

# RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY SCHOOLS PANTHER PRIDE NEWSLETTER

DR. DONNA MATTHEWS, SUPERINTENDENT

## BACK IN THE SWING Students & Staff Start Strong

The 2016-2017 school year promises to be a strong one! After an exciting back to school convocation for teachers, featuring the 2013 National Teacher of the Year, Jeff Charbonneau, as the keynote speaker, a very successful and productive back to school night and 8<sup>th</sup> grade orientation, and a productive new teacher orientation training program, RCPS is off to a great start. Initiatives in the works are the expansion of performance- and project-based learning activities, the implementation of service learning as a school-wide program during the FLEX period at the high school, the opening of the environmental science water studies laboratory, the Commit to be Fit Challenge, and an increase in technology-enhanced programs for all students. This is just to name a few of the very important outreach and enrichment activities offered in alignment with our new vision and mission statement as part of the current revision of the RCPS Comprehensive Plan. The guiding principle of the new plan states: "Through educational opportunities, the mission for RCPS will be to promote a culture of learning, a roadmap for excellence, and the passion and character that leads to each student's success." We hope to share with our school community and key stakeholders through the publication of this new division newsletter a snapshot into the everyday successes consistently happening at each of our wonderful schools. Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm for our programs!



*RCES Principal, Karen Ellis, welcomes students*

## GIFTED EDUCATION

Exciting improvements to our gifted services model are being implemented. Thank you to all parents who responded to our satisfaction survey, as well as the commitments and suggestions offered through the Gifted Advisory. This year, gifted services at the elementary school are being offered in a daily enrichment period built into the schedule. Focus areas by day are Mondays/Tuesdays—photojournalism and newspaper publishing, Wednesdays—Math/STEAM exploration, Thursdays—Language Arts (Battle of the Books, Wordmasters, Quizlet), and Fridays—Math 24 Challenge practice and teambuilding. For questions regarding the gifted program and services, please contact Mrs. Shannon Grimsley, [sgrimsley@rappahannockschools.us](mailto:sgrimsley@rappahannockschools.us)

## NEW MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

### RCHS Students Mentor Underclassmen

As the high school welcomes the class of 2016, they are ready to assist students transitioning with the implementation of a new, exciting program, the “8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy.” The academy will serve to create a school within a school, serving as a bridge between the middle and high school to ease the transition and make the process far less stressful for students and far more rewarding. The four key components of the Academy are providing social support, providing academic support and high school preparedness, providing career and college readiness, and connecting parents, community and school. Monthly activities designed to address all four components are planned, with several already accomplished or underway. Ms. Dani Pond has launched a new 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academy Facebook page which provides a window into the world of 8<sup>th</sup> grade along with supplying timely reminders to parents about school activities. In partnership with 4-H, dozens of our juniors and seniors have applied to become 8<sup>th</sup> grade student mentors. These mentors will be paired up with 8<sup>th</sup> graders to provide peer support throughout the year. Those student mentors underwent a day long training session at the Northern Virginia 4H Educational Center, led by Jenny Kapsa from 4-H, Kathy Zehr Rhodes, and Dani Pond from RCPS, and are ready, willing, and able to begin providing leadership to their younger mentees.

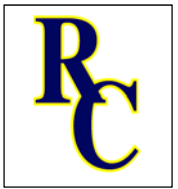


*RCCHS students involved in mentor “boot camp” activities*

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

Rappahannock County Public Schools is committed to engaging parents as valued partners in the education of our students who present with unique learning challenges. In conjunction with Virginia Regulations Governing the Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities (2010), the *Special Education Advisory Committee of Rappahannock County Public Schools (SEAC of RCPS)* consists of parents, community members, school staff, and representatives of other groups who meet a minimum of four times each school year to participate in the development of priorities and strategies for meeting the identified needs of children with disabilities that will support the intellectual, social, physical, and emotional needs of this special population in coordination with local agencies and support groups. An initial meeting has been scheduled for Sept. 15, 2016 at 6:00 at the RCES cafeteria. The agenda will include an overview of the Imagine Learning Reading Program, as well as, planning for future meetings. Students are welcome to attend for adult-supervised time on the playground. For additional information, please contact Mrs. Carol Johnson at

[cjohnson@rappahannockschools.us](mailto:cjohnson@rappahannockschools.us)



## RCES LIBRARY

### Reading is FUNdamental!

Students have been excited this year welcoming our new media specialist at RCES. Amy Wayland has enthusiastically guided students on tours of the library, discussed using the Dewey Decimal system, and incorporated the “shelf marker song” into lessons. Sixth grade students will soon be utilizing the Biblionasium website to promote literacy and share book recommendations. Mrs. Wayland’s goal for the year is simply to “Inspire students to love reading as much as I do.” We welcome Mrs. Wayland in her new role as RCES Media Specialist!

Visit the RCES Library Page: <https://sites.google.com/a/rappahannockschools.us/rces-library-media-center/>

*Students enjoying library time with Mrs. Wayland*



## Upcoming Events and Announcements

- September 10<sup>th</sup>: Taste of Rappahannock
- September 12<sup>th</sup>: PTO Meeting, 6:30 PM at RCES
- September 23<sup>rd</sup>: Kid Pan Alley concert at 7:00 PM at RCES
- September 24<sup>th</sup>: Fall Festival at RCHS
- October 6<sup>th</sup>: Parent Teacher Conferences

*RCPS Welcomes New Staff Members:*



**RCPS Vision Statement:**  
***To empower every student  
to reach his or her full  
potential.***

**\*\*\* Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>:** Come out to the school board meeting at 6:00 PM for the public comment on the new RCPS Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan helps define the division and student focus for the next six years. Thank you to all who participated in the writing of this document!

For upcoming athletic events visit the RCPS Sports Page:  
<http://rappahannockcountyhs.schoolteams.com/>