



Dorchester County  
Public Schools  
Every Child A Success!

# SUPERINTENDENT'S STAFF BULLETIN

Henry V. Wagner, Jr., Superintendent

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## INSTRUCTIONAL UPDATE

In previous months, I presented summaries of our system's new approaches to the **post-observation conference**, the **written narrative summary** of an observation lesson, and the importance of a well-crafted **objective** as the critical component of any successful lesson. This month, I am presenting a summary of the professional development that our **instructional technology** leaders (**Theresa Connors, Cindy Houghtaling, and Art Renkwitz**) provided in January for principals and supervisors. Specifically, their objective was *to weave the thread of technology into the fabric of the instructional conversation by demonstrating the operation of standard classroom equipment*. Thanks to a special technology (**QZAB**) grant from the State last year, "standard classroom equipment" now means the document camera, wireless MOBI Pad, and wireless mouse and keyboard. The professional development activities included demonstrations of exciting enhancements to instructional practices that are now available. Teachers are encouraged to contact Cindy or Art for further information on these expanded uses of technology.

## COVEY UPDATE

The fifth habit of highly effective people (and the second habit of the **Public Victory**) is **Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood**. In practicing this habit, the effective individual will listen *empathically* and with *discipline* to another person or persons and then communicate an accurate or good-faith understanding of what is being said. What makes this habit a challenge is, of course, the natural tendency to be thinking about our response (i.e. a good comeback or defense) to what is being said. If this tendency can be overcome by practicing the fifth habit, the listener can often effect a remarkable transformation in the other person. In fact, one of the best ways to know that you have done a good job of listening to someone is whether – as a result of your listening – there is a change in the attitude or demeanor of that person. Finally, this habit requires the faith and maturity to know that if your perspective or opinion is the "right" one, then it will keep until it is your turn to be understood!

## BUDGET UPDATE

Now is the time of year that we typically would be finalizing the proposed **budget** for the next fiscal year. This year, however, we have been hearing quite a bit of speculation in the media about the effect that financial woes have had on our nation, state, and county. Therefore, at this point in the process, there is simply no way to make definitive plans because there is so much **uncertainty**. We do not know how our two main revenue sources for the operating budget – **state and local funding** – will be impacted by the legislative session in Annapolis which ends in April, and the resulting decline in revenues available to our county government. The key issues are whether **maintenance of effort** will be waived, whether **Thornton formulas** are preserved, and how the structural deficit in the **State Retirement Fund** is addressed. But I can assure you that our **Board of Education** is determined to involve and consider **all stakeholders** as we assess our priorities and make decisions affecting the 2011-2012 school year. Please note that the guiding **mission statement**, adopted at the September board meeting, is as follows:

The mission of the Dorchester County Board of Education, **in partnership with the community**, is to provide leadership for excellence in teaching and learning for all students by:

- **consistently advocating for resources,**
- continuously developing sound policies, and
- carefully monitoring student progress.

As the ways to accomplish this become apparent in the months to come, we will certainly keep you informed.

## STAFFING AND TRANSFER PROCESSES

By this time, you should have received your **Declaration of Intent for the 2011-2012 School Year**. This is another vitally important annual process that works best in a *climate of trust*. We will make every effort to fulfill staff requests **as they are stated on these forms**. (This means that we will not accept “unofficial” requests that bypass this process.) Factors that affect our ability to fulfill transfer requests are **student needs** as reflected in the **school organizations, budget, program demands**, and the **negotiated agreements**. The plan is to conduct the annual transfer meeting once these factors are better defined (perhaps in mid-May). Please contact Dr. Orr in the Office of Human Resources if you have questions or need further clarification.

## **TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

The processes to select the **2011 Teacher of the Year** and **First Class Teacher of the Year** have begun! Of all the award programs we conduct, this is the most celebrated. This is because we always recognize both the primary importance of teachers, and the incredible challenges they regularly face. I hope you will take this opportunity to advance the nomination of a colleague you particularly admire!