student teachers from Georgia State will reduce the teacher-to-student ratio as they learn best instructional practices.

Another unique feature will affect all students entering Dunwoody Springs after the 10-day count. Those students will spend 5-10 days in a "transitional" classroom staffed by a teacher trained to assess each incoming student's academic needs. Additional staff will assess the students' families' social service needs and provide in-depth orientation to the school.

Enhanced language arts instruction also will be provided to struggling students. Students who perform below grade level in reading can be placed in an enhanced language arts classroom. Students will benefit from a hands-on arts integrated approach to the curriculum to supplement what is taught in the regular classroom.

TEACH charter petition approved

Also at the meeting, the Board approved the charter petition for TEACH (Technology Enriched Accelerated Charter High) High School, which is planned to be a continuation of the Fulton Science Academy middle school. The school will begin with 250 students in grades 9 and 10 and will add one grade each year until it reaches its maximum enrollment of 450.

TEACH also will feature accelerated instruction for all students to boost expectations and smaller class sizes. Wireless laptops will be provided for all students and staff so that all activities will be technology enriched.

Growing from good to great in Fulton County

Editor's note: A certain level of stress in our life and our work is a good thing – it keeps us “on our toes” and energized. But too much stress can reduce the quality and quantity of our work. Reducing the level of stress at work can help all of us in FCSS grow from good to great. The following tips for a low-stress work environment are excerpted from a Texas Woman's University article. They may not be practical for all of us all the time, but just applying one or two of them can make a real difference in your work environment.

1. *In the course of doing business, **build rewarding, pleasant, cooperative relationships** with as many of your colleagues and employees as you can.*
2. *Rate your work by order of importance and **manage your time effectively**; don't bite off more than you can chew.*
3. ***Manage by objectives** to capture the initiative on as many problem areas as you can.*
4. ***Build an effective and supportive relationship with your boss.** Understand his/her problems and help the boss to understand yours. Teach your boss to respect your priorities and your workload and to keep assignments reasonable.*
5. ***Negotiate realistic deadlines** on important projects with your boss. Be prepared to propose deadlines yourself, rather than have them imposed.*
6. ***Study the future.** Learn as much as you can about likely coming events and get as much lead time as you can to anticipate them. Manage and plan actively, not reactively.*
7. ***Find time every day for detachment and relaxation.** Close your door (or at least your eyes) for five minutes each morning and afternoon, put up your feet, relax deeply and take your mind off the work. Use pleasant thoughts or images to refresh your mind.*
8. ***Take a walk now and then** to keep your body refreshed and alert. Find reasons to walk to other parts of your building or facility. Greet people you meet along the way.*
9. *Make a noise survey of your office area and **find ways to reduce unnecessary racket.** Help your employees reduce the noise level wherever possible.*
10. ***Get away from your office from time to time** for a change of scene and a change of mind. Don't eat lunch there or hang around long after you should have gone home or gone out to enjoy other activities.*
11. ***Reduce the amount of minutia and trivia** to which you give your attention. Sign only those things that really require your study, understanding and approval. Delegate routine paperwork to others whenever possible.*
12. ***Limit interruptions.** Try to schedule certain periods of "interruptability" each day and conserve other periods for your own purposes. Take phone messages and return all calls at a certain time (except for emergencies, of course).*
13. *Make sure you know how to **delegate effectively.** Inventory a typical day's work and find out how many things you tended to that could have been assigned to someone else whose job it really should have been.*
14. ***Don't put off dealing with distasteful problems** such as counseling a problem employee or solving a human relations problem in your staff. Accept short-term stress instead of long-term anxiety and discomfort.*
15. ***Make a constructive "worry list."** Write down the problems that concern you and beside each one write down what you're going to do about it. Get a complete catalog of current worries, so that none of them will be hovering around the edges of your consciousness; get them out into the open where you can deal with them.*

F.I.Y (Fulton Information for You)

January step increases go into effect –

You might have noticed a little extra “cha-ching” in your January paycheck. That’s because the FY05 step increase, approved in July 2004, has finally become active. The Board approved the step increase with the stipulation that a one-step increase be applied in July 2004 (to make up for the step increase not given in 2003-04) and then an additional one-step increase be applied in January 2005 (for the 2004-05 school year). The step increase affects eligible employees only.

REMINDER:

FCSS technology is to be used for school-related purposes only – Policy IFBGA, Electronic Network Access, states: “The School System maintains an electronic network (EN) that includes local- and wide-area networks such as Internet. Access to the EN, as well as the hardware and software that support access, are the property of the School System, and shall be used solely in support of the School System’s instructional and administrative programs. Use of this property is a privilege that may be discontinued at any time. The EN should be used only in a responsible, ethical and lawful manner. Any unauthorized use of the EN or any failure to comply with the local and systemwide provisions relating to use of the EN will be grounds for loss of EN access and other disciplinary and/or legal action.”

Specifically, in accordance with Procedure IFBGA, Electronic Network Access, employees may not use the EN to publish or transmit any information that:

- 1) Violates or infringes upon the rights of any other person;
- 2) Contains material that would be considered abusive, profane or sexually offensive to the average person;
- 3) Contains any advertisement or solicitation of goods or services that are not school-related;
- 4) Relates to the user’s personal business or commercial activity;
- 5) Solicits the performance of any unlawful act;
- 6) Encourages the use of controlled substances, or
- 7) Violates any local, state or federal law, Board policy or procedure or school rules.

Verification needed for employees with dependent coverage –

Employees that have dependent insurance coverage should be aware that the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) will implement a **Dependent Eligibility Verification** beginning February 9, 2005. This requires that each employee with family coverage to verify eligibility of **all covered dependents**. Affected employees will receive a letter identifying the dependents to be verified and the documents that need to be submitted. **If you receive a letter, and do not respond, your dependents’ coverage will be suspended retroactively to the coverage effective date and SHBP will initiate the recovery process for any payments made on behalf of the dependent(s) from the employee.** Therefore, send any required documents **directly** to the SHBP as instructed.

Words That Heal: Using Children's Literature to Address Bullying –

Children's literature can be an effective tool for addressing the growing concerns of physical, verbal, and relational bullying. It can improve students' ability to understand and cope with problems, and can increase empathy and respect for others. The Anti-Defamation League’s Winter 2005 issue of *Curriculum Connections* (http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/winter_2005/default.asp) provides educators with study guides for five books that address bullying plus an extensive bibliography of selected children's books on this topic. Ask your school’s media specialist for more resources on this topic.

New extended day program offered at Independence HS and McClarin HS –

Effective January 24, an extended day program has been implemented at both Independence HS and McClarin HS for students referred by tribunal to the Crossroads Program. The new evening program, which runs Monday through Thursday, 2:30 – 6:45 p.m., provides instruction to expelled students in language arts, math, science, and social studies. Students are assigned by the FCSS Office of Student Discipline.

Proposed high school educational specifications available at...

http://www.fultonschools.org/story_detail.asp?id=1252

– The proposed educational specifications for FCSS high schools were presented for first reading at the Jan. 13 Board of Education meeting. The educational specifications depict educational program requirements and the facilities needed to meet those requirements. Specifications have been developed in the following 24 areas:

- Administration
- Art
- Auditorium
- Business management
- Career technology
- Career technology intervention
- Diversified technology
- Drama
- English
- ESOL (English to speakers of other languages)
- Family and consumer sciences
- Foreign language
- Health and physical education
- Information technology
- JROTC
- Mathematics
- Media center
- Music
- School nutrition
- Science
- Services for exceptional students
- Social studies
- Student services
- TAG (talented and gifted)

Superintendent Michael Vanairsdale's State of the System, 2003-04 report...

is available on the FCSS web site at:

http://www.fultonschools.org/media-bin/documents/State%20of%20the%20System%202003-04_1.pdf.

The report includes an overview of test scores, parent satisfaction, citizen involvement, effective and efficient instructional and administrative processes, operations, staff issues and finances.

School Board in action

Upcoming Board meetings



...**February 8, 4:30 p.m.** – Pre-Board meeting, Hamilton E. Holmes ES

...**February 10, 5 p.m.** – Board workshop, Dunwoody Springs ES

...**February 10, 6:30 p.m.** – Board meeting, Dunwoody Springs ES

...**February 24, 5 p.m.** – Roundtable, Administrative Center

...**February 24, 7:30 p.m.** (tentative) – Budget public hearing #1, Administrative Center

The 2004-05 calendar of 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.

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: Mitzi Edge, 404.763.6830 or edgem@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.