Highlights...

➢ Cover: LCPS Links; Department Leadership
➢ Page 2: A Message from the Director of Special Education
➢ Page 2: Inclusive Technology Spotlight
➢ Page 4: Mental Health & Awareness Conference; Dr. Debbie Schwind; Restorative Practices
➢ Page 5: A Message from the Assistant Superintendent; Upcoming Events

DEPARTMENT LEADERSHIP
Dr. Asia R. Jones, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Clark Bowers, Director, Student Services
John Lody, Director, Diagnostic and Prevention Services
Dr. Patricia D. Nelson, Director, Special Education

LCPS Links
https://www.facebook.com/LCPSofficial/timeline/
https://twitter.com/LCPSOfficial
https://vimeo.com/lcpstv

Committed to “EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD” and to ensuring a safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment for all students.
A MESSAGE from the DIRECTOR of SPECIAL EDUCATION

We have been excited and overjoyed to see our secondary students join our elementary students as we return to brick and mortar learning. During their first days back, we had the opportunity to spend time at several schools. While there we noted that students seemed happy and eager to be back in school. Students were welcomed back with clever bulletin boards, “We cannot MASK our excitement to see you again”! And well-prepared teachers did a great job of anticipating student needs and planned for students to get reacclimated and to share with each other about events and activities that had occurred in their lives since they saw each other last. The incorporation of social skill and community building activities allowed students to connect with each other and staff. In addition to smooth arrival and dismissal routines, we observed proactive strategies to help students with special needs transition back to the building in person (i.e. lots of visuals, social narratives, well planned movement breaks, token economies, etc.) Some of these students returned for the first time since March, so staff was ready to anticipate their needs in terms of transitions, stamina, mask wearing, etc.

We continue to eagerly anticipate the return of all students to in-person learning in the days and weeks ahead.

In addition to welcoming students back, the Office of Special Education is excited to announce that Loudoun County Public School (LCPS) was accepted to enroll in the Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) Virginia IEP cohort for the 2021-2022 school year. Approximately, 90 Virginia school divisions use Virginia IEP to make data-driven decisions more efficient, ensure compliance, and provide increased transparency and collaboration. LCPS will join 19 other school divisions in Cohort V. We understand the timing of our transition to the statewide IEP solution is not optimum given the challenges of the pandemic; however, the next opportunity will not present itself until 2027. The Office of Special Education remains committed to doing everything possible to facilitate a seamless experience for all users.

End-user staff (special education teachers, related service providers, leads, deans, designees, CT’s, SIF’s, identified Virginia IEP School-Based Trainers and all OSE administrator’s) will have multiple opportunities to attend a live synchronous training or an asynchronous training. The goal is for all end-users to complete a synchronous or asynchronous training session by the close of business on Thursday, June 17, 2021. Virginia IEP is scheduled to go LIVE in Loudoun on July 1, 2021.

The Office of Special Education will also be working on a schedule of opportunities for families to learn about the new EdPlan Connect Parent Portal. This web-based portal will facilitate collaboration and increase family engagement. It allows parents to virtually access and sign student records online. Parents can receive automatic and personalized notifications from other key stakeholders as well as give school teams, parents, and stakeholders the ability to collaborate on student progress.

Sincerely,

Dr. Patricia Nelson
Director of Special Education
LCPS returned to 100% distance learning on December 15th, 2020. Just prior, educators at Algonkian Elementary School worked to ensure that students installed the literacy support extensions of Read&Write for Google Chrome, Texthelp PDF Reader, and Texthelp Screenshot Reader. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Instructional Facilitator for Technology, Specialized Instructional Facilitator - Assistive Technology, and the Specialized Instructional Facilitator - Reading, learners also participated in experiences where they practiced how to use the tools to support their own learning. Regardless of whether a student is participating in a distance or in-person learning experience, these extensions are available to anyone in LCPS. Take it from the students at Algonkian! Install, explore, and use the tools today!
**LCPS HOSTS MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS CONFERENCE**

LCPS Dept of Pupil Services hosted the 4th annual (1st virtual) Mental Health and Wellness Conference for the community on January 30th.

Both events were free for parents, educators and community members.

Our breakout sessions included mental health professionals from LCPS, Inova Kellar Center, Center for Anxiety and Behavioral Change, Formed Families Forward, NAMI, Grafton, Insight Into Action Therapy, Project Horse Empowerment, and Therapeutic Alliance.

Each breakout sessions had 30–40 individuals in attendance. The welcome remarks and keynote panel streams had a total of 220 plays and close to 700 hits.

In addition, LCPS collaborated with Inova to present the “Inova Act on Addiction Summit,” a series of presentations offered January 25-29: [http://inova.events/AOASummit](http://inova.events/AOASummit)

**OT RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION**

Loudoun Occupational Therapist, Dr. Debbie Schwind, was a recipient of The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) first ever Innovation and Impact Award. This award is given to publicly recognize the exceptional work Occupational Therapists do in their daily practice. Recipients of this award demonstrate the delivery of an evidence-based, effective, and innovative program or intervention that enhances the quality of life for a person or persons. Dr. Schwind was recognized for her work with the Jobs Program at Cedar Lane Elementary School that prepares students for transition by developing work behaviors, career interests, social skills and self-determination skills.

Congratulations Dr. Schwind!

**RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

Restorative Practices facilitators provided Reflective Circles to over 80 middle and high school student equity ambassadors and their trusted adult leaders during their February 8th Meeting. The Equity Office and Student Services Office are looking at additional ways to align our division wide efforts through equity committees, affinity groups, restorative circles, and peer led programming.
The month of February has provided many opportunities for us to celebrate and support each other within our school communities. I’ve been inspired by the collective positive energy that welcomed many students back to in-person instruction, the state and district athletic victories achieved by individual student athletes and teams, the thousands of vaccinations provided to our employees, and the Black History Month programs that were promoted within many schools to acknowledge the contributions African Americans have provided to our United States history. As an African American and 28-year educator, I continue to salute my grandparents for their courage and perseverance to provide the opportunity for an equitable education, within desegregated schools, for their children and future grandchildren. To do so, my grandparents moved to New York from Prince Edward County Virginia as public schools closed to all students to avoid the provision of instruction within racially integrated schools. Although the 1950s seem to be some time ago, their decision to move North is a special gift that has benefited me and many others in my family. In fact, my teaching experience began in Lunenburg County at the very high school where family friends could not attend until it became desegregated and allowed family choice somewhere around 1969...wow!

Thank you for continuing to teach our collective history, support our students, and celebrate the wonderful diversity that exists within our community.

Asia R. Jones, Ed.D.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **March 17, 2021:** Audio Conference: *Section 504 Part 1 of 3: Evaluations and Eligibility*
- **March 29-April 2, 2021:** Spring Break (Students)
- **April 1-2, 2021:** Spring Break (Administrative Staff)
- **Summer Programming: COVID Recovery and ESY 2021:** June 28-July 29, 2021 (July 5, 2021-Holiday)

The Department of Pupil Services is grateful for all of your hard work and steadfast commitment as we return to our buildings. Stay diligent and thank you for all that you have done and will continue to do. We continue to be grateful for the efficient process developed by the Office of Student Services, Student Health Services, LCPS Nursing staff and ALL who assisted in any manner with the COVID vaccination process. We know that the process has been daunting and appreciate the dedication and long hours that were devoted to this process.

THANK YOU BRAMBLETON MS for hosting this momentous endeavor.