Dear Parents:

Happy New Year!

We trust that you had a wonderful holiday and that your children have returned to school refreshed and ready to get back to school. I know our teachers and staff are eager to get back into the business we love so much, that of teaching and student learning.

I wanted to kick off the New Year with some factual information about what the single most important school controlled factor is in the teaching and learning process. Simply put, it’s the quality of the teacher. Research is not only clear on the aforementioned topic but is also clear that the two major factors of teacher effectiveness are directly correlated to the amount of experience the staff members have and also the turnover rate of certified personnel at any given school.

Let’s get specific. Recently, I was asked by a major educational periodical to write a small article on how to hire and retain highly qualified experienced teachers. Perhaps I was asked to share my views because it is fairly well known that the staff at Spring Hill Elementary School, once hired, tends to stay quite a bit longer than the average staff member at many other schools.

Fortunately, Spring Hill enjoys one of the lowest staff turnover rates in all of FCPS. In a typical year we usually only have to replace a small number of teachers over the summer. Their departure is almost always due to retirement or their significant other gets transferred to another location. In addition, Spring Hill is the benefactor of one of the most experienced certified staffs anywhere I have worked or heard of. When I ran the numbers of years of teaching experience for our certified staff, I was stunned to learn that the “average” number of experience of our certified staff was 17.3 years. What that equates to is that our certified staff members at Spring Hill have amassed a total of over 1,100 years of teaching/professional educational experience!

With the wonderful student body we have, coupled with the tremendous support our parents, mixed with the incredible amount of expertise, experience and longevity of our staff, means that together we can assist our children in accomplishing great things. Please join me in looking forward to a highly successful next six months at Spring Hill.

Sincerely,

Roger Vanderhye

Roger Vanderhye, Principal
Attention Parents:

Due to safety and supervision concerns students may not be dropped off in the mornings before 8:10. There are no staff members here before that time to supervise them. At 8:10, students may go to the cafeteria to await dismissal to their classrooms at 8:25.

When school has a 2hr delayed opening, children should not be dropped off before 10:10

Early Pick-Up Policy

If you need to pick up your child early from school, you must do so before 3:00 pm. Please schedule appointments accordingly. There will be no early pick-ups after 3:00 pm. After this times, you will need to wait until dismissal @3:20 pm.

Calendar

Time Out of School

Please schedule your family vacations during FCPS designated holidays / breaks, which you can see at this link: http://www.fcps.edu/cal.shtml Be aware that missing school for extended periods of time negatively impacts your child and your child’s teacher.

Week of January 12:
Wednesday, January 14: PTO Meeting, Lg Pod, 9:15 am, featuring Arlene Randall, Cooper MS Principal & Fred Amico, Langley HS Asst. Principal, as speakers.
Thursday January 15: Clubs, Candids and Panoramic Photos, Lg Pod, 9am-All day
Fun Fair Meeting, 9:15, Cafeteria
5th & 6th GR Orchestra Concert, Gym, 7 pm
Friday, January 16: Korean Seminar, Room 913, 10 am See pg 4 for flyer
SCA Flashback Friday
(Wear clothes from any decade)

Week of January 19:
Monday, January 19
MLK Day Holiday, No School

Friday, January 23: Dr. Alan Zametkin of NIH speaks on “ADHD, Anxiety and Attitude” Geography Bee, Cafeteria, 2-3 pm

Saturday, January 24: Family Skate Night, Reston Skate Quest, 6-9 pm

Week of January 26:
Monday, January 26: Chinese Coffee, Cafeteria, 8:30

Thursday, January 29: 2 hr Early Release
Friday, January 30 & Monday, February 2, No School, Student Holidays


This school newsletter will be issued every Wednesday during the school year on our website, under “News and Events.” You will receive an email link to the newsletter if we have your current email address. Deadline for submissions are Mondays by Noon. Email nelda.hirji@fcps.edu

Calling All Chocolate Lovers!!

The McLean and Langley High Interact Clubs and the Rotary Club of McLean are partnering to hold McLean's third annual chocolate festival on Sunday, January 25, from 11-5 PM at the McLean Community Center. The Community Hall and Stedman Hall will be filled with 17 vendors selling anything chocolate: candy, cakes, ice cream, cupcakes, etc. American Heritage, a Mars company, will demonstrate how chocolate was made in the 1750's. In the Center's DuVal studio, LHS and MHS Interact Club students will lead children in chocolate-related games, and there will be half-hour performances by Ukelele Phil and the Hula Kids at 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30. Admission to the Chocolate Festival is $2. Children under 6 get in free. Twenty-five percent of all proceeds will support local community organizations like the Falls Church McLean Children's Center, Homestretch, Literacy Council, Timber Lane Elementary School, high school senior scholarships, the Safe Community Coalition's 6th Grade Ethics Days, and many others. For more information, please visit www.McLeanChocolateFestival.org.
Spring Hill Korean Seminar

스프링힐 韓人 學父母 세미나

• Where: Spring Hill Elementary School
  8201 Lewinsville Rd. McLean VA 22102

• When: Friday, January 16th, 10:00am

• Speaker: Matthew Lee (이원진 선생님)
  former FCPS counselor

Questions? Please contact Aejin Lee, Spring Hill Parent Liaison, at aejin.lee1@fcps.edu.
Special Education Committee Speaker

Save the Date: Friday, January 23 at 9 a.m. in the Spring Hill Cafeteria. Please join the Spring Hill Special Education Committee for an eye-opening presentation: “Attention, Anxiety and Attitude: What's Love Got To Do With It?” Well known speaker, Dr. Alan Zametkin, a Senior Clinical Staff Physician at the National Institute of Mental Health at NIH, will speak to Spring Hill parents about a broad range of attention and anxiety-related issues that impact so many students in today's fast paced and often challenging world. We hope to see you there! Please e-mail Leslie Young at lfy@mac.com with any questions.

PTO Meeting – January 14th

Our next PTO Meeting will be Wednesday, January 14th at 9:15am in the Cafeteria. Our speakers will be Arlene Randall, Principal of Cooper Middle School, and Fred Amico, Assistant Principal at Langley High School. Come find out what’s going on in our education pyramid and what’s coming in the spring for the PTO!

Fun Fair Meeting – January 16th

On Friday, January 16th at 9:15am, there will be a planning meeting for Fun Fair committee members in the Cafeteria. See you there!

Save the Date! Skate Night Is Back!

When: Saturday, January 24th  
Where: Skate Quest in Reston  
Time: 6:10-8pm

Tickets will be sold before school in the lobby January 20-23rd for $10 per skater (includes skate rental). Cash or checks payable to Spring Hill PTO. Spring Hill will receive a % of each pizza slice sold at the concession stand that evening so come prepared. Helmets are encouraged for all skaters. Skate Quest does not provide helmets, so please bring your own. Bike helmets are acceptable.
Fun Run Co-Chair Needed

The Fun Run co-chairs are looking for one additional volunteer to help plan and coordinate this fun, family event! Have you been thinking about how to get involved, but need flexibility when you volunteer? This event may be the perfect opportunity for you. The Fun Run is held on a weekend in May, and much of the planning can be done on your own schedule. The event is normally chaired by three people to keep planning manageable for everyone. Many of the event milestones have been documented by prior chairs, but help is needed in bringing the details together and executing the schedule for this year.

If interested, please contact current co-chairs Jenn Ruscio (jenniferruscio@yahoo.com) and Krista Page (krista.page333@gmail.com).

Wanted: 6th Grade Party Planning Committee Chairs

Our 6th grade graduation in June will be here before we know it! The 6th graders look forward to an all day celebration at school including games, lunch and a DJ hosted dance. The Committee is looking for a few leaders to chair committees including: Baby Photo Guessing Contest; Class DVD; Class Gift: School and Teachers; Decorations; Entertainment; Games; Food; Last Will and Testament.

If interested, please contact Alicia Bond (aliciajbond@aol.com) or Mary Welch (maryswelch@verizon.net).

Thank You!

Each week there are so many volunteers that take time to make our school a little better. Many thanks to:

- Amelia Steiner and Susan Connery for doing the January birthday board
- Holly Piper, Amy Prewett and Mendy Crews for volunteering to direct voters to the library during the Special Election yesterday.
A huge thank you to everyone who donated to our PTO fundraisers this fall! Because of your generosity, the PTO is able to appropriate funds back to Spring Hill to meet the needs of our staff and students.

PUTTING DELAYED WALKING TRAIL FUNDING TO USE TODAY
Last year, the PTO approved money to build a walking trail behind the school. The school was later made aware that local proffer money may be available to construct a much higher quality track instead. With that knowledge, the school decided to put the trail project on hold, pending the outcome of the proffer request. As of Tuesday, December 16th, we still have not heard whether a full-fledged track has been approved by Fairfax County through the proffer system. Given the uncertainty around the track decision, in November the PTO Executive Board requested and received a refund from FCPS of the funds appropriated for the trail last fall in order to put those funds to use as soon as possible. The Board felt that should the proffer fall through, membership can revisit the trail idea at a later time. Appropriations reflect the current needs of the school.

RECOMMENDED APPROPRIATIONS SPENDING
The PTO Appropriations Committee met with Roger Vanderhye on Tuesday, December 9th to review a list of requests submitted for appropriations. The following requests were approved by the Appropriations Committee and are recommended to be voted on by the PTO general membership:

1. 65 laptop computers to be used by the 6th grade ($39,000) – This purchase, along with existing machines, will allow each 6th grader to have a dedicated laptop. Providing our older students with individual laptops allows for more thorough research to be done during school hours AND frees up valuable Computer Lab time for younger students, who require both sturdier desktop computers and more direct instruction on computer use.
2. New and replacement games for the Critical Thinking Room, formerly Strategies Lab ($4,000) – Our new AART teacher found many games with missing or broken parts that need replacing.
3. Five Incubators for chick hatching for 2nd grade ($913.77) – The 2nd grade teachers report that the current incubator systems and humidity kits (below) are failing due to age, resulting in a large number of unhatched chicks.
4. Five humidity kits for chick hatching for 2nd grade ($688.77)
5. One 14” Tubano drum ($265.63) – The music teachers would like students be have more turns with instruments during General Music class.
6. One 12” Tubano drum with storage bag ($234.59)
7. Two 10” Tubano drums with storage bags ($417.22)
8. Four sets of bean bags for rhythm ($72.95)
9. Four sets of six 36” ribbon wands ($111.78)
10. Four sets of rhythm sticks ($107.30)

Total Appropriation request amount: $45,812.01

PLEASE VOTE BY JANUARY 9
We ask PTO members to please review the recommended list of appropriations requests above and submit your votes via email to the PTO President, Amy Prewett, no later than Friday, January 9th. This timing should allow all purchases to be made and put to use early on in the 3rd Quarter. According to our Bylaws (found on the PTO website at www.springhillPTO.org), Appropriations requests must be approved by membership through a meeting or a ballot. The Executive Board has determined that the Panther Press newsletter will serve as a ballot. Members either vote YES on the entire slate or NO. Per PTO Bylaws, a non-vote is counted as a "yes" vote. Amy's contact information is acprewett@yahoo.com. Thank you for your generosity and consideration!
Are You Prepared? Make Plans Now!

Inclement Weather and Emergency Closing Plans
Make Arrangements Now in Case of an Unforeseen Schedule Change

Due to inclement weather or other emergency situations, it may be necessary to close schools for the entire day, to open schools two hours late, or to close two hours early. The procedures used in school closings are detailed below. Keep this information in a convenient location for future reference.

Parents are urged to make arrangements now for the care of their children when schedule changes are made (and to provide for the rare situation when it is necessary to close an individual school because of a power failure or other circumstances). Children should know where to go or what to do if a parent will not be or is not home.

FCPS has several schedules set up to deal with inclement weather. These are put into effect when conditions threaten the safety of children and FCPS staff who are walking, driving, or riding buses to schools. These schedules are:

(1) Keep schools closed. (2) Open two hours late. (3) Close two hours early.

As soon as a decision is made to implement one of these changes, we post the information on:

♦ FCPS cable Channel 21
♦ www.fcps.edu.
♦ Facebook and Twitter.
♦ Email notifications will be made through our Keep in Touch (KIT) system.
♦ Called in to local radio and television stations.

We try to make a decision by 4:30 a.m. when schools will be closed all day or will open two hours late. This gives us 30 minutes so that the public announcement can be posted and reach all media outlets by 5:00 a.m. On some occasions, it is not possible to make these time frames as weather can change unexpectedly. On some other occasions, the school system has been able to make a scheduling decision the day before so that parents, staff members, and students know what will happen the following day. This usually happens when precipitation is already on the ground and the temperatures are such that the precipitation on the ground is frozen or will refreeze.

For more information, go to http://www.fcps.edu/news/weather.shtml