

Nelson School News

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Superintendent's Message

Dear Parents and Friends:

It is my pleasure once again to share information with you regarding our school division. We can all take great pride in the daily efforts and annual accomplishments of our students and staff.

Our school board and leadership teams remain focused and committed to moving the Nelson County Public School Division forward. In order to continue educational services and ultimately expand student offerings, collaborative support from parents, businesses, community members, and our local funding authority is essential. In the past, these united efforts have resulted in numerous successes for our schools.

Dictionaries define advocacy as the act of speaking or writing in support of something. In Nelson County, your advocacy has played an essential role in establishing adequate staffing levels, instructional and programmatic improvements, and competitive employee compensation packages and has had a positive impact on the success of our school division. As data and other indicators reflect, the Nelson County Public School Division excels in many categories. My colleagues across the commonwealth, who represent school divisions of similar demographics and monetary support, are often amazed by our individual student, school, and staff achievements.


However, our attention must now be directed toward future opportunities for your advocacy. Primarily because Nelson County will receive less state and federal money next year, budget projections reveal a much greater need for support from the locality. I respectfully ask you to consider taking a more active role in the budget process by becoming a public advocate for our school division, its staff, and its students. Decisions regarding school funding will make a tremendous difference for children as they strive to compete and excel in a global society.

You may ask how can I get involved. Communication to your representative board members regarding educational priorities will be important as they complete the budget task in the coming weeks. On April 8, 2008 a public hearing will be held on the budget, and anyone may speak on behalf of the school division. Speaking out about what we want our schools to continue to offer for our students is an ideal opportunity for you to be an advocate for education in Nelson County.

I have faith the Nelson community and representative board members value education and desire a continuation of the quality educational opportunities to which we have become accustomed. Thank you for your support, and have a great spring!



Roger D. Collins, Division Superintendent



Visit our website:
www.nelson.k12.va.us

On-line Substitute Teacher Training

In an effort to make it more convenient to qualify for substitute teaching positions in our school division, the central office of NCPS has prepared an on-line training program to facilitate the process and make you a member of our team! If you are interested in being considered for a substitute teaching position, please go to our website at www.nelson.k12.va.us, click on the link entitled "Substitute Teacher Online Training," and proceed through the slide presentation. There is a required questionnaire at the end highlighting some of the more important aspects of the training.



After you have completed the on-line training, it is necessary to complete the following additional steps to be eligible to substitute teach:

- Meet individually with the building principal or assistant principal of the school in which you wish to substitute. Upon receiving his or her recommendation, we will then consider submitting your name to the school board for final approval.
- Visit the school division's central office, located on the second floor of the courthouse in Lovingson, for employment paperwork and a background investigation. Two forms of identification are required; the most common are a driver's license, birth certificate, social security card, or passport.
- Provide proof that you are free from tuberculosis. Our local health department provides this service with the cost absorbed by the Nelson County School Board.

Roll Out the Red Carpet

Nelson Middle School students continue to shine in many areas. They are participating in and winning Young Author's contests, FFA awards, and PTA Reflection competitions, just to name a few. This year, NMS students are also being honored by the faculty for exhibiting the **Six Pillars of Character**:



Trustworthiness
Respect
Responsibility
Fairness
Caring
Citizenship



Each six weeks, NMS teachers nominate fifteen students who demonstrate one or more of the six virtues listed above. Two "celebrities" are chosen from each academic team, and one "celebrity" is chosen by the teachers of the technical arts, music, visual arts, and physical education departments. These outstanding students are treated to a pizza party to reward them for their achievement. They are also given a certificate and their picture is displayed in the NMS office throughout the six weeks. Nelson Middle School staff is proud to honor those young people who prove that Nelson Middle School is a great place to be!

Virginia Index of Performance (VIP)



The Virginia State Board of Education approved the Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) in July 2007 in response to Governor Kaine's call for a formal system to recognize schools and school divisions that exceed minimum state and federal accountability standards. The multi-tiered V.I.P program provides incentives for improved performance and opportunities for recognition regardless of where a school or school division happens to be in the journey from competence to excellence. On January 10, 2008, Governor Timothy M. Kaine announced awards for specific, high-performing Virginia Public Schools.

It is exciting to note that two resolutions of commendation from the Virginia State Board of Education were granted to our own school division. **Nelson County Public Schools** was one of twenty-five Virginia school divisions recognized for the board of education's V.I.P **Competence to Excellence Award**. Additionally, **Rockfish River Elementary School** was one of 475 schools that received the board of education's VIP **Excellence Award**. In order to earn these awards, divisions and/or schools had to meet all state and federal accountability benchmarks for at least two consecutive years and had to show significant progress toward Governor Kaine's goals for increased student achievement and expanded educational opportunity.

The school division acknowledges the hard work of students, teachers, staff, parents, and significant others.

~ Twenty-Five Virginia School Divisions Earned

Competence to Excellence Awards~

Fast Facts

The Virginia School Report Card provides information on SOL achievement at the state, division and school level, and is available online at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/src/index.shtml>.



2006-07 Nelson County Public Schools SOL Testing Facts

- There were 234 perfect SOL scores
- 178 students earned 1 perfect score
- 39 students earned 2 perfect scores
- 7 students earned 3 perfect scores
- 1 student earned 4 perfect scores

Family Literacy



Reading is emphasized in all schools and should also be an important aspect of family life. However, in today's hectic world, it is often a challenge for parents to find the time to emphasize reading at home. This year, Rockfish River Elementary School has provided several opportunities for parents to learn effective methods for use at home to foster good reading habits.

In January, RRES celebrated "Reading Month," and the culminating event, held in the school cafeteria, was "Laugh Out Loud for Literacy Night." With approximately 130 parents and children in attendance, storyteller Barbara Lawson presented an informative and entertaining program featuring songs which involved sequencing and recall, a retelling of a Dr. Seuss book from different points of view, and the creation of a family reading game to take home and enjoy.

The Rockfish faculty has identified pre-school literacy as a focus in the community. By distributing gently used pre-school books to local doctors' offices, the faculty hopes that parents will take them for their children to enjoy at home. Also, a group of faculty members met to identify some possible strategies to pursue in order to educate the community about the importance of reading with pre-school children as well as involving them in activities that teach pre-reading skills.

Title I teachers and the Reading Coach have purchased a parent center resource kit called SIESA (Successful Innovations Enhancing Student Achievement) and in the near future will be doing a presentation at a PTA meeting to introduce a variety of DVD's which can be checked out by parents for use at home. Topics include building comprehension, helping with homework, phonics instruction, preparing for standardized testing, and helpful tips on preparing children for school. The DVD's are available in both Spanish and English, and DVD players are also available for check out.



Lastly, RRES is very fortunate to have a community volunteer working on a regular basis with several Hispanic parents who desire to improve their English skills in order to assist their own children with homework.

Yes, You Do Count



In accordance with Sections 22.1 – 281 through 22.1 – 286 of the Code of Virginia, the Nelson County School Board is conducting its triennial census of school aged children in order for the state to apportion the Sales and Use tax that citizens pay on purchases of tangible products. Approximately \$1,000 per child (ages 5 -19) per year comes back to Nelson County in support of public education. **Making sure that every eligible person is counted will guarantee that the county is receiving its appropriate share of the state tax collections and will reduce the burden on the local government to provide funds for the public school system.** If you lost your form or if you need another form, you can download a copy from our website www.nelson.k12.va.us.

“Commonwealth Scholars” Program

“A scholar today....a success tomorrow” is more than just a catchy slogan. It is a compelling reality which faces students as they graduate from high school and prepare to enter colleges and universities and, ultimately, a workforce that is shaped by a global economy.



Commonwealth Scholars is a project of the Virginia Career Education Foundation, a state-wide business and education partnership, in conjunction with the Office of Vocational and Adult Education of the U.S. Department of Education. It is a state level program under The State Scholars Initiative, a national program that utilizes business leaders to motivate students to complete a rigorous course of study in high school which will give students a boost in college and in their careers. In Virginia, Nelson County is one of four new sites launching the Commonwealth Scholars program along with the counties of Greene and Fluvanna and the City of Charlottesville.

The basic tenet of the Commonwealth Scholars program is that students who enroll in rigorous courses in high school stand a far better chance of succeeding in college and in the workplace. As businesses and the economy demand more skilled workers, a more flexible knowledge base, and a greater capacity to learn, it is critical that we prepare our youth by developing state-level business and educational partners who work with students in middle and high schools to encourage them to excel academically.

According to a 2005 education survey, forty percent of high school graduates reported gaps in their preparation for college and/or the workplace, and a majority noted that if they could return to high school, they would work harder and take more challenging courses. With this in mind, parents and educators must join forces more frequently to help students accomplish this goal.

The business/education coalition in each state defines a State Scholar Initiative Course of Study as one that includes no less than the following: four years of English; three years of math; three years of basic lab sciences; three and one-half years of social studies; and two years of a language other than English. Guaranteeing that all high school students graduate ready to succeed in college and careers requires a common college preparatory curriculum with high standards for everyone.

Within the next several years, more students will graduate from high school than ever before in history. Therefore, it is the responsibility of parents and educators to “raise the bar” so that our young people are well prepared to become productive and successful members of both our local and global communities. We encourage parents and Nelson County High School students to learn more about the Commonwealth Scholars program by contacting a high school guidance counselor or by visiting the website of the Virginia Career Education Foundation at www.vcef.net.



This issue of **Nelson School News** is also available on our website and can be printed individually as needed. Our move from postal delivery to an electronic newsletter version is a cost savings measure.

Thank you for your continued interest in school division news.



Plan Your Calendar

Kindergarten Registration	April 22, 2008 4:00-7:00 P.M.	Rockfish River Elementary
Kindergarten Registration	April 24, 2008 4:00-7:00 P.M.	Tye River Elementary
Employee Retirement Celebration	May 8, 2008 4:30 P.M.	Nelson High School Auditorium
NCHS Awards Night	May 19, 2008 7:00 P.M.	Nelson High School Auditorium
NCHS Senior Graduation	June 7, 2008 10:00 A.M.	Nelson County Veteran's Memorial Field



Tentative SOL Testing Dates

May 14-May 30, 2008 Grades 3-8 & End of Course
 May 14-May 30, 2008 High School End of Course

Testing dates subject to change

Projected Summer Learning Dates

(8:00am – 12:30pm)

June 16-June 27 Nelson County High School
 July 8-July 31 Nelson Middle School
 July 8-July 31 Rockfish and Tye River

Bully Prevention

The seriousness of bullying and its consequences are relevant issues in the school days of our children. In the schools of Nelson County, our principals, guidance counselors, and classroom teachers work diligently to address these problems. However, there are programs in place to stop bullying and to further assist students with coping strategies.

At both elementary schools, the **SAVE** (Substance Abuse and Violence Education) program focuses on bullying. TRES and RRES are quite fortunate to have community mentors who deliver weekly SAVE lessons to students over a ten week period. These lessons are structured to help our children recognize bullying and develop skills to deal appropriately with this type of behavior. Furthermore, the children are taught character development in themselves and others.

In addition to the SAVE program, the school guidance counselors at all levels have programs dealing specifically with bullying. Elementary and middle school counselors deliver classroom lessons about bullying and its negative effects in school settings and meet with students individually and in groups to counsel those whose lives have been negatively impacted by bullying.

In all Nelson County Public Schools, the **Character Education** program is used to emphasize mutual respect and to encourage students to deal calmly with anger, insults, and disagreements. Students are urged to report bullying behaviors to a counselor, administrator, or another adult so that concerns can be addressed in a prompt, responsible manner.