

## FALLS CHURCH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### *Budget Update: Board to Stand By School Budget*



It's been a couple of weeks since the Falls Church City School Board presented it's FY08 budget proposal to the Falls Church City Council. We all knew that given the economic climate, this would be a tough budget year, and we scrutinized our school budget to ensure every taxpayer dollar is being spent wisely and in the best interest of our students. The budget that the board presented is as lean as it can be without doing significant harm to the academic program, and the school board and I are prepared to further defend that budget proposal, if necessary.

At this point, the city council is holding budget work sessions and hearings to determine city funding priorities and funding resources. There has been some discussion about raising the tax rate by one penny to adequately fund both the city and schools - a proposal that the current city administration has indicated it does not support. Unless alternate funding sources can be identified, the schools may be asked to take another look at our budget and identify areas to make cuts.

From where I sit, I see no way to do this without jeopardizing some aspect of our academic program. The school board shares my concern. We have already scrutinized our budget, cut positions and reprogrammed resources in an effort to ensure efficient and effective use of taxpayer dollars. We did what we were asked to do, and several council members praised us for our efforts.

The city's current vision statement includes "World Class Schools." The board and I certainly share that vision and recognize that world class schools require adequate funding. When you consider what's at stake, you realize it's something we can't afford to do without.

*"People know you for what you've done, not for what you plan to do."*

~Author  
Unknown

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### **Committee Names Veteran Staffer 2007 Support Employee of the Year**

Congratulations to **Barbara Mitchell**, the recipient of the 2007 FCCPS Support Employee of the Year Award! A committee of three former employees including a school-based administrator, a support employee and a central office administrator selected Barbara to receive the award from a field of six nominees.

Barbara wears many hats in the division: Secretary to the Superintendent, Deputy Clerk of the School Board, school division historian and jack-of-all trades. Her service to the FCCPS spans five superintendents and more than two decades, and a precious few people in the division have more institutional knowledge than she does.

Barbara and the five other nominees (see page 2) will be recognized at a reception on May 10th at 5:30 p.m. at Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School. Everyone is invited!



*Superintendent's Secretary and School Board Deputy Clerk Barbara Mitchell is the 2007 FCCPS Support Employee of the Year.*

# 2007 Support Employee of the Year Nominees



**Jennie Adkins**  
FCCPS School Bus Driver

"She takes extra time and effort to get to know the kids personally."

*Jenifer Kern-McGregor*  
Parent



**Elizabeth Cate**  
TJ Clinic Aide

"If you are scared or in pain, she immediately tries to make it stop."

*Evelyn L.*  
TJ Student



**Barbara Mitchell**  
Superintendent's Secretary

"She is our 'institutional memory' and usually knows the answer to any question that is asked."

*Trudy Taylor*  
TJ Elementary Principal



**Pat Smith**  
MEHMS Attendance Secretary

"Pat's calm demeanor, caring approach and soothing voice have certainly made many students feel safe."

*Karen Post*  
Special Education Teacher



**Sue Wallen**  
Human Resources Specialist

"She is a guiding light to all who seek her assistance, and she faithfully supports the 400+ employees who rely on her for contracts each year."

*Karen Acar*  
Communications Director



**Mary Werner**  
TJ Elementary Aide

"She has a superb sense of humor and a strong sense of justice. This shows with the students who all seem to adore her."

*The TJ Office Staff*



# FCCPS Employee News and Notes

It's customary for the father of the bride to escort his daughter down the aisle, but in this case, he and the mother of the bride officiated at the ceremony, too!

The parents of MEHMS teacher (and GMHS graduate) **Layton Walker** are both ordained ministers. As a result, Layton and her husband, **Lucas McCann**, received double blessings on their wedding day.

Layton and Lucas were married on Saturday, March 24th. The guests included 13 of Layton's Sunlight Zone students (several are in the background of this picture).

The newlyweds are honeymooning in Spain. Congratulations Layton and Lucas!



*MEHMS 5th grade teacher Layton Walker is escorted by her father as she prepares to take her vows on her wedding day.*



## With Sympathy

Condolences to TJ GT Specialist Heidi Lang in the recent loss of her mother. You are in our thoughts at this difficult time.

## FCCPS Travelogue

**Employee:** **Trudy Taylor**, TJ Principal and **Gloria Guba**, Assistant Superintendent

**Destination:** Oxford, England

**Purpose of Trip:** To participate in an Educational Leadership and Ethics Conference at Exeter College, Oxford University, March 18-24.

**Experiences:** Gloria and Trudy had the opportunity to study the English education system through K-12 school visits. They say the similarities in the English and the U.S. systems include a focus on individual students and concerns about "teaching to the test." The English motto is Every Child Matters. Here it's No Child Left Behind. One noticeable difference in the English system is that there is no specialized instruction at the elementary level. All teachers are expected to teach basics, as well as art, physical education and music. Another big difference: England has a national curriculum.

**Cultural Memories:** Trudy visited Warwick Castle, north of Oxford, as well as Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of Winston Churchill. Gloria explored the ancient Roman baths at Bath, England and took in a show at the Palace Theatre in London.

"Seeing Monty Python's *Spamalot* in England was unlike any theatre experience I've ever had at the Kennedy Center," Guba said. "When the signature song, *Always look on the Bright Side of Life* started, everyone in the audience sang along!"



*Blenheim Palace is the birthplace of Winston Churchill.*



*Warwick Castle is one of the most dramatic and complete medieval castles in England. It has been inhabited continuously since the Middle Ages, and until recently, was the home of the Earls of Warwick.*

## News to Use

### Internet Traffic Report!



The need for speed is hopefully a thing of the past for the FCCPS. After a long and patient wait, Verizon's high speed FiOS service is now working and connecting the schools to the Internet. Our Internet access speeds are now capable of reaching up to 30Mbps from any school computer! That is 30MB per second. That is like going from a water faucet to a fire hydrant.

At this point the division has two, low-cost, high-speed Internet connections for everyone to share. This will be a huge benefit during our spring online testing periods.

This new high speed connection also means that access to school resources from home will be much faster now.

## Ask EAP



**Q.** *I started to explain how my marital problems are interfering with work, but my supervisor stopped me and recommended the EAP. I felt a little rejected. Aren't supervisors supposed to be good listeners?*

**A.** Your supervisor gave you the best type of support—an EAP recommendation. Discussing your marital problems with your supervisor could be harmful if as a result you felt less urgency about seeking effective help. The supervisor's role can't permit advising you on personal matters. When an EAP exists, supervisors are always advised to redirect employees presenting personal problems to the EAP.

**For more information or assistance, please contact Courtney Atkins-Miller of New Millennium Employee Assistance Services at (703) 863-6680.**

## Calendar of Events

**MEHMS Presents Annie, Jr.**  
**April 13 & 14**



Leapin' Lizards! The popular comic strip heroine takes center stage in one of the world's best-loved musicals. Showtime is 7:30 p.m. on April 13th and 14th at the MEHMS Cafetorium. Admission is free for teachers and staff who present a school ID, \$4.00 for children and \$6.00 for adults.

**FCEF Annual Dinner and Auction**  
**Friday, April 27**



It's not too late to purchase tickets to the Falls Church Education Foundation's annual fundraising dinner. This year's keynote speaker is George Mason University Men's Basketball Coach Jim Larranaga. The event will take place on April 27th at the Westin Arlington Gateway. For more information, contact the foundation office at 703-538-3381 or visit the foundation Web site at [www.fcedf.org](http://www.fcedf.org).

### Foundation Auction Now Online

If you can't make this year's dinner, you can support the foundation by participating in its first ever online auction! Auction items range from exotic vacation getaways to donated items guaranteed to delight and surprise. So, tell your friends, family, community! Let the bidding begin!



**Mount Daniel Dedication**  
**Wednesday, May 2**

Join the Mount Daniel staff, students and their beloved mascot, Danny the purple hippo, as they celebrate the dedication of the school's new classroom wing! The celebration begins at 6:30 p.m. on May 2nd outside the new wing.

**Falls Church City Public Schools**  
**Employee Benefits and Wellness Fair**  
**Thursday, May 3**

All employees are invited to talk to representatives from the companies that provide our employee benefits at the Falls Church City Public Schools Employee Benefits and Wellness Fair on May 3 from 2:45 - 5:30 p.m. in the Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School Cafetorium. More details will be sent to all employees soon.

**Agnes Meyer/Support Staff of the Year**  
**Reception, Thursday, May 10**

Here's your chance to salute the 2007 Agnes Meyer Teacher Award winner and the 2007 FCCPS Support Employee of the year along with all of the award nominees. The annual reception and recognition program will be held on May 10th at 5:30 p.m. in the Mary Ellen Henderson Cafetorium. The recognition program will begin at 6:00 p.m. All employees are invited.