



## Letter from the Superintendent

September 25, 2007

Dear Parents, Teachers and Staff:

Welcome to our new school year. It is hard to believe that we have completed our first six weeks of school and that Parent-Teacher Conferences will take place on September 27, 2007. This year the Prince Edward County Public Schools are ready to take all needed and appropriate steps to prepare our students to function in a global economy. Therefore, we have embraced the philosophy and approach that "Failure is NOT an Option."

Parents can make our school system a remarkable school system with their support, feedback and suggestions. Therefore, we urge all parents to join the School Board and our employees in developing a school system that is beneficial to all students and where all students can acquire the skills to achieve personal success and to benefit their community.

We have a long journey in front of us, but these examples of excellence give us much to celebrate: Wanda Bass, Special Education Teacher from the high school, has been named "Teacher of the Year" for Region 8; the high school's Freshman Advisory Program has been well received by the 9th grade students and teachers; and the middle school has increased its percentage of students taking Algebra I.

I welcome your feedback and look forward to your partnership for another successful year.

Sincerely,  
*Patricia Watkins*, Ph.D.  
Superintendent

## Data drives decision making

PEPCS is providing training for teachers, principals and administrators to collect and analyze various types of data to guide decision making and to improve students and schools success.

Data are used for setting goals, addressing individual student or group needs, evaluating effectiveness of teaching practices or programs being implemented in the schools, assessing if student needs are being met, and allocating or reallocating resources to improve outcomes.

For instance, the school division is providing training on the use of the Educational Information Management System (EIMS), TieNet and Reports Online, to analyze SOL and benchmark assessment results. The EIMS is sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education and its objective is to analyze SOL results; TieNet and Reports Online are data warehouses acquired by the school division to analyze benchmark test scores. Benchmark tests are designed to assess student learning every six weeks and to be tools that will guide planning for intervention, re-teaching or enrichment.

## Superintendent hosts Parent Forum

All parents of PECMS students were invited to meet with the Division Superintendent, Dr. Patricia Watkins, in an Open Forum on Sept. 19. to discuss the accreditation status of the Middle School. Dr. Watkins explained the Action Plan developed by a committee of parents, teachers and administrators to meet requirements of No Child Left Behind and achieve full accreditation in 2007 – 08.

Targets for student achievement in English, math, science and social studies were established to meet or exceed state and federal standards. In addition, objectives were developed to increase active engagement of parents, the community and businesses in the school, improve student behavior, develop a professional learning community with relational trust and develop a Pyramid of Interventions. Parents reviewed the plan and provided feedback to the committee.

## Wanda Bass named Teacher of the Year for Region 8

PECHS Special Education teacher Wanda Bass has been named Region 8's Teacher of the Year and will compete against seven other regional winners for the title of Virginia's Teacher of the Year. Bass learned of her selection Sept. 19 in a surprise classroom visit by Dr. Watkins and Virginia Department of Education officials.

Bass, the 2007 PECPS Teacher of the Year, and other candidates for the regional honor submitted portfolios highlighting their professional accomplishments, educational philosophies and community activities. A panel of representatives from professional and educational associations, the business community and the 2007 Virginia Teacher of the Year, Susan W. Evans of Rural Retreat, reviewed and judged the portfolios.

## Bus drivers receive safety training

Bus drivers for the Prince Edward County Public Schools will receive training Oct. 12 on how to handle disruptive behavior on the bus. The training session will be the first in a series of two workshops designed to equip the bus drivers with additional strategies to perform their challenging tasks.

## Coffee with the Superintendent

Dr. Patricia Watkins will meet with parents on a regular basis at the different schools. Parents will have an opportunity to become informed of the progress of school initiatives and to provide their support and feedback. The first "Coffee with the Superintendent" will take place at Prince Edward County Elementary School Library on Thursday, October 11, 2007 from 7:50 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The second "Coffee with the Superintendent" will take place at Prince Edward County High School Library on Wednesday, October 24, 2007 from 7:50 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. If you will be able to attend, please call Mrs. Jane Lee at 315-2151.

## News Notes

**Students from St. Angela's Schule** in Koenigstein, Germany, arrived in Farmville Sept. 23 for a two-week visit. The 15 girls will be staying with host families and attending classes with their host sisters and brothers at PECHS. The German and American students will tour Jamestown and visit Grand Caverns. The German students are accompanied by two of their teachers, Mr. Wolfgang Heisl and Mrs. Antje Ohliger, who will also visit classes. This is the fourth year of the St. Angela-PECHS exchange.

**The National Honor Society** and the Prince Edward Public Schools Endowment teamed up to raise money for PEPSE with a dunking booth at First Fridays Sept. 7. Volunteering to be dunked were Mr. Sam Wilson from the governor's school, Mr. Kenneth Cooper, Mr. Aaron Willoughby, Mr. Greg Giuriceo, Nick Coyle, Justin Godsey, Elise Allen, Carrie Eberly and Scott Henshaw. Mrs. Scott-Brown, Farmville Mayor Syd Newman, Mr. Keith Henshaw and John Henshaw also helped with the fundraiser.

**Sophomore Courtney Garrett** brought home the ninth place award for Public Speaking I from the Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda National Leadership Conference, held in June in Chicago. The public speaking competition recognizes FBLA members who are beginning to develop qualities of business leadership and effective speaking skills. Courtney's speech was four minutes in length. She competed against 70 other entrants.

**All sophomores** will take the PSAT test Wed, Oct. 17, with the school division paying the registration fees. Freshman and juniors are encouraged to take the test since the scores are considered for the National Merit scholarship. The cost is \$13.00.

**Flip that Classroom**, a grant sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Center at VCU, remodeled the high school classroom of Ms. Janet Miller and Dr. Kathryn Orth. The Lowe's stores in the Richmond area donated materials and labor for new computer work stations and a work island with storage, as well as air purifiers, stools for the work island and storage containers, as part of their Lowe's Heroes Project. Other donations included an LCD projector from Street and Co. Audio Visual of Richmond and a projection screen from Key Office of Farmville.

**New parents** to the Prince Edward County Public Schools were invited to meet the Superintendent of Schools and members of the leadership team on Tuesday, Sept. 18. The purpose of the meeting was to provide parents with an overview of the school division academic programs

and to give parents an opportunity to ask questions about the schools. Dr. Patricia Watkins, Superintendent of Schools, welcomed the opportunity to meet with the parents and she is looking forward to forming a strong partnership with all parents.

### A note from the Department of Finance:

We are pleased that the students at the elementary school are enjoying the new bathroom facilities in Building G. It is also rewarding to see the instruction being provided to our students at the high school and career technical center in the new wing. The high school and Career Technical center security camera project is underway. We would like to thank the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors and the Prince Edward County Administrator and Assistant Administrator for their support in securing these funds for our school system and its students.

## Coming up . . .

### After-school tutoring

Plans are underway for several after-school tutoring opportunities for students across the division. Tutoring begin Oct. 16 and continue every Tuesday and Thursday through Nov. 29. Detailed information will be sent to parents by each school principal the first week in October.

### School pictures

High School - Oct. 3  
Elementary School - Oct. 23  
Middle School - Oct. 24

### PECMS PTA

Meeting - Oct. 17  
Cookie Dough Fundraiser Sale -  
Sept. 28 through Oct. 12

### SAT

Nov. 3 at Longwood, register by Oct. 2  
Dec. 1 at Longwood, register by Oct. 30  
Jan. 26 at PECHS, register by Dec. 26  
Mar. 1 at Longwood, register by Jan. 29  
May 3 at PECHS, register by Apr. 1  
June 7 at Longwood, register by May 6

### ACT

Oct. 27, register by Sept. 21  
Dec. 8, register by Nov. 2  
Feb. 9, register by Jan. 4  
Apr. 12, register by Mar. 7  
June 14, register by May 9

### For further information on

high school events, call 315-2130  
middle school events, call 315-2120  
elementary school events, call 315-2110

## Division to apply for AP grant

PECPS plans to submit a proposal to the Virginia Advanced Study Strategies program (VASS), for funding to strengthen the Advanced Placement program in mathematics, science and English at the high school. VASS is a non-profit corporation that works with Virginia schools and the private sector to maximize the number of students passing AP math, science and English exams by planning, implementing and managing training and incentive programs.

Program features include: 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 vertical 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. Schools will be notified of selection and funding awards by Dec. 15, 2007.

## SES Tutoring at PECMS

A Parent Fair was held on September 25 to introduce eligible middle school parents and students to the providers of Supplemental Educational Services (SES) serving our school division. These vendors are approved by the Virginia Department of Education and must follow strict guidelines set by No Child Left Behind. They are required to administer pre- and post-assessments, communicate regularly with the school and with parents, and provide interim progress reports.

Parents had an opportunity to meet company representatives, compare qualifications and focus of each vendor, and ask specific questions about how their child's needs would be met. Parents will select the provider of their child's tutoring from the following vendors: Longwood Center for Communication, Literacy and Learning, Reach for Tomorrow, Achieve Success Tutoring, Tsquared Tutors, Bright Futures Learning, ATS Project Success, and Alternatives Unlimited.

## PE Focus

*PE Focus* is published four times a year from the superintendent's office of the Prince Edward County Public Schools. Its purpose is to keep faculty, staff members and parents informed of district-wide initiatives.

Superintendent  
*Dr. Patricia Watkins*

Editor  
*Dr. Kathryn Orth*