

New Employee Benefits Coming July 1

Last fall, the Board of Education charged the Insurance Council with evaluating our insurance and other benefits programs. The Council included FCTA, FASSE, FCASA, the retired employees' association and FCPS representatives. The goal: to reduce the cost of providing benefits while at the same time offer employees and retirees affordable, quality coverage.

Council members could not reach consensus on health insurance and referred the decision to the Board of Education. In March the BOE signaled its intent to select UnitedHealthcare, and at its April 13 public meeting voted to do so.

"UnitedHealthcare's proposal costs less and doesn't require referrals, but initially it offered a smaller network of providers. However, the company is rapidly expanding its network in conjunction with its merger with MAMSI. Their goal is to have almost all the current network under contract by July 1," according to BOE vice president **Dr. Michael Schaden**. "Our board found it hard to say 'no' to a potential half-million dollar savings, while asking for more

money from the County, which also uses and is satisfied with UnitedHealthcare/MAMSI."

New Health & Vision Insurance

UnitedHealthcare's two-tier health program offers the options of choosing a network provider—physicians and hospitals that are in United's participating group—or the provider of your choice. The first is an in-network option with co-payments; the second is a more traditional "80/20" co-insurance plan. One of the plan's chief features is that you do not need a referral to see a specialist. The vision program is very similar to our current coverage, administered by Spectera.

Health insurance costs are rising across the country. Despite efforts to avoid raising employees' share of the cost, FCPS expects to institute a modest premium increase.

New Flexible Spending Provider

HFS is the new Flexible Spending Account (FSA) benefit provider. The program is very similar to the present plan with the addition of

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Your Next Steps

Insurance You must complete an enrollment form if you wish to:

- enroll in the health, vision, dental and prescription plans after previously waiving coverage,
- waive or change your coverage.

Forms are due to the Benefits Office by **May 27**.

You do not need to complete an enrollment form to continue participation with no changes.

Flexible Spending Plan If you want to lower your tax bill by having out-of-pocket dependent care or noncovered health expenses deducted pre-tax from your 2005-06 paychecks, you must enroll or re-enroll in the Flexible Spending Plan by **May 27**.

Existing Claims File any claims under discontinued plans soon, for expenses incurred through June 30. The FCPS Benefits Office will continue to assist with them.

Get the Facts Visit www.fcps.org/content/hrbenefits.cfm. Review the detailed information, video and forms coming to your school or office soon. And attend a benefits "road show," sponsored by the Insurance Council and FCPS Benefits Office, in your area during May. Watch for a date and place near you.

May is Open Enrollment Month!

Benefits are available to all eligible FCPS employees and retirees and their dependents.

FCPS Grads Well Prepared for College

FCPS graduates who enrolled in Maryland colleges outperformed their counterparts statewide during their freshman year, according to the Maryland Higher Education Commission's Student Outcome and Achievement Report (SOAR). The Class of 2002 had higher GPAs regardless of whether enrolled at a private or public college or university.

In addition, the report reveals that FCPS grads are readier than ever to tackle academic coursework at FCC and other colleges, without the

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Dr. Burgee New Superintendent

On March 9 the Board of Education voted unanimously to appoint **Dr. Linda Burgee** superintendent of FCPS. Her appointment—as Frederick County's first female superintendent—is effective for 4 years beginning July 1. Dr. Burgee has served as interim superintendent since July 2004.

"Since last July, Dr. Burgee has consistently proven that she is an exceptional instructional leader and astute business manager who has

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(L to R) Walkersville High special education teacher **Nick Cardy** is devoted to the needs of students, offering them frequent words of encouragement that mean a great deal, says the parent of one of his students. Co-workers at North Frederick Elementary commend instructional assistant **Sharon Wright** for first-class dedication. Bus driver and assistant **Gene & Shirley Roberts** are an exceptional team, driving special needs routes and generating smiles along the way.



New Employee Benefits Coming July 1

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a convenient debit card. Just use the card to purchase a qualifying item, and HFS will automatically deduct the amount from your FSA account.

Same Prescription and Dental Plans

EHS will continue to provide our prescription benefits, but under a new name: PharmaCare. PharmaCare offers the same "prescription card" service on a co-pay basis at major pharmacies, at many small neighborhood locations and by mail order. Dental insurance will still be through Delta Dental, allowing you to choose a dentist from the provider network or a non-participating dentist. ★

FCPS Grads Well Prepared for College

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need for developmental or remedial support. Over the past four SOAR reports dating back to 1998, FCPS grads have shown a decreasing need for developmental coursework at FCC, and are less likely to require remedial coursework than their counterparts from other schools.

In mid-March, FCPS published the latest Maryland Report Card data. The No Child Left Behind Act requires school systems to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets. FCPS staff can be proud that our system achieved AYP for 2004, as did 51 of our 57 rated schools.

Based on 2004 results, each of the six county schools not making AYP met 8 of the 9 targets. Four are working to improve reading achievement for special education students: Lewistown and North Frederick Elementary, Walkersville Middle and Brunswick High. The other two are targeting reading achievement for African American students: Brunswick and Hillcrest Elementary.

South Frederick Elementary was among the schools making AYP this year after two years of targeted strategies to raise student achievement. Principal **Ann Reeve** says, "Our staff and students have worked hard to achieve improvement, and we are proud of this accomplishment. Because AYP targets will continue to rise, we are continuing proactive strategies to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need for success." ★

Dr. Burgee New Superintendent

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the knowledge, vision and integrity to take our schools into the future," said BOE President **Dr. Bonne Borsa**.

The original superintendent-search time line called for interviews of candidates this spring and announcement of an appointment in May. But after careful review of the applications and considerable discussion involving the Maryland Association of Boards of Education consultants hired to guide the selection process, the BOE decided not to extend the process further.

On March 10, the Frederick Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously to express strong support for the BOE's decision to appoint Dr. Linda Burgee as superintendent. BOCC President John L. "Lennie" Thompson Jr. said, "The Commissioners wholeheartedly support Dr. Burgee's appointment. We wish her our very best in her management of the school system and especially of her oversight of one of our most important resources in Frederick County – our children. The Board of Education could not have selected a more polished educator with the experience to deal with the issues facing us today and the proven professional skills to help make our collective goals a reality."

Said Dr. Burgee, "I envision working with the Board, our dedicated staff and the community to build a shared leadership culture in which we are all clear about our goals and empowered and equipped to achieve them. We've already established a first-class school system; we'll just keep getting better." ★

Share Your Priorities

The BOE has forwarded to the County Commissioners a \$360.5 million operating budget request for FY '06. The proposal calls for

- a salary resource pool sufficient to address competitive pay issues,
- programs and services critical to our ability to close the achievement gap,
- start-up costs to open the new Centerville Elementary and Urbana High addition,
- adding full-day kindergarten at 7 schools
- maintaining the existing level of programs and services for an additional 591 students expected to enroll in August 2005 and more.

The boards will hold a joint hearing **Tuesday, May 3, 7 PM at Catoctin High School**. Staff comments are welcome at the meeting or via email to boe@fcps.org and BOCC members at FirstInitialLastName@fredco-md.net. ★



ASK THE SUPERINTENDENT

This section features questions to and answers from Superintendent **Dr. Linda Burgee**. Please send your questions for future issues to Marita.Loose@fcps.org.

Q: What factors go into creating each year's school calendar?

- A:** Our first objective is to design an instructional calendar that:
- complies with State-mandated directives on the length of school year (a minimum 180 days)
 - maximizes the opportunity of 5-day instructional weeks
 - incorporates statewide testing requirements
 - recognizes the need to balance instructional and family time for both students and staff, and
 - reflects State-designated holidays for Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas Eve through January 1, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, the Friday before Easter through the Monday after Easter, Memorial Day, and primary and general election days.

Q: Does FCPS observe additional holidays?

- A:** Yes, BOE Policy 401 also includes holidays for the Fourth of July and Labor Day.

Q: How do testing requirements affect our school calendar?

- A:** Testing plays a major role but does not extend our school year beyond 180 days. The State Department of Education determines dates for High School Assessments and requires that they occur at the conclusion of each semester. FCPS must make sure school is in session through the end of each HSA testing schedule. We also build our calendar around MSA, SAT-10 and college entrance exam schedules.

Q: How does the BOE determine staff work calendars?

- A:** The BOE receives input from the Calendar Committee, however it negotiates the length of the work year with the respective employee groups (FCTA, FASSE, FCASA), providing time for staff to evaluate student work, plan for instruction, work collaboratively with colleagues and take advantage of professional development at appropriate junctures in the work year.

Q: How does our student calendar compare with other Maryland school districts?

- A:** This year, we were among 3 districts that started August 23. 17 started later in August, and 4 (1 of which has a year-round schedule) began September 7. We are among 2 districts that planned our last school day for June 13 this year. Eight plan to end earlier, and 14 later (1 of which has a year-round schedule).

★★★ ACCOLADES ★★★

Outstanding Urbana HS social studies teacher **Colleen Bernard** is the FCPS 2005 Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher. Ms. Bernard was instrumental in involving local veterans groups at Windsor Knolls MS and Urbana HS and in launching an after-school peer-tutoring program between the two schools. The Civitan Club of Frederick presented Special Educator of the Year awards for elementary, middle and high school respectively, to **Norma Raymond, Karen Kehoe-Murray** and **Christina Galiardi Suter**.

Poetry First-year Frederick HS English teacher **Kelly Edgeington** won a \$6K poetry award from the Maryland State Arts Council.

Winners The **TJ HS** team, coached by **Teresa Wilson**, won this year's countywide Academic Tournament. Linganore HS coach **Sara Grandstaff** received the Tournament's Curriculum Specialists Award. The **Brunswick Middle** team, coached by **Jennifer Bean** and **Judith Hale**, won the 2005 Reading Rally.

Know-How Frederick cluster general mechanic **Tom Kroh** was Maintenance Employee of the Month for March. Winning the title for April: Middletown cluster supervisor **Dave Wade**.

R-e-s-p-e-c-t FCPS social workers promote respect, understanding, cooperation and school success. March was National Professional Social Work Month and a time to thank the outstanding professionals who do this work in our schools: **Angie Banadus, Bill Derbyshire, Susan Ham, Ginger Hart, Tara High, Mike Hombach, Christina Karszen, Grant Keimig, Susan Lindstrom, Eileen McGrath, Pam Miller, Shelley Pollock, Corni Reynolds, Anne Ricciuti, Patricia Ruiz-Wigger, Sharon Wiklinski*, Karen Williams & John Witmer**. **recently recertified by the National Association of Social Workers*

1st in State Our **Career & Technology Center** yielded the 1st-place team in statewide competition for the 2nd year in a row. For first-class preparation of another winning team, kudos to instructors **Richard Smith** and **Gary Wilfong** and to FCPS business partners at Damascus Chevrolet, Fitzgerald's Auto Mall and Frederick Nissan.

1st in Region 4 FCPS student teams placed 1st in Destination ImagiNation regional competition: **New Market** and **Walkersville Middle** and **Tuscarora** and **Urbana High**.

SPIRIT 65 representatives of the student body at **Urbana High** completed a 2-day problem-identification and resolution workshop concerning diversity issues. The concluding report praised the school and students for establishing a "solid foundation...to address racial and ethnic tensions on an ongoing basis." The students' top 2 concerns: stereotypes and lack of knowledge about other cultures. The Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together (SPIRIT) initiative "was a valuable mechanism for us to examine our school culture. A school mirrors its community, and ours is undergoing great change," says Principal George Seaton.

Quintuple Winners 5 Maryland Excellence for Minority Achievement Awards go to Frederick County this year to celebrate individuals and groups who make outstanding contributions in striving to promote equity in educational opportunity for all students during their lives in school and beyond. FCPS Minority Achievement Coordinator **Maria Whittemore** received the prestigious Vanguard Award for demonstrating extraordinary vision and leadership to advance the success of minority students in Maryland. Other local winners: Eliminating Achievement Gaps, Inc.; the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity; Gazette education reporter Diana Mota Morgan; and Pastor Hedy Drummond.

Caring Community Health Charities gave FCPS an achievement award for our outstanding 33% increase in contributions; kudos to **Francina Baldi** for coordinating this effort and to all who donated. Kudos also to **Myersville Elementary** and reading specialist **Susan Kreiger** for a successful read-a-thon that raised \$3,446 for UNICEF tsunami relief efforts and to **Catoctin HS** for hosting a Battle of the Bands that raised \$1,000 for CASS.

Key Appointments

Please welcome **Robert Wilkinson** to a new position as director of Maintenance and Operations in our Facilities Services Division. Reporting to this position are the FCPS energy specialist and supervisors of Operations and Safety and Maintenance. In addition, **Joe Dattoli's** title is now director of Construction Management. Reporting to him are FCPS senior project managers, project manager and construction inspections staff. ★

New Central Office Approved

The Board of County Commissioners has approved allowing FCPS to apply the sale value of our central office properties at Church Street and 7630 Hayward Road to offset the cost of a new FCPS central office building slated for construction in downtown Frederick near the train station.

Do you have questions about the new facility? Visit the Q&A section on the *insidefcps* Intranet to read answers to questions already posted or to ask your own. ★

Celebrating 25 Years

Congratulations to the following 55 employees who have devoted 25 years of full-time service to Frederick County Public Schools. FCPS will honor these individuals at a banquet May 6:

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Cynthia B. Abbott | Laurie Moser |
| Kathleen Arnold | Karen Mount |
| Mary Ann Blankinship | Linda Mullineaux |
| Stephen Blickenstaff | Charles Nichols, Jr |
| Betty Brashears | Robert Norris |
| Deborah Brooks | Carolyn Oland |
| Michael Bunitsky | Mary Ann Peterson |
| Placid Collins | Wilma Polce |
| Katherine Comfort | Bonnie Rodriguez |
| Karen Durkin | Edward Rollins, Sr |
| Louis Eskuchen, Jr. | Frances Rothenhoefer |
| William Fischbach | Franklin Saunders, Jr. |
| Calvin Fouche | Robert Saxon |
| Wanda Fultz | Mary Shoemaker |
| Judith Grove | Joyce Sigler |
| Beverly Hauver | Nancy Slovikosky |
| Clara Hobbs | Judith Smith |
| Teresa Jeffers | Brenda Standfield |
| Nancy Jones | Sharon Steger |
| John Jurchak | Rosemary Stitely |
| Carolyn Kimberlin | Eileen Tipperman |
| John Koepke | Regina Trump |
| Penny Lantz | Connie VanRavensburg |
| Alan Lescalleet | Julie Vogl |
| Linda Lucas | Cheryl Washburn |
| Margaret Mann | Shirley Wilson |
| Kathryn Martin | Martha Wolfe |
| Wendy Miller | Craig Zearfoss |

If you worked for FCPS for 25 years but less than full time, you are still accumulating time toward this anniversary. For details, call 301-644-5122. ★

Quality Training for All Employees



The 7th annual Accent on Achievement Summer Institute is on its way August 9-10, returning to the FCC campus.

Day 1 kicks off with keynoter **Dr. Lenworth Gunther**, described as a "true keeper of the flame" of American ideals and African American inspiration and leadership. Dr. Gunther will address contemporary education issues and achievement gaps.

On Day 2, best-selling author of *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls* **Rachel Simmons** will speak about cliques and consequences. Ms. Simmons has appeared on TV shows such as *Oprah*, *Today*, *Dateline* and *NPR*. She directs the Empower Program's Girls Leadership

Institute and most recently published *Odd Girl Speaks Out: Girls Write about Bullies, Cliques, Popularity and Jealousy*.

Watch for registration materials in May for this free event for all employees. One of the benefits of working in education is the opportunity to learn. Plan to start a new school year inspired by at least one of the nearly 100 sessions offered. Each year, hundreds report they're glad they did. ★

NEWS TO USE

Year of Languages To highlight the growing need for foreign language education, the US House of Representatives and Senate have each passed resolutions designating 2005 as the "Year of Foreign Language Study." The resolutions state that increased language learning is a critical national interest necessary to maintain the economic edge the US has in the worldwide marketplace. Only 9% of Americans in contrast to 53% of Europeans fluently speak both their native language and another language. The legislation asks President Bush to call upon US citizens to encourage and support initiatives to promote the study of languages and observe a year of languages with appropriate ceremonies, programs and other activities.

2005-06 Calendar Changes In February, the BOE amended next year's school calendar. The student first day remains August 25, but the last day changes from June 16 to 15, with 5 days included for snow or other emergency closings. The BOE changed parent-teacher conference dates to maximize instructional schedules because teachers report that students retain information better when they attend a half day instead of having a full day off. Fall conferences are October 10-12. Spring conferences are March 6-7, and all students attend half days. In addition, to maximize 5- and 4-day week instructional schedules, students are off October 14 when teachers attend professional development, and students attend October 20. Finally, the BOE expanded Winter Break to include December 23 in response to requests for an additional travel day at the start of the break. It is likely the BOE will add 6 early-dismissal days, to be assigned soon. The calendar is online at www.fcps.org.

Expanded Monocacy Valley Montessori Public Charter School will offer free half-day programs for 3- and 4-year olds next school year. Enrollment is by lottery for these programs and grades K-8.

Inflation In an effort to recoup increasing maintenance and operations costs, the BOE approved a July 1 increase in fees for groups that use FCPS facilities. Three long-term contracts for after-school child care will remain unchanged. Other than for pools, fees have not increased since 1995. The last pool-charge increase was in 1999. Revised hourly building-use fees are online at www.fcps.org/dept/facilities.

April 26: Life Planning Fair, 4-7 PM, Gov. T.J. High

April 27: Administrative Professionals Day

May 1-7: Teacher Appreciation Week

May 2: Urbana Conversation with the Superintendent

May 10: Employee Celebration of Excellence

May 15-21: National Educational Bosses' Week

May 27: Insurance Enrollment forms due

June 10*: Last school day for students

**June 13*: Last day for teachers:
4-day week schedule begins**

*Subject to change if FCPS closes between April 11 and the end of the school year



FCPS FACTOID

How many years have staff worked 4-day weeks in summer?

A: This is the 3rd year that FCPS has closed on summer Fridays to conserve operating costs. June 13 – August 12, staff will work longer days Mondays – Thursdays and enjoy 3-day summer weekends. Supervisors have details.



Tune to channel 18 for FCPS news:

Student Voice – 10 AM & 8 PM weekends

School Talk – 2:30 & 7:30 PM

Newsbreak – 9:30, 10:30 & 11:30 AM
12:30, 5:30, 8* & 9:30 PM
*weekdays

Inside Look – 2 & 7 PM

Health Matters – 11 AM & 9 PM

BOE Meetings – Wednesdays: 6 PM (live)
Calendar Handbook lists meeting dates
Re-broadcast the following evening

Bulletin Board – Menus, closing info, etc.
To submit news, fax: 301-696-6958 or
e-mail Dian.Nelson@fcps.org.

Classic Arts – 11 PM to 5 AM

www.fcps.org/cable18.htm

Schedules are subject to change

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Please fax 301-696-6958. Call 301-696-6900.
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Frederick County Public Schools

Working Together to Educate Each Child and Promote Success

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