

RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY SCHOOLS PANTHER PRIDE NEWSLETTER

DR. DONNA MATTHEWS, SUPERINTENDENT

CUTTING EDGE INSTRUCTION AT RCES

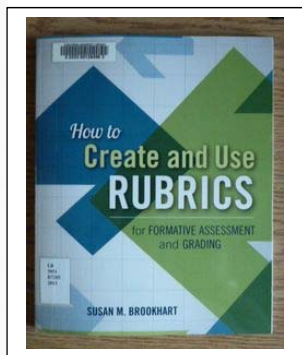
Teachers Collaborate to Enhance Learning

Staff at RCES are working with consultant, Dr. Shannon King, Professor at George Mason University, to enhance instructional practices by including performance based assessments (PBAs) in their classrooms. In all classrooms where there were formerly Standards of Learning (SOL) tests, such as 3rd grade science and social studies, along with 5th and 6th grade history, the state requires that teachers begin to utilize PBAs in place of the multiple choice standardized testing.



Teachers are enthusiastic as they look forward to students demonstrating what they have learned through hands-on, authentic processes. For example, in upcoming units, kindergarten students will be creating their own maps, 2nd grade students will become weather forecasters, and 5th grade students will be writing and performing skits based on the events in the Revolutionary War. Through each of these

PBAs, students will demonstrate knowledge learned through real-world application, encouraging the use of critical thinking, collaboration, and cross curricular connections. In order to provide students with a framework for these new assessments, teachers will create rubrics that describe what beginning, developing, capable, and exceptional student products look like. Many teachers are participating in a professional learning community book study that is reading and discussing the book, *How to Create and Use*



Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading by Susan M. Brookhart. These teachers meet monthly to review book content and bounce ideas off one another for practical application of rubrics in the classroom.

Closely related to this work, a group of elementary school teachers, along with their Principal, Karen Ellis and RCPS Director of Teaching and Learning, Cathy Jones, were selected to participate in a Virginia Department of Education 2-year pilot program to study and utilize formative assessments in the classroom. This cutting edge pilot program supports the teachers' efforts as they study in a Google Community along with teachers from other Virginia school divisions, sharing ideas and collaborating on best practices for assessing students to strengthen instruction. With the overall goal of having students participating in authentic, engaging application of what they are learning, we can anticipate greater motivation and enthusiasm, which will undoubtedly yield positive results for student learning.

ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITY

The University of Virginia is pleased to announce that registration is open for its annual Saturday Enrichment Program. In coordination with the Curry School of Education Gifted Department, UVA is offering enrichment courses for gifted or high-ability, high-interest students in kindergarten through grade five. For almost 40 years, these courses have been offered to help broaden young students' academic interests and personal horizons by introducing them to topics and professional fields they may never have known about otherwise. This year, available courses will include topics such as disease, immunology, nutrition, metabolism, the science of the Chesapeake Bay, architecture, journalism, filmmaking, physics, music history, and more. The full list can be seen on the application page: <http://curry.sites.virginia.edu>. For questions concerning the program, please email curry-sep@virginia.edu or call 434-924-3182.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY APPRECIATION AT AN EARLY AGE

RCES Pre-K and K Celebrate Fire Prevention Week

The RCES preschoolers and kindergarteners were excited to welcome several community members from the Chester Gap and Sperryville Volunteer Fire Departments for National Fire Prevention Week. The firefighters gave a safety talk and demonstrations for these attentive students. The focus of the presentation was fire safety and prevention to educate our younger students what to do in case of a fire.

The firefighters reviewed the importance of having smoke detectors, how to respond if a smoke alarm sounds, and what to do if they see smoke in their home. Students learned they should crawl on the floor when exiting their home to a designated “safe place.” The practice of Stop-Drop-Roll and the knowledge of calling 911 in the event of an emergency were strongly reinforced to increase student preparedness in case of emergencies.



The firefighters explained the role of the fire truck and demonstrated the type of emergency equipment that is used when responding to a fire. Excited students toured the fire trucks and received a fire helmet with small gift bag filled with fun, safety activities. RCES appreciates the time and effort shown by these dedicated volunteers of our community, both in their responses to local emergencies and in their efforts to teach our students effective methods of protecting themselves in the event of a fire.



SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program at RCES offers a wide range of services to address the special needs of students as early as possible. The ECSE program serves preschool aged students through an individually tailored plan for each student designed to address his or her developmental needs. Services range from part- to full-time instruction in both special education and regular preschool programs. Currently the ECSE class is “pushing in” to the Headstart Program provided through Skyline Cap Headstart. ECSE teacher, Jennifer Benhoff, explained, “Some of our ECSE friends spend all day with their peers in Head Start and Kindergarten with push-in services for language development and pull-out resource help for academics. We have other ECSE friends who are with their peers all day and join us for ‘Lunch Club’ to work on receptive language skills. We also have friends who enjoy recess with developmentally appropriate peers. Each student is individually planned for based on present levels of performance and his/her unique needs.” While the Headstart class, under the guidance of teacher Charity McClung and assistant Megan Lee, currently serves as the inclusion setting for these students based on the eligibility of the students for this particular program, the same plan is put in place for students who qualify for dual enrollment through our regular Preschool Program. Our ECSE friends who are included in Headstart benefit from the Creative Curriculum and developmentally appropriate practices utilized by this program in addition to the specialized instruction provided by Mrs. Benhoff. By being included in these general education initiatives, our neediest students can receive the best of both programs without missing out on special opportunities, such as the recent visit from local firefighters, with their fire trucks, in recognition of Fire Safety week. This full service model that meets all the needs of our youngest scholars is a testament to the commitment of our early childhood staff to provide inclusive and high quality preschool experiences for all eligible students.



NEW CLUB OPPORTUNITY AT RCHS

“Get Involved. Have Fun. Cause Change.”

RCHS is proud to announce the start of its newest active, student-led group, Y-Street, whose motto is, “Get involved. Have fun. Cause Change.” As Virginia’s largest youth-led movement, Y-Street claims 1500 members, and its promoters, activists, and leaders are fighting for a healthier Virginia for youth and adults, focusing specifically on tobacco and obesity issues. Known as the “Y-sters,” they represent over 50 communities across the state, teaching our youth how to have fun while implementing positive social change.

Rappahannock County High School is the newest school community to join the Y-Street organization, with our own students learning how to be activists in the fight for Virginia’s future by promoting healthy lifestyles and educating the public. An outgrowth of the Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) student group at RCHS, Y-Street broadens and strengthens local efforts by allowing young people across the state to join together in a variety of campaigns for a healthier Virginia. Each campaign has different goals and each student group, or community, picks the goal(s) they wish to work on and then decides how they will achieve their chosen goals. Current campaigns include Counterbalance, a program designed to protect youth from tobacco advertising; Meltdown, which seeks to expose the harms of the new “smokeless” tobaccos; and Act Out, which is about encouraging teens to have fun and get healthy by participating in new and exciting types of sports. Another advantage to participation in Y-Street is a points program whereby students earn points for event participation with those points redeemable for a variety of rewards.



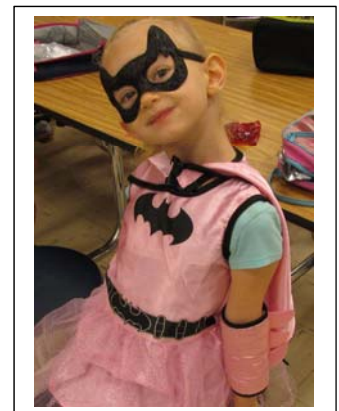
RCHS Guidance Counselor, Dani Pond, introduced Y-Street, arranging an informational meeting between Y-Street representative and Leadership Team member, Holley Tillman, and SADD club faculty sponsor, Joy Richardson, art teacher at RCHS. The goal is to have thirty to forty students involved, with Mrs. Richardson reporting that sixteen students have already turned in the necessary permission forms for participation. The first training for the

Rapp Y-sters will take place next Tuesday, October 25, and will be conducted by Y Street Leadership Team members. Learning leadership skills, becoming community activists for healthy causes, and qualifying for cool prizes is sure to be a recipe for success for Y- Street, the newest of the many extracurricular club opportunities at RCHS.

RCES STUDENTS SHOW THEIR SPIRIT

Stamp-Out Bullying Spirit Week

This week, the Road to Character Program at RCES featured a “Stamp-Out Bullying” Spirit Week, where students were able to express their support through themed costume or clothing. For example, Monday was Superhero Day, where students were able to dress up as their own personal super heroes and focus on the positive attributes possessed by their hero. Twin Day was Tuesday, Unity Day (Orange) on Wednesday, Crazy Socks Day on Thursday, and PJ Day on Friday. The week was a perfect example of the school’s efforts to find fun and engaging ways to build positive character and citizenship in our students.





Upcoming Events and Announcements

- ❖ October 21: Homecoming Game 7 PM (senior night at 6:45)
- ❖ October 21: Homecoming Court and Band Presentation at Halftime
- ❖ October 22: Homecoming Dance 8-11 PM
- ❖ October 25: Report Cards Go Home
- ❖ October 25: Senior Night for Varsity Volleyball
- ❖ October 25-27: SOL Writing Tests at RCHS
- ❖ October 26: Delegate Webert Wrestling Resolution Presentation at 2:15 PM
- ❖ October 26: Rapp River Conference Theater Competition at 4:30 PM
- ❖ October 28: Kindergarten to Graves Mountain
- ❖ October 28: Harlem Superstar Basketball
- ❖ November 1: 8th Grade Field Trip to Holocaust Museum
- ❖ November 7: PTO meeting, RCES at 6:30 PM
- ❖ November 8: ASVAB Testing at RCHS 8:30 AM
- ❖ November 21: Career Day at RCHS Gym
- ❖ November 23-25: No School—Thanksgiving break

For upcoming athletic events visit the RCPS Sports Page:

<http://rappahannockcountyhs.schoolteams.com/>

RCPS Vision

Statement:

To empower every student to reach his or her full potential.

Comprehensive Plan Update: The division is seeking input from parents concerning the next six year Comprehensive Plan. The draft plan has been loaded on the Community page of the website as well as on Board Docs. Please feel free to send comments to your principal or contact your school board representative with comments. School board representatives are as follows: Chairman John Wesley Mills, Jackson District; Vice Chair Aline Johnson, Piedmont District; Chris Ubben, Wakefield District; Larry Grove, Stonewall-Hawthorne District; Lucy (Pud) Maeyer, Hampton District.

Transportation Update:

The Virginia Department of Transportation will close Route 628 (Fodderstack Road) bridge over the Rush River in Rappahannock County for approximately four weeks for bridge replacement.

The bridge, located 0.4 mile north of Route 1101 (Gay Street) and 3.8 miles from Route 606 (Fodderstack Road), will be closed beginning Oct. 17. Weather permitting, the road is expected to reopen to traffic on Nov. 11. Bus transportation will be affected by this change. Parents who live on Fodderstack Road will be contacted via transportation coordinator, Eddie Gore, for change in pick up locations.

RED RIBBON WEEK OCT. 23-31

SADD & MADD Encourage Drug and Alcohol Prevention

Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), in collaboration with our community MADD partners, encourage citizens to participate in drug and alcohol prevention awareness. Students will be participating in education activities during the month of October. Please support our students during Red Ribbon Week.

