

Nelson School News

Winter 2011

Superintendent's Message

Dear Parents and Friends:

With each year and seasonal change come new and different challenges for our school division, community, and individual families. As we begin 2011, I am reminded of our many accomplishments during the fall of 2010. Across the division, students continued to prepare themselves academically and performed extremely well in a number of co-curricular areas. For example, two outstanding accomplishments worthy of recognition are winning the 2010 Virginia High School League (VHSL) state championships in both girls' volleyball and theatre (one-act play).



It was my sincere pleasure to observe the NCHS girls' volleyball team win their first ever state championship and to watch as the one-act play cast and crew earned a second consecutive state title this past fall. These teams accomplished the ultimate goal by working extremely well together, focusing on the challenges at hand, one competition at a time, and persevering through potential set-backs. Both groups shared something extraordinary and unique to a small rural high school.

I ask that you join me in congratulating all Nelson County students who have gone above and beyond expectations in a specific, educationally related endeavor. We can all enjoy the positive life lessons observed daily inside and outside of classrooms across the school division.

I wish all of you a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Roger S. Cole
Division Superintendent

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Group A — 2010 State Girl's Volleyball Champions



Group A — 2010 Theatre Festival State Champions
(second consecutive year!)



Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

On December 7, a team of teachers and administrators from both Nelson County High School and Nelson Middle School participated in an introductory training session that will lead to eventual implementation of a new division-wide bullying prevention program.

The *Olweus* (pronounced Ol-veus) *Bullying Prevention Program* (OBPP) is one of the most researched and best known bullying prevention programs available today. Backed by more than thirty-five years of research and successful implementation in many different countries, the OBPP is a school-wide program that has been proven to prevent or reduce bullying throughout a school setting. The goals of the program are as follows:

- To reduce existing bullying problems among students
- To prevent the development of new bullying problems
- To achieve better peer relations at school



Implemented at the school, classroom, and individual levels, the prevention program includes methods to reach out to parents and the community for involvement and support. School administrators, teachers, and other staff are primarily responsible for introducing and implementing the program with goals of improving peer relations and making the school a safer and more positive place for students to learn and grow. This program is not a classroom curriculum but an entire school system improvement effort focused on specific staff and student behaviors

The *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* has created many positive outcomes. Six large-scale evaluations involving more than 40,000 students produced the following documented results:

- Average reductions of 20 to 70 percent in student reports of being bullied and bullying others. Peer and teacher ratings of bullying problems have yielded roughly similar results.
- Marked reductions in general antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy among students.
- Clear improvements in the classroom social climate, as reflected in students' reports of improved discipline, more positive social relationships, and more optimistic attitudes toward schoolwork and school.



Opportunities For Your Voice to be Heard—The Budget Process Begins ...

It's budget time again, and, yes, there appears to be another difficult year ahead of us as the Nelson County Public School Division staff strives to provide the very best possible services to students while, at the same time, being good stewards of the county's limited resources. The staff and school board understand that fixed operating outlays will likely be increasing as costs to participate in the Virginia Retirement System are set to rise. In addition, we have been advised about other possible rate hikes on the horizon for insurances and energy- related expenses.

Thus far, the school division has successfully endured one of the harshest economic recessions in memory through the collective efforts of directed cost cutting and efficient resource management as well as critical, continued support from county officials at the local level. Selected faculty and staff positions have remained unfilled, but in spite of such adversity, the NCPSD continues to excel as dedicated staff members focus on helping each child flourish. Future success depends upon continued support from the entire community as everyone works toward the common goal of excellence in all areas.

The 2011-12 budget calendar is available at www.nelson.k12.va.us and provides information on when meetings will be held to develop the division's spending plan for the upcoming school year. You are invited and encouraged to attend future work sessions and to provide input regarding your individual spending priorities for the division.

NCHS Students Collaborate With Students in India

Several students from the Nelson Achievers computer lab classroom are currently collaborating on a joint project with students from the Mira Model School in New Delhi, India. In each school, students are creating projects that outline the rights of citizens of their respective countries. Both schools will post their various contributions to a shared webpage and will evaluate each other's work.



As a culminating activity, a video conference is being planned where the students can meet and discuss their projects. Furthermore, students from both schools are able, through this project, to put into practice several of the 21st century technology skills, a current focus of Nelson County Public Schools. NCHS students will actively collaborate with each other, make effective use of various media, think critically throughout the project, resolve various problems as they arise, and develop a deeper understanding of different cultures and the world in which they live.

Project Opportunity—Getting Rave Reviews at RRES

A new, instructional support program called **Project Opportunity**, which is project-based learning, is proving to be very popular with some Rockfish River Elementary students. The program focuses on math and reading skills, along with hands-on projects that incorporate such skills. Three projects started in October and met on Mondays and Thursdays after school for six consecutive weeks, and additional six-week sessions are scheduled throughout the remainder of this school year.

Students work in small groups with a classroom teacher and a community volunteer in one of the following areas: woodworking, cartooning, cooking, sewing, sports, or art. There are a variety of activities during each session; for example, the woodworking students built a picnic table that can be used on the school grounds, and the cooking class made snacks for the woodworking students. On the final day of the first session, a “picnic” of homemade pizza, pumpkin cupcakes, and lemonade was prepared by “the cooks” and eaten at the new picnic table. The cartooning class had an actual cartoonist, Bentley Boyd from Williamsburg, to come for a visit during one of the classes, and the students were able to witness the actual planning, drawing, and writing process that goes into a cartoon before publication. Students are selected for participation based on assessments and mastery of skills, and attendance at a project day and a research day is mandatory in order for students to participate in the project session.

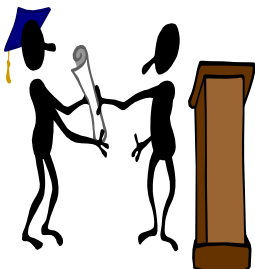


Project Opportunity generates excitement about learning in a creative, hands-on fashion while also gaining community and parental involvement. The students who completed the first session are now enthusiastic about upcoming projects and are eager to come to school on Mondays and Thursdays for these events. In these after-school classes, there has been increased attendance along with a new confidence in the students' abilities to attempt new projects and to strengthen math and reading skills.

If any community member would like to participate by volunteering one day per week for six weeks, please contact the RRES administrative staff.

NCHS Students Earn Advanced Placement Awards

Seven students from Nelson County High School have earned Advanced Placement (AP) Scholar Awards in recognition of their achievements on AP exams. The College Board's Advanced Placement Program provides motivated and academically prepared students with the opportunity to take rigorous college-level courses while still in high school. At the end of each AP course, students are required to take the AP exam which is graded on a scale from 1-5 with 5 being the highest one can earn, and college credit is awarded depending on the score achieved. At ninety percent of four-year colleges and community colleges in the United States, students are given either college credit, advanced placement, or both on the basis of the AP exam.



During the 2009-2010 school year, sixty-eight Nelson County High School students were enrolled in eight different AP classes. Of those sixty-eight students, 61% earned a score of 3 or higher on their exams, and 31% received a score of 4 or 5.

Advanced placement awards were given to seven NCHS scholars. Three students earned an AP Scholar Award recognizing them for receiving scores of 3 or higher on at least three AP exams. One student received an AP Scholar with Honor Award in recognition of achieving scores of 3 or higher on at least four AP exams and an average score of at least 3.25 on all AP exams taken. Three students obtained an AP Scholars with Distinction Award recognizing them for earning scores of 3 or higher on at least five AP exams and an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP exams taken. Congratulations to all of the AP award recipients for an excellent job!

Farm to School Initiative Takes Root in Nelson County

Nelson County students benefit daily from fresh fruits and vegetables offered during lunch in school cafeterias. Last spring, local produce made its debut on school menus when the Charlottesville-based Local Food Hub introduced itself as a distributor of produce grown by farmers in the surrounding counties. The cafeterias' connection with The Local Food Hub has cultivated a focused effort to include more locally grown fruits and vegetables on the school lunch menus.



Though the main goal of the Farm to School Initiative is to bring healthy foods from local farms to the school lunch tray, the program extends beyond the cafeterias to educational opportunities in the areas of nutrition, health, and agriculture. This innovative concept can help students understand where their food comes from and how their food choices impact their bodies, the environment, and their specific community.

Nelson County Schools celebrated Virginia's second annual Farm-to-School Week with school meals that featured foods grown here in Nelson County. Throughout the week, students enjoyed a variety of apples, sweet potatoes, broccoli, lettuce, and late season tomatoes. Local grass-fed beef was served in the lasagna at the elementary schools and in tacos at the middle and high schools. Furthermore, students had the opportunity to meet some local farmers and learn about the foods they were eating during lunch.

Farm to School has taken root in Nelson County, and it is sure to grow as school staffs continue to partner with local farmers to bring healthy food choices and learning opportunities directly to students.

To learn more about the Farm to School Initiative in Nelson County Schools, please contact the Director of Food & Nutrition Services at bmorris@nelson.k12.va.us.

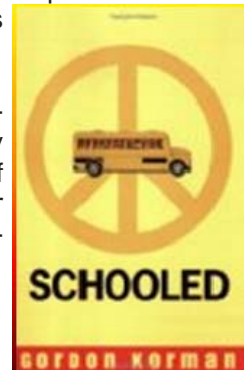
For more information on Farm to School, go to <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/marketing/farm.shtml>.



Schooled! at NMS

The entire student body and faculty of Nelson Middle School are preparing to embark on a journey together. Starting in January, all 444 students and 50 staff members will read *Schooled* by Gordon Korman. The novel is about a boy, Cap, who has been home-schooled for his entire life by his grandmother. When she is hospitalized after an accidental fall, Cap is forced to begin attending a public school where he faces many challenges as he adjusts to life as a middle school student in a very different setting.

Thanks to an Nelson County Education Fund grant, Nelson Middle School was able to purchase enough books for every student and staff member to have individual copies. On each Friday for ten weeks, everyone at NMS will refocus and read the novel for a set time period. The goals of the First Annual NMS School-Wide Read are to unite in the joy of reading, to create opportunities for discussion of the issues, such as bullying, that middle school students face, and to engage in reading activities that correlate with the Standards of Learning.



Fast, Fun Learning at TRES

What can you learn in one minute? The students at Tye River would answer quite a bit, and you can have fun in that minute if you are part of the “Minute to Win It” program. The “Minute to Win It” television show was the inspiration that led to this creative, fun way to engage students in learning. All of the students in third, fourth, and fifth grades will have an opportunity to participate in timed academic and physical challenges and will vote on the team member they want to represent them in a final challenge match. The winning class at each grade level will earn the coveted “TRES Minute to Win It Trophy” for their classrooms.



As in the TV program, students will participate in traditional, fun physical/mental challenges, and they will be presented with academic challenges, too. These academic challenges will be based on Virginia Standards of Learning topics chosen by the classroom teachers to reinforce the students’ studies in classroom. Some of these topics include spelling, multiplication and addition facts, famous figures in history, sorting parts of speech, and matching up science terms and concepts. Practice for these challenges will take place during the first part of the students’ art, PE, library, music, and computer classes. Classes will be presented with a new set of challenges monthly.

Log on to the Tye River website as video clips will be posted of what is sure to be a fun, fast-paced learning activity! More information about the actual “Minute to Win It” show can be accessed at www.NBC.com.



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



Students Learn About Careers During the 7th Grade Career Expo

“How do you know when someone’s going blind?” students asked optometrists from Crozet Eye Care during the Seventh Grade Career Expo held on November 8 and 9 at UVA’s Newcomb Hall. At the same time across the ballroom, professionals from Schnabel Engineering were leading students through a design competition where they had to build towers using only paper and tape, and in another section, trainers from ACAC were monitoring a push-ups contest.

Over forty area businesses exhibited careers and talked about workplace skills with approximately 1,900 students from Albemarle, Charlottesville, Fluvanna, Greene, and Nelson during the two day event. These businesses were recruited by the Piedmont Futures program at Piedmont Virginia Community College, and the event was hosted by the University of Virginia.

Professionals were not the only ones teaching students about college and career readiness. Students from the University of Virginia spoke to seventh graders about preparing for college. Presenting a different career choice, students from the Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC) brought career studies to life for younger students by creating hairdos on the spot, teaching them how to build a brick wall, demonstrating their skill with culinary knives, and talking about jobs in healthcare. “You get to see how it feels to be a teacher,” a CATEC student commented.

Many students came away with new information. “I learned that you need to start thinking about your career as soon as possible in order to be prepared,” said a Nelson Middle School student.

Counselors from participating schools plan and implement the annual expo which plays an important role in career planning curricula for seventh graders. “Students learn so much from the opportunity to speak directly with people working in a variety of different fields,” said Julie Smith, school counselor at Fluvanna Middle School. “The students leave the Career Expo with a better understanding of their career options and the education needed to achieve their career goals.”

GRASP Aspirations Scholarship Program

At Nelson County High School, senior students and their parents are now able to receive assistance in filling out financial aid paperwork for college thanks to a new program called GRASP. Great Aspirations Scholarship Program (GRASP) is an organization that helps students and parents attain financial assistance as graduating students prepare to enter college or technical/vocational training. The program, founded by Dr. Ray Gargiulo and Senator Walter Stosch, was established to advocate for students as they are making plans for their future after high school.

Made available to Nelson County High School by donations to the Central Blue Ridge Community Foundation, the program provides a part-time employee who acts as a GRASP advisor and assists students and their families with the financial aid process, primarily through individual in-school meetings but also through presenting financial aid seminars in public libraries and other forums. Advisors access institutional, federal, state, and community resources to allow students to implement an education plan beyond high school. Funds are available to many students, but benefiting from these funds requires completing a complicated process of forms and documents within specific deadlines. Depending upon the circumstances of the student, the development of an educational plan may include the possibilities of attending and paying for continuing education at a community college, technical/vocational school, or public or private four-year college or university.

The GRASP advisor at Nelson County High School is Mrs. Phyllis Gardner who is available each Thursday at the high school. Services are free and confidential. Students and parents can make an appointment with Mrs. Gardner by calling the guidance office at the high school or by sending an email to Mrs. Gardner at nelsonco@grasp4-virginia.com.

2010 Tech Tour

The Charlottesville Business Innovation Council (CBIC) sponsored its eighth annual Tech Tour, an event which introduces middle school and high school students to the technology world that exists in the Charlottesville/Albemarle County metro region. The day-long tour is aimed at exposing students to the diverse career possibilities offered by the regional technology community and at helping students envision themselves as technology employees, professionals, and entrepreneurs in the next wave of high tech advancements.

Eleven Nelson County juniors and seniors spent the day traveling to three different businesses to meet employees, to learn about the technological career opportunities, and to see first hand how technology is being used in the workplace. Virginia Diodes, Inc. (VDI), CBS 19 News, and UVA Digital Media Lab were visited by Nelson's students. VDI, a business of a Nelson County resident, was the first stop of the day; this local industry designs, manufactures, and sells millimeter wave and terahertz devices, components, and systems. As they toured the facility, the students were amazed at the level of technical skill that is required. Moving to the next part of the tour, students found themselves watching the live news broadcast at noon in the studio of CBS 19 News where they witnessed the on-air, live countdown and watched what happens inside the studio as the commercials are shown. The audio and equipment rooms were open to them, and they met the computer operators. Everyone agreed it was exciting to see what actually goes on behind the television screen. The final stop on the tour was the University of Virginia where students were initially welcomed to the UVA Digital Media Center by its staff and student workers; the media center provides a place for UVA students to produce digital media such as websites, video, animation, and 3-D. Nelson's students were then given the opportunity to be interactive with numerous types of digital media available in the lab and were also able to visit a recording studio, to become a part of special effects videos, and to hear about emerging technology tools.



The 2010 Tech Tour provided NCHS juniors and seniors a view of the current and emerging world of technology in the workplace. Students came away from the educational trip with an expanded understanding of technical career opportunities in our region and the post-secondary educational requirements for these fields.

School Schedule Information



When dictated by weather or other emergencies, a delayed school opening may be implemented. In some instances, a two-hour delay gives school authorities extended time to closely evaluate conditions which may ultimately close school for the day. Parents and others should be aware of published information and be alert for any updates which may follow.



School Board Members

South District:	Jane B. Mays, 29 Dave's Place, Arrington, VA 22922	(434) 263-8181
West District:	David Parr, P O Box 598, Piney River, VA 22964	(434) 277-5265
Central District:	Margaret D. Clair, 560 Gullysville Lane, Faber, Va. 22938	(434) 361-2463
North District:	Mary S. Cunningham, 171 Joshua Lane, Afton, Va. 22920	(540) 456-8316
East District:	Amy C. Snapp, 91 Riverside Drive, Schuyler, Va. 22969	(434) 987-0374

Teach Your Children the Value of "Going Green"

During a recent conversation with a three-year-old, a parent asked "What do you think about going green?" Her response: "How about pink?"

Young children may not recognize the phrase "going green", however, they do have the capability of understanding small changes which can make a positive difference in being good stewards of our land and limited resources.

Teaching children to be environmentally friendly is a lifelong learning process which must be modeled and reinforced. Instilling values of environmental consciousness requires that habits be formed. There may be many simple steps you can take with your children in an effort to "go green."

- Communicate with children the value of reducing fuel usage and the benefit of exercise on your health.
- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth. This simple habit can save several gallons of water.
- Start a garden. Children benefit from the process of planting and reaping a harvest. A garden is a big undertaking, but it provides a valuable science lesson and reduces your grocery bill.
- Turn off the lights and television when they are not in use.
- Recycle and allow children to help sort the items. This is an educational opportunity for very young children.
- Reduce your use of disposables.
- Ease up on the electronics. Encourage your children to play outdoors, saving electricity and encouraging gross motor activities.
- Donate. Reduce the amount of trash you create by donating items that can be used by others.



These tips are just some ways to get your family to become more earth friendly. Once you get everyone on board with conservation, challenge your family to come up with new and innovative ways of going green.

Engaging your children in this way will get them to start thinking about how their individual efforts affect the world they live in, and how little changes can, and will, make a difference.

Planning for the Future - 2011-12 NCPS Division Calendar

2011		2012	
August 22	Open House	January 16	Division Holiday
August 24	First Day of School	January 20	Non Student Day
September 5	Division Holiday	January 23	Non Student Day
October 20	Early Dismissal/ Parent Teacher Conference	March 5	Non Student Day/
October 21	Non Student Day	March 15	Non Student Day/ Parent Teacher Conference
November 23-25	Division Holiday	April 9-13	Division Holiday
December 19-30	Division Holiday	May 28	Division Holiday
		June 6	Last Day of School