



Dorchester County
Public Schools
Every Child A Success!

SUPERINTENDENT'S STAFF BULLETIN

Henry V. Wagner, Jr., Ed.D. Superintendent

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The 2011-2012 School Year Begins!

Even in the face of earthquakes and hurricanes, our 2011-2012 school year is off to an **excellent start!** Throughout Dorchester County, there is a strong focus on the kind of instruction that will insure the **advances in achievement** that our children need. But in order to provide that focus, we rely on the dedicated efforts of all support personnel – including **facilities, food services, transportation, finance, information technology, and human resources**. **I thank everyone in the DCPS family** for such getting us underway in such a fine fashion!

Additionally, special acknowledgments are in order for **Mrs. Wilson (Principal of Hurlock Elementary School), Dr. VanSciver (Principal of Mace's Lane Middle School), Ms. Phillips (Manager of Food Services), Mr. Hauge, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Brooks, and Mr. Slacum of our Facilities Department**, and all of their staffs for responding to the needs of the Dorchester community during **Hurricane Irene**.

A Salute to Our Teachers of the Year

Because our kick-off event was a little different this year, we did not get a chance to hear from our **Teacher of the Year** and **First Class Teacher of the Year**. Therefore, I have invited both of them to offer their thoughts in this **spotlight feature**:

Valerie Lomax, DCPS Teacher of the Year



I hope that everyone had a wonderful opening to the school year. Hopefully, you have returned refreshed and renewed and ready to inspire your new group of students. We have already had quite an impressive start with the arrival of an earthquake and hurricane all in the first week.

To the teachers of Dorchester County, you do more than you will ever know! We are rewarded by seeing students grow and excel in our classrooms. Some students will find us long after they have left our classroom to say thanks or remind us of something they liked about our teaching style or our class. There is another group, however, where our impact is not as well known. You, yourself were probably influenced by a teacher - yet you never told them. That student may be quiet or shy and doesn't feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. It may be that they didn't realize how much it would matter to you to know. These students may not have told you how much they appreciated the kind and positive words you spoke to them or how great it felt to be in your class where they experienced success, but they felt it.

Don't underestimate your power to inspire and influence your students! A positive relationship between you and a student can influence the student to produce things they have not bothered to try before. Students will try harder, think deeper, and put forth more effort in a classroom where they are respected and valued. Use your power wisely and abundantly, and always know that you are making a difference for your students - even if it is not obvious at that moment.

Thank you for answering the call to be a teacher. If you don't think you were meant to be a teacher, look at what you do. Who would work this hard if it was not what they were meant to do?

Be inspired and inspiring, make a positive difference, and have a wonderful year!

Valerie Lomax

Mary Collins, DCPS First Class Teacher of the Year



My first year as a special educator in Dorchester County has been a wonderful experience. I have found a true family community at Choptank Elementary School. My administrators, Jennifer Ruark and Jon Harper, have been an awesome support; I have learned so much from them as well as my fellow teachers. I look forward to this being another fabulous year, making a difference in the students here at Choptank, and experiencing their growth to the greatest potential! I hope everyone in Dorchester County has had a great start to a bright new year!

Mary Collins

The Three Achievement Themes for 2011-2012

During this summer's **school improvement and A & S retreats**, we developed **three themes** to guide our work this year. They are:

- **Intervention rather than remediation** – Providing *just in time assistance* as soon as we know that there is a lack of appropriate mastery. This is **proactive**, as opposed to the reactive mode of remediating long-term deficits.
- **Infusing appropriate rigor at the elementary, middle, and high school levels** – Developing and implementing ways to insure that students are appropriately **challenged** each and every day.
- **Developing the profile of an independent learner at the elementary, middle, and high school levels** – Envisioning the attributes of a student who has the **reading stamina, reasoning ability, mastery of basic/advanced skills, and the confidence** to proceed as soon as possible on his/her own with learning.

I thank everyone involved in the instructional conversation in advance for being mindful of these themes!

Covey Reflection

*“Habit One, **Be Proactive**, is all about making and keeping commitments. The commitments and promises you make to yourself and others – and your integrity to those commitments – provide the clearest manifestations to your proactivity.”*

Again, let us resolve to foster this sense of ownership in our students, whether the issue is **achievement, behavior, or character**.