



The Edwardian

Prince Edward County Public Schools

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August 2008

A message from the Superintendent

A year of challenges and accomplishments

On behalf of the Prince Edward School Board, I would like to welcome you to the 2008-2009 school year. The start of a new year is always a very exciting time for students, parents, teachers, and staff. It is a time of new opportunities and enormous possibilities. Therefore, as I review the challenges and accomplishments of Prince Edward County Public Schools for the 2007-2008 school year, I am profoundly grateful and deeply honored to have worked with so many passionate, committed, and devoted staff members and community members.



My vision for the 2008-2009 school year is to ensure excellence in every classroom by ensuring the success of every child in our school division. I am proud of the work students and staff accomplished across the school division for the 2007-2008 school year to help support our mission of meeting the intellectual, personal, social, and vocational needs of all students. These efforts have helped us achieve progress in each of the six goals of our strategic plan. Among the accomplishments are the following:

- The middle school increased the number of students taking Algebra I.
- An instructional support team program was implemented at the elementary school to review student individual achievement.
- Fifty-two percent of middle school were enrolled in Algebra

I and Geometry at the middle school.

- All ninth grade students at the high school had the opportunity to participate in a Freshman Advisory Program designed to assist them with the transition from middle school to high school.
- The administration increased parental engagement through the Superintendent's monthly coffee meetings, monthly community meetings, and the community forums.
- Employees, at all levels of our school division, were engaged in professional development to increase their knowledge and skills.

The entire school division believes that the education of our children is the key to their future personal and professional success. Therefore, we will work diligently to make sure that every child receives high quality education and the opportunity to succeed.

In keeping with this vision, the primary goals of the Prince Edward County Public Schools for the 2008-2009 school year are to ensure student achievement, to prepare our students to compete in the global economy, to offer a variety of challenging academic opportunities to students, to strengthen relations with parents and the community, and to strengthen our leadership and leadership capacity. Therefore, we are looking forward to the following initiatives for the 2008-2009 school year:

- Expansion of the AP Program at the high school
- Implementation of the AVID College Program at the middle and high schools
- Expansion of Algebra I at the middle school
- Implementation of German, Latin, and Spanish at grades 5, 6, and 7
- Implementation of the accelerated math program at the elementary school

As we move through the school year, there will be many opportunities, in varied formats, to share more detailed information about our school division's goals, new programs, new initiatives, and information regarding the performance of our students.

Finally, I would like to recognize our teachers and staff for their dedication and hard work during the 2007-2008 school year. I, also, would like to thank the parents for helping us to ensure the success of our students.

I encourage our parents and community to visit our schools, and I look forward to hearing from them on how we can best provide an exceptional education to our children.

- Dr. Patricia Watkins

Failure is NOT an option

Professional model provides framework for district initiatives

Prince Edward County Public Schools' commitment to identify and serve the needs of each child is demonstrated by its adoption of a professional learning community model, Failure Is NOT an Option. This model is founded on the belief that ALL children can achieve at least grade-level proficiency.

The overriding philosophy of the Failure is Not an Option model describes the critical role that every teacher, paraprofessional, administrator and school staff member plays to identify any child who is falling behind and to work together to provide the support the child needs to be successful.

We believe that each employee influences children every day and we expect those interactions

to be positive, meaningful, and supportive of academic and behavioral success.

Continuous school improvement is guided through the use of achievement data to make decisions. Research conducted by Dr. Douglas Reeves, founder of the Center for Performance Assessment, indicates that high-performing schools use on-going professional development, model effective teaching and assessment practices, encourage on-going professional collaboration, use effective communication between school staff, parents, and students, and monitor student progress on a frequent and regular basis.

Prince Edward County Public Schools encourages and en- See MODEL page 4

PECPS welcomes new staff for 2008-2009

Prince Edward County Public Schools welcomed 26 new staff members to fill vacancies for the 2008-2009 school year.

During the 2007-2008 school year, 38 new teachers were hired, which shows that the turnover rate for new staff is di-

minishing, school officials said.

Six of the 26 teachers are graduates of Longwood University and four are graduates of Prince Edward County Public Schools. The new staff brings a total of 108 years of experience to the school division.

Open House

Thursday, Aug. 7
2 - 7 p.m.

Take the opportunity to meet your child's teachers!

School opens
Aug. 11

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Division Initiatives What's New for 2008-09?

PECHS expands Advanced Placement program with VASS grant

Prince Edward County High School is the recipient of an advanced placement grant from the Virginia Study Strategies Program (VASS) for funding to strengthen the Advanced Placement in mathematics, science, and English. This year PECHS will offer advanced placement courses in Calculus, Biology and English Literature.

The grant features the following components:

- 1) voluntary participation by students and teachers;
- 2) financial incentives for students, teachers and schools based on AP exam results;
- 3) lead teachers to mentor teams of AP and pre-AP teachers;
- 4) advanced-level, content-focused training for teachers of AP and pre-AP courses;
- 5) Saturday AP exam prep sessions; and 6) professional management by VASS.

I CAN LEARN - MATH

Successful summer pilot program expanding to Algebra I for 2008-09

Prince Edward County Middle School was selected as a summer site for a state pilot of the I CAN LEARN (Interactive Computer Aided Natural Learning) software system. Students in the Pre-Algebra summer camp used this software system to improve their skills in the math strand "Number and Number Sense."

Teachers monitored student achievement and progress on a daily basis and were able to see exactly which lessons each student was working on and how much time was spent on each lesson.

The Middle School was excited to be selected to implement this software system because of the school's success with I CAN LEARN during the

2007-08 school year, when the school was one of only two I CAN LEARN math labs in Virginia. For the upcoming school year, I CAN LEARN math will be expanded to High School in Algebra I.

The standards-based Pre-Algebra and Algebra courseware is a very successful teaching tool and has been used with great success in school divisions across the country. The system provides immediate feedback to teachers and administrators through its classroom management system and web-based remote reporting.

Students also like the immediate feedback, as well as the interactive lessons and individual attention that the software can provide.

Stengthening college prep

PECPS adopts AVID program

The main objectives of the Prince Edward County Public Schools are to increase student achievement and to prepare students to be competitive in the global economy. With this in mind, the school division will focus on strengthening college preparation for the middle and high schools through the implementation of the AVID Program (Advancement Via Individual Determination).

AVID is an international college readiness system for students in grades 4 through 12. AVID has 27 years of proven success. Data provided to us by the organization show that 97 percent of AVID students are accepted to attend college. More-

over, the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research has shown that the vast majority of AVID graduates are prepared to enter a four-year college or university at a rate more than double the national rate (2005).

The Mission of AVID

The mission of AVID is to ensure that all students, most especially the least served students who are in the middle:

will succeed in a rigorous curriculum, will complete a rigorous college preparatory path, will enter mainstream activities of the school, will increase their enrollment in four-year colleges, and will become educated and responsible participants and

leaders in a democratic society. Prince Edward County Public Schools will implement AVID in grades 7 through 10 for the 2008-2009 school year. The program is available to students as an elective to their standard academic schedules. Teachers who participate will receive training throughout the entire school year. Students who participate in the program will receive the support of a college tutor and will participate in a summer institute.

An information forum for parents and students will take place during the first week of August.

Read 180

PECPS implements program to improve reading levels for students who struggle

According to a recent report from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and Alliance for Excellent Education, "approximately 8 million young people between fourth and twelfth grades struggle to read at grade level. Some 70 percent of older readers require some form of remediation" (2004). The 2003 statistics on reading achievement from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) also revealed that 37 percent of fourth graders were reading at below basic levels and that reading problems affected students in almost every social, cultural and ethnic group. According to the results, 25 percent of Caucasians, 60 percent of African Americans, 56 percent of Hispanics, 30 percent of Asian Americans, and 53 percent of Native Americans were reading at below basic levels in the fourth grade.

Students who do not have strong literacy skills find themselves at a serious disadvantage in school, social settings, as civil participants, and in the working world. A recent call for workplace preparedness from high school graduates intensified the importance of remediating and nurturing students' reading abilities. Reading interventions must help these students achieve sufficient gains in reading ability, so they can attain the literacy skills needed to succeed in school and in life.

PECPS is addressing this national problem through the implementation of READ 180, an intensive reading intervention program that helps educators confront the problem of adolescent illiteracy and special needs reading on multiple fronts, using technology, print, and professional development. READ 180 is proven to meet

the needs of struggling readers whose reading achievement is below proficient level. The program directly addresses individual needs through differentiated instruction, instructional software, high-interest literature, and direct instruction in reading, writing, and vocabulary skills.

The program is entering its second year at Prince Edward. After an evaluation of the first year of implementation, the administration made several adjustments to improve the program. There is one Read 180 classroom in the high school and one in the middle school. One teacher in each school has been assigned to teach Read 180 classes exclusively.

Students are identified as struggling readers (reading two years below grade level) based on SOL results, scholastic reading inventory (SRI), benchmark assessments, and teacher input.

More district initiatives, pages 4, 6

PECHS Information

Prince Edward County High School

1482 Zion Hill Road
Farmville, VA 23901
(434) 315-2130

Prince Edward County Career and Technical Center

1419 Zion Hill Road
Farmville, VA 23901
(434) 315-2140

Administrators

Odessa H. Pride, Principal (Extension 3322)
Erenest E. Miller, Assistant Principal (Extension 3324)
Allie C. Yarbrough, Assistant Principal (Extension 3323)
Janice G. Page, Coordinator of Career and Technical,
Adult, & Continuing Education (Extension 3422)
Shirby Scott-Brown, Athletic Director (Extension 3340)

Guidance Counselors

Jennifer Halladay, Director of Guidance (Extension 3333)
Avis Gresby (Extension 3336)
Edward Newby (Extension 3334)

Registrar

Patricia Holcomb (Extension 3332)

Nurse

Jean Thornton (Extension 3330)

Librarian

Nancy Currie (Extension 3345)

Department Chairs

Karen Parton, Business and Information Technology
Gwen McQuaige-Hicks, English
Bernice Hackett, Fine Arts
Lisa Simon, Foreign Language
Emily Camden, Agriculture
Marjorie Finch, Health Occupations
James Scott, Health and Physical Education
Kathryn Orth, Journalism
Lt. Col. Edward Gray, Junior Air Force ROTC
Noel Cabautan, Mathematics
Sarah Fulcher, Science
Sarah Moore, Social Studies
Ruth Williamson, Special Education
Robert Zava, Trades and Industrial Occupations

Parking Passes

Vehicles that are parked on Prince Edward County School property are done so at the risk of the owner. Students must purchase a parking decal for \$10 and adhere to the following regulations:

- Park neatly in the designated areas, displaying the parking decal on the rearview mirror of the vehicle.
- Students must not return to vehicles during the day unless permission is given by administration.
- Students must depart from vehicles immediately upon arrival at school.
- Speed limit on school grounds is 10 miles per hour.
- Vehicles are subject to inspection by school authorities.

The privilege to park on school grounds will be taken away if the student does not adhere to specified rules.

Programs In School

English/Honors Humanities, Math, Science, Social Studies/Honors Humanities
AVID, Freshman Advisory, and Project Adventure
Advanced Placement - English, Calculus, Biology
Dual Enrollment - English 111-112, Survey of British Lit, Probability/Statistics, Chemistry, VA/US History, Government, Criminal Justice, CIS, Word Processing, Electronics, CAD, Nurse's Aid, EMT

AP/Expansion 2008

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are designed as college level courses for high school students. Students at PECHS will have the opportunity to take three AP courses this year: AP English (Literature), AP Biology, and AP Calculus. After students complete rigorous course requirements, they take an end of the year test in May. Students can earn scores from "1" to "5", with "5" being the highest. Typically, colleges accept for course credit student scores of "3" or higher on examinations. **AP coursework is viewed favorably by colleges.**

Freshman Advisory (Restructured)

All entering freshmen are enrolled in Freshman Advisory, which alternates with Health and PE I. Purposes of the program include the following: monitoring academic achievement; fostering communication among home, school, and community; preparing students for life transitions; promoting character development; encouraging supportive peer relationships; and practicing conflict resolution.

Components added to Freshman Advisory for the 2008-2009 school year include **AVID** (Advancement Via Individual Determination) and **Project Adventure**.

AVID students are "in the middle," capable of completing a college preparatory path with much support from their parents and the school. These students often don't realize their fullest potential academically. College potential, desire, determination, and family support are crucial components. AVID 10 and Sophomore Seminar will be offered in Grade 10 to continue implementation of advisory components.

Project Adventure is a model for empowering youth to experience, desire, create, and maintain respectful communities (home and school). Project Adventure uses a structured, research-based intervention called Behavior Management Through Adventure that develops the skills for understanding that long-term behavioral change is both desirable and achievable. This intervention ultimately improves the developmental and academic outcomes for youth.

After School Programs

Extra Curricular Activities, Clubs, and Tutoring in Core Areas

Fees

Locker - \$2
Parking Decal - \$10
Individual Games - \$5
Family Sports Passes - \$80
Student Passes - \$20
Class Dues: Freshmen-\$15
Sophomores-\$25
Juniors-\$35
Seniors-\$60

Lunch schedule

3 Lunches
11:27-11:55
12:03-12:31
1:06-1:34

Strengthening the focus of math, science at PECES

Students in Grades 3 and 4 at Prince Edward County Elementary School will have the opportunity to expand their learning in math with the implementation of accelerated math. The purpose of this program is to create excitement for learning math and to make practice more effective for every student. The program will build upon the set of core objectives to achieve proficiency in mathematics.

Parents will have the oppor-

tunity to link to the school and obtain feedback online.

Students in Grades K through 2 will be introduced to the Waterford's Math and Science Program, which fosters hands-on-exploration and inquiry-based learning, while giving students a sound foundation in basic skills and creative problem solving. The curriculum teaches students to observe, manipulate, and question while learning science and math concepts.

Project Adventure helps students improve behavior, academic achievement

In an effort to enhance learning and behavioral outcome for students, the school division is implementing the Project Adventure Behavior Management Program at the middle and high schools.

Project Adventure is a structured, research-based intervention that not only contributes to the amelioration of serious behavior disorders in children and youth, but develops skills for understanding that long-term behavioral change is both desirable and achievable. It is a systematic approach to promoting positive behavior for middle and high school students with social adjustment issues.

Using behavior supports and proactive strategies, this model provides alternatives to expul-

sion, improves academic and behavioral outcomes, and allows children to remain or return to the least restrictive environment. Project Adventure's program benefits include dramatic improvement in communication skills, accelerated achievement of behavioral goals, development of individual accountability, and, ultimately, greater academic success.

Training for the leadership team, administrators, teachers and support staff who will participate in Project Adventure will begin at the start of the school year. Parents and students who will participate will be invited to attend a question and answer session with the superintendent and administrators before the start of school.

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hances these practices through collaboration, discussion, and coaching among our staff.

Failure is NOT an Option at Prince Edward County Public Schools demonstrates:

- Our commitment to making sure that all students learn the content and process skills they need in school and in the future
- Our commitment to creating a culture that encourages and allows all students to succeed
- Our collective responsibility for students' learning
- Our commitment to becoming a learning community and improve our learning.

During the 2008-09 school year, teachers, administrators and all staff members will

be moving to the next level in implementing these six principles. The vision for the school division will be articulated. Additional and more effective intervention will be provided for students in core content at each school. The focus will be on early identification of any gap in a student's learning and quick response to address the missing concept.

In addition, division-wide initiatives for the 2008-09 school year include Project Adventure Behavior Model, AVID, and Response to Intervention demonstrate our continuing commitment to the philosophy and tenets of Failure is NOT an Option.

Technology in the classroom

Teaching "digital natives"

Today's students are often dubbed "digital natives," as they have never known life without technology. PECPS is dedicated to providing opportunities for students to utilize technologies in learning and is equipping teachers with tools to meet the diverse needs of the school population.

Interactive white boards are used in many schools, eliminating the traditional chalk or white board. With them, teachers and students can create, record, and review content with the touch of a finger or special pen. Several such whiteboards are now located in each school in the division.

Former kindergarten teacher and new Instructional Technology Resource Teacher Emalee Owens is a regular user of the Smart technology.

"Using the Smartboard with my kindergarten students has engaged students. The Smartboard is just like a computer screen, only it is projected onto a whiteboard that responds to touch, just as it would respond to the mouse of the computer. I have students who are not at all eager to participate in the classroom using traditional methods, but are enthusiastic and eager to participate using the Smartboard," she said.

A new Smartboard was installed in the Yearbook/German classroom at the high school as part of the Flip the Classroom

competition won by teachers Kathryn Orth and Janet Miller. A set of Senteo student response devices was donated to the high school by Region 8 Teacher of the Year Wanda Bass, and Orth and Miller are excited about incorporating these devices into their instruction.

"I have spent my summer scanning my photography class slides, so that I can use them in Smartboard presentations and draw all over them as I point out elements of design or points of historical interest. I know I'll have fun with it. We can also practice for quizzes with the Senteo equipment," Orth said.

More recently, after "test driving" two Promethean interactive whiteboards in the middle and high schools in the spring, the division has purchased boards for math and science classes in each school—nine in the Middle School and eight in the High School. The Elementary School will have ten Promethean boards for use by all fourth grade teachers. Promethean developer markets its product as a total classroom solution designed by teachers, for teachers. Teachers can create their own lessons using the Promethean software or use over 5,000 lesson resources already available from the Promethean website to make science and math lessons more interesting, engaging, real-life like, and interactive for students. Other

equipment purchased includes additional student response devices and the Activslate, a wireless, fully integrated mini-board, small enough for teachers to bring prepared material to the classroom, to set on a desk, or to move around the classroom.

"I am so excited to have this technology in our schools," said Instructional Technology Resource Teacher (ITRT) Mary Beth Blessing. "We are lucky to have a superintendent, director, and school board who support innovations that can be not only beneficial to teaching and learning, but can be lots of fun for teachers and students to use. Interactive white boards and student response devices encourage student participation and provide immediate feedback to teachers regarding student knowledge."

The ITRT team and classroom teachers carefully scrutinize new technologies to ensure their best use. The ITRT positions were mandated by the Virginia Standards of Quality three years ago to support teachers in the integration of technology in the classrooms. ITRTs are licensed teachers, often with advanced degrees and technology expertise, who provide on-demand classroom assistance and professional development in new technology, software, and web-based programs for teachers and staff throughout the division.

The Six Principles of Failure is NOT an Option are:

Principle 1:

Common Mission, Vision, Values and Goals

Principle 2:

Ensuring Achievement for ALL Students
by Developing Systems of Prevention and Intervention

Principle 3:

Collaborative Teaming Focused on Teaching and Learning

Principle 4:

Using Data to Guide Decision Making and Continuous Improvement

Principle 5:

Gaining Active Engagement from Family and Community

Principle 6:

Building Sustainable Leadership Capacity

Prince Edward County Middle School

35 Eagle Drive, Farmville, VA 23901

(434) 315-2120

PECMS ADMINISTRATORS

MICHAEL EARL- Principal- Ext. 3223

JULIA BRITT- Assistant Principal-Ext. 3239

LUCY CARSON-Assistant Principal-Ext. 3224

Phone extensions:

Nurse -
Phyllis Breil - 3230

Librarian
Leola Entzminger - 3228

Guidance -
Linda Burden - 3227
Angeles Christian - 3236

Students Entering 6th Grade Need Tdap Booster

During the 2006 General Assembly, Virginia passed a new law which requires all sixth grade students to have a Tdap booster shot prior to entry to school. The Tdap vaccine protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Tetanus, also called lockjaw, causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body. It can also lead to locking of the jaw so the sick person cannot open his mouth or swallow. Diphtheria is a serious disease that causes a thick covering in the back of the throat and can lead to breathing problems, paralysis, heart failure, and even death. Pertussis, also called whooping cough, causes coughing spells so bad it is often hard to eat, drink, or breathe and can last for weeks.

Middle School News:

New assistant principal

Mrs. Julia Britt is the new Assistant Principal at the Middle School. Mrs. Britt taught science at Cumberland County Elementary School from 1998-2001 and then moved to Buckingham County, where she taught math for three years and then sixth grade science for several years. Mrs. Britt is a graduate of Alvernia College. She received her Master's Degree from Longwood University in Educational Leadership. Mrs. Britt is currently enrolled in a doctoral program in Educational Leadership at Liberty University.

Join the PTA!

The Middle School PTA is looking for an increase in membership and the election of new officers. During open house, a registration table will be available for enrollment in membership for parents and teachers. All parents and teachers are encouraged and invited to enroll!

R.E.A.P. helps and enriches

The middle school has put into place and will monitor a new remediation and enrichment program for students. REAP stand for Remediation Enrichment Academic Progression. During 4th period, teachers will work with students to either remediate or enrich student learning. Students will receive extra help in areas of weakness, or their learning will be extended in areas of strength.

100% passing SOLs in Algebra and Geometry

During the 2007-2008 school year Prince Edward County Middle School had approximately 50% of the eighth grade students enrolled and successfully completing Algebra I and Geometry. Of those students taking the Algebra I and Geometry SOL tests, we had 100% passing! Congratulations to those hard working students and teachers for their ongoing effort toward SOL achievement!

Middle School sports

(Excerpt from the Farmville Herald, courtesy Nathan King)

The idea of a middle school sports program has been pondered for some time in Prince Edward. Eighth graders have been able to play on the high school's junior varsity team, with younger students participating in intramural competition, or through community leagues.

Coach House sees the move toward interscholastic competition at the middle school level as a positive one.

"This will encourage an increased sense of pride in our school. Kids will be representing Prince Edward County Middle School," he said.

Coach House added that the students will have to meet academic and behavioral requirements to participate - much like what is in place at the high school.

"The students will learn at an earlier age what is expected of them in order to stay eligible to play."

Like the high school, PECMS teams will play under the "Eagles" nickname and will

wear purple and gold. House said that other middle schools in the conference have different nicknames and colors, but for simplicity sake and to reduce the start-up costs, he feels this is the best route to take.

Go Eagles!

Farmville Herald
July 11, 2008

Daily schedule:

Bus Arrival - 7:50

Breakfast - 7:50

School Begins - 8:05

School ends - 3:10

Classroom Walkthrough

Teacher-led professional development activity provides vehicle to discuss learning and teaching processes

Prince Edward County Public Schools is the first school division in Virginia to use a powerful professional development tool for teachers, the Teacher-Led Classroom Walkthrough process. Teachers visit other classes for brief periods, observing the ways that students learn in different settings.

The objectives of this process are to develop a positive school culture, to support a professional learning community, to increase student achievement and to empower teachers in the school decision-making process.

Training provided by the UCLA School Management Program during the pilot phase last year gave teachers hands-on practice to implement the collaborative

classroom observation process.

Governor's Conference

On July 29, Katrina Little, third grade teacher, Jessica Fortner, middle school teacher, Laura Williamson, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Dr. Patricia Watkins, Superintendent of Schools, presented a workshop on the Teacher-Led Classroom Walkthrough at the Governor's Conference in Richmond.

Last year, teachers learned:

- to use a variety of collaborative strategies to collect, analyze, and act on authentic classroom observation and student learning data;
- to design focus questions for classroom observations;

- to participate in an observation debriefing that provide non-judgmental feedback and creates new understanding about learning;

- to practice the art of questioning and giving feedback in ways that create trust and encourage a variety of perspectives;

- to identify patterns and trends in student data that suggest areas for professional inquiry.

This year, teachers will put these skills into action and engage more teachers in the process.

How it works

The Teacher-Led Classroom Walk-through (CWT) follows a protocol that has several phases. During the preparation phase, the teachers agree on the norms

for the CWT and develop a focus question. A sample focus question might be, "What evidence do we see or hear that students are engaged in their own learning?"

During the Classroom Observation Phase, teachers visit classrooms and collect evidence and data in response to the focus question.

During the Debriefing Phase, the teachers engage in conversations analyzing the data collected and reflecting on its implication for classrooms and student learning. Evidence is charted in a non-judgemental fashion and discussed by the group.

During the Next Step Phase, teachers agree on the strategies to follow-up the CWT. The ac-

tions are related to the focus question, based on the evidence collected.

In Prince Edward County Public Schools, teachers are taking the lead in building positive school culture and coming up with real solutions to everyday problems. Follow-up training in the process will be provided throughout the 2008-09 year to support the teacher teams. Administrators will discuss how they can support the teacher-led classroom walkthrough and develop a handbook of procedures. All teachers and administrators will read and discuss the book, *Breaking Through to Effective Teaching*, a Walkthrough Protocol Linking Student Learning and Professional Practice.

Benchmark testing to be administered every 9 weeks

Local teachers use Instructional Data Management System, other resources, to construct practice tests for PE students

For the last two school years, the Prince Edward County Public School system has been using benchmark assessments every six weeks to measure how much students know and are able to do in the core content areas of math, science, history and social sciences, and English. Analysis of these benchmarks allows teachers and school administrators to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, in an effort to plan and implement remedial or enrichment strategies.

Previously, benchmarks were developed by Tests for Higher Standards (TfHs) with little input from local teachers. Therefore, Division Superintendent Dr. Patricia Watkins decided to put in place a system that gave teachers more participation and control over the nature and quality of the benchmark assessments.

First, the division's Execu-

tive Director of Curriculum and Instruction conducted a thorough review of the curriculum. Second, teachers were recruited to develop pacing guides (sequence and rate at which subjects are taught) for all subject areas by grade. And third, teachers developed four benchmark assessments for each core content area by grade that will be administered during the 2008-2009 school year. However, in response to teachers' concerns regarding time spent on testing, the superintendent decided to change the frequency of benchmark assessments from every six to every nine weeks.

Forty-two teachers volunteered to participate in the development of the benchmark assessments. The school division provided training and all resources needed to complete them. The school division purchased test item banks and a

platform called IDMS that allowed teachers to put benchmark assessments together, to be administered online or on paper and pencil. In addition to ETS item banks, the division purchased item banks from ExamGen and used released state SOL test items, as well as items from TfHS. As a result, teachers could select from thousands of items.

Based upon a review of the state's standards, testing requirements, and SOL test blueprints, the school division created benchmark assessment templates that guided the development of each benchmark. The questions measure skills that students need to reach learning milestones reflected in the state's standards. They cover the standards tested in the state, in terms of number of items for a standard and how well each aspect of the standard is covered.

This year, the school system will house its own benchmark assessments on its data warehouse system. The school system will use IDMS to manage the school division assessment program.

The IDMS application is a web-based application that helps K-12 educators create and administer tests and manage and use data to inform instructional practices, improve student achievement, and optimize learning results. Using item bank questions, the IDMS Test Builder module can create standards-based assessments paced to the division's curriculum. Online test management and scoring options give educators the flexibility to administer and score tests online, or to use paper and pencil tests. They can then drill down into the data to produce meaningful, actionable reports.

Achieving student success and improving school performance mean focusing on the standards by asking the best questions, getting the right answers, and gaining a deeper understanding of how to build a balanced assessment program to meet the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and state accountability requirements. The school division is committed to accomplishing this in fulfilling its most important responsibilities — to students, parents, and the community.

But developing quality benchmark assessments is only part of the equation. The school division will provide intensive and extensive professional development to teachers and school administrators throughout the school year to become effective users of data and information to guide and target instruction.

Don't miss school announcements and information!
Visit the PECPS web site.

www.pecps.k12.va.us

Prince Edward County Elementary School

1666 Zion Hill Road, Farmville, VA 23901

Phone (434) 315-2110, Fax 434-392-1583

PECES Information

PECES Phone Extensions
Call 315-2100, then ;

Nurse 3127
Ms. Barron
Ms. Reames

Guidance 3128
Ms Arieti
Mr. Baker 3130

Registrar 3123
Ms. Jones

Psychologist 3129
Ms. Lynch

Speech Pathologist 3131
Ms. Eiban

Assistant Principal 3126
Mr. Kane

Assistant Principal 3125
Ms. Robertson

Principal 3124
Ms. Brown



Barbara S. Brown,
Principal

For almost 40 years, she has been involved in meeting the needs of students and teachers in many diverse roles. She views education in a global perspective as she has observed classrooms and presented educational lectures in Russia, Thailand, and Japan. Mrs. Brown received the Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from Virginia Union University and The Masters of Education from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has taught her favorite subject (mathematics) for the Richmond Public Schools, John Tyler Community College, and Virginia Union University. She recently was employed as the Mathematics Specialist for PECPS and the Interim Principal for PECHS. Prior to becoming an administrator, she was a gifted and talented teacher for grades K-8.



Rodney D. Kane,
Assistant Principal

Mr. Kane is no stranger to Prince Edward County Schools. He has been an Administrator in the county schools for four years. Mr. Kane is a graduate of Cedarville College with a B.A. in Health and Physical Education. He also earned two Master Degrees from Lynchburg College in the areas of Special Education and Educational Leadership. He has been in education for 22 years. Mr. Kane has been selected to Who's Who Among American Teachers and Dogwood District Girls Basketball Coach of the Year. Mr. Kane is looking forward to many years at PECES. His main goal is to make a difference in the life of each student and to help each of them be successful in life.



Angela Robertson,
Assistant Principal

Ms. Robertson is the returning member of last year's Administrative Team. Ms. Robertson is starting her 5th year as Assistant Principal at PECES after teaching Technology Education at Prince Edward County Middle School. This will be Ms. Robertson's tenth year in Prince Edward County Schools. Ms. Robertson is a graduate of Saint Paul's College. She completed her Graduate school coursework at Virginia State University and earned a degree in Educational Administration & Supervision. Ms. Robertson is the Testing Coordinator for Prince Edward County Elementary School. She is looking forward to another exciting year at the Elementary School.

Daily Schedule

8:05—8:30—Breakfast

8:30—Tardy Bell/Morning Announcements

8:35—Morning Instruction Begins

10:45—1:15 Lunch Periods @ 30 minute intervals

3:10 - End of Instructional Day

Note: Prince Edward County Elementary School cannot accept students until 7:45 each morning. All entrances will remain locked until 7:45 a.m.

The **Southside Family Learning Center** is located in the small building between the School Board Office and Prince Edward County Elementary School. The Family Learning Center is funded by the Prince Edward County Public Schools to assist parents in learning new skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. The center is open on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Parents of young children through Grade 3 are invited to come with their children or alone to learn new skills. For more information, please call 434-315-2119.

News from the Food Service Department

Even as gas and food prices increase, Prince Edward County Schools will not be raising the cost of meals for the 2008-2009 school-year. That's right, meal prices will remain:

BREAKFAST PRICES

.60 Full Price Grades K-4

.75 Full Price Grades 5-12

.30 Reduced Price Grades K-12

\$1.25 Adult Breakfast

LUNCH PRICES

\$1.50 Full Price Grades K-12

.40 Reduced Price Grades K-12

\$2.50 Adult Lunch

Let's face it. You're unable to pack a lunch that is healthy for the price that you can buy a school meal. For \$1.50, your child will get a meal that meets the nutritional needs of students as recommended by the Virginia Child Nutrition Program. Lunch will include an entrée, fruit, vegetables, bread, and milk. We encourage each family to allow Prince Edward County Schools to provide our students with a healthy breakfast and lunch each school day.

The Food Service Department anticipates an increase in participation which will allow us to exercise our main objective, which is to give the students of our school system a well balanced meal at minimal cost. We may look at cutting some things to help support the cost of food that we buy. We are working very closely with our food service providers to buy quality food at the lowest price so that our prices will remain the same.

Bruce Davis, the Supervisor of Food Service, plans to make the menus more appealing to the customers. Students, faculty, and staff are invited to eat lunch everyday. It is important that we feed the children of this county a healthy, nutritional meal that will help them in the classroom and throughout the day.

We encourage parents to pre-pay for meals or put money on the students debit account. For those families that qualify, the free and reduced price meal program is available. Every parent is given the opportunity to apply for these benefits. Forms may be picked up at your school's cafeteria, main office or food service office. An application can be completed at any time during the school year.

This department is always open to suggestions. We appreciate your continued support. If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

Bruce Davis, Supervisor of Food Service

(434) 315-2148

(434) 392-2216 (FAX)

bruce.davis@pecps.k12.va.us

More than 300 students attend successful PECPS summer programs

Prince Edward County Public Schools just concluded its largest summer academic program in recent years. Over 300 students entering grades 3 through 11 participated in math, science and reading camps designed to accelerate their learning and give them a jump start on the new school year. The summer camps were conducted over a five week period, from June 16 to July 24, with students attending Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Students, parents and teachers were pleased with the quality and variety of programs offered and attendance was excellent. Nine different camps were conducted with each program at or above anticipated enrollment.

“Measuring Up” for students entering grades 3 and 4 involved hands-on math activities. Students measured volume, weight, and length using English and metric units. Favorite lessons included Centimeter Bubbles, Trundle Wheel Perimeter, and the Wheel Clock.

Students in “Famous People from the Past” (grades 3 and 4) learned about polar exploration, Apollo 13, American Pioneers and the Wild West. They read and discussed the biographies of Matthew Hensen, Ronald Amundsen, John Glenn, Neil Armstrong, Sally Ride, Jedidiah Smith, Daniel Boone, Annie Oakley, Jesse James and Levi Strauss.

“Splish-Splash Science” (grades 3 and 4) focused on studies of wetlands, riparian zones, non-point source pollution, and indicators of water quality. Favorite activities included Marsh Munchers, Wetland Metaphor, Dragonfly Pond, and Alice in Waterland. A field trip to Briery Lake with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries included water quality testing for pH and dissolved oxygen. A fish-shocking demonstration to study fish species and health was particularly interesting for students, parents, and teachers. Students also visited the Farmville water treatment and

sewage treatment facilities after creating classroom models.

Reading Camp for rising fifth and sixth graders reinforced the reading comprehension strategies: predicting, clarifying, summarizing, and questioning. Students read and discussed a number of books. They also had many opportunities to visit the middle school library, which was open for all the camps.

Fundamental Math Camp was designed to strengthen basic math skills in multiplication and division. Each day began with a quick review of the math facts that should be in memory. Then students discussed and did practice questions which reinforced more difficult math concepts requiring reasoning and multiple steps. In small student groups, with ample opportunities to work closely with math professionals, students gained the skills necessary for success in future math classes.

Pre-Algebra Camp (grade 7) and Algebra Camp (grade 8) used the I CAN LEARN software or

math lab. Last school year, Prince Edward Middle School was one of the first schools in Virginia to use this powerful and successful math program in its state-of-the-art math lab. The school was selected to pilot the online software version this summer. Students were placed in their appropriate lessons after a pre-test assessment. Student progress was monitored constantly through the electronic reporting capacity.

“Rising Scholars Summer Transition” for rising ninth graders was held at the Career Technical Center. Students participated in the widely acclaimed “High School 101” curriculum, which focused on financial literacy and preparing academically for the real world. Students took a personality test, read Financial Literacy for Teens and Teenagers Preparing for the Real World, and discussed goals for college and careers.

Advanced Placement Biology Camp gave students an experience with advanced content,

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*Its purpose is to keep
the community informed
of division initiatives
and school events.*

Superintendent
Dr. Patricia Watkins

Editor
Dr. Kathryn Orth

expectations, and strategies. Students conducted field studies at Wilck’s Lake and analyzed data in the lab. Advanced Placement Biology is a rigorous and challenging curriculum which engages students in current and future science technology.

At the end of the final day of each program, parents were invited to attend a brief presentation by students on what they had learned. Prince Edward Public Schools were pleased and gratified at the large number of parents who attended each of these presentations.

Security measures installed

Surveillance cameras for all buses

The transportation department has installed and implemented one of the most elite camera systems available on all of our buses. These cameras will allow bus drivers to focus more on the road and less on what’s going on in the back of the bus. This system may also be used to monitor the performance of the driver in the fulfillment of his/her duties on the bus.

This digital system is comprised of three cameras strategically placed in each bus to see all student seats, the driver’s compartment, the bus entrance, and stairwell. The 80 gigabyte hard drive is designed to record up to 40 hours, without erasing any information.

The system is also equipped with a panic button, located in the driver’s compartment, which will allow the driver to pinpoint an incident at the time it occurs. When the panic button is pushed, all three cameras capture an image simultaneously. The feature is beneficial because the official handling the incident would not have to watch the entire video. When that particular incident is viewed, the display screen shows all three images at the same time.

Since the cameras are not hidden, students should know that they are being recorded. Video surveillance, as a preventative measure on school buses, has been shown to enhance the management of problem behavior. Video information provides a mechanism to review the school bus environment and initiate problem solving strategies to remediate undesirable behaviors. The video surveillance

system also provides liability protection in case there is legal action against the driver. If they are used properly, a surveillance system can promote student safety, prevent discipline problems, and deter vandalism.

Visitor management system

The Prince Edward County Public School system has installed the Raptor V-Soft at all the schools, the Career Tech building, the bus shop, and the central office building. The system was installed to add another blanket of security for the safety of all students and staff. The new system will replace all previous sign-in procedures. The system will provide a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors.

This powerful system will enable building administrators to identify anyone attempting to gain access to the campus, as well as track those visitors and volunteers who routinely visit their building. Most significantly, this system tracks all registered sexual offenders in the United States and alerts the building administrator if an offender attempts to gain entry.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, there are an estimated 603,000 registered sex offenders in the U.S.

Upon entering a school, a visitor will proceed to a registration desk. The staff member on duty will take the visitor’s ID (usually a driver’s license) and scan it into the V-Soft system. A visitor’s badge will be issued with the person’s name and photo, the date, the time, and the destination within the building for the visit. The ID will be held

in a secure location until the visitor’s pass is returned. When the visitor leaves the building, the staff will sign the person out.

Visitors without a valid ID will need to obtain permission from the school administration to visit the school. Visitors without a valid ID will only be allowed to enter the school twice during the school year.

A letter to parents from the Superintendent explaining the purpose of this system was mailed out July 28.

For information on
school activities, sports
and inclement
weather closings,
call the school Hotline:

434-315-2101