



# Farquhar Forum

Feb. 2010

Letter from the Principal

Scott Murphy

## Dear Farquhar Community:

Welcome back after the historic snowstorms! We hope you survived the extreme weather and enjoyed the time with your families. At school, we are working very hard to resume our normal routines, make necessary adjustments in the curriculum, and prepare students for the important work that is ahead. We are also planning in earnest for next school year, and MSA testing is right around the corner.



Parents-- thank you for your patience with the difficult traffic situation when we returned to school after the snowstorms, particularly with traffic along Batchellors Forest Road and service to certain bus stops. We worked closely with MCPS Transportation and county agencies to remedy the situation as quickly as possible. County Public Works responded to remove additional snow from Batchellors Forest to widen the road, and MCPS transportation supervisors continue to work with bus operators to address any bus transportation concerns.

If you have specific questions/concerns about bus issues, please contact MCPS Transportation directly: <http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/transportation/contact/supervisors.shtm>

As far as making up the snow days in the school calendar, here are some responses to frequently asked questions:

The recent blizzards have created an unprecedented weather event for MCPS, closing schools and administrative offices for an entire week. It also raised some questions about the school year, testing and other issues.

(Cont. on next page)



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Q: We've had nine snow days so far this year. Will we have to make up all those days?

A: There are four days that are built into the school year, so the most we would have to make up at this point is five days (unless there are additional snow days this winter). State Superintendent of Schools Nancy Grasmick has indicated she will ask the State Board of Education to waive some of the instructional days missed due to the weather last week. MCPS would not need to make up any days that are waived by the state, but it's not clear when—and if—the State Board will make that decision.

Q: How will any snow days be made up?

A: The calendar, as passed by the Montgomery County Board of Education last year, would add days onto the end of the school year. Any change to those plans would have to be considered and voted upon by the Board of Education.

Q: Does the early release day we had on Feb. 5 count as a day of instruction?

A: Yes.

Q: The Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) are coming up and we just lost a week of instruction time. Any chance the MSAs will be moved back?

A: MCPS has asked the state about this and are awaiting more information

## Registration For 2010-11



Planning for next school year is underway. Our 8th grade students have completed the course registration process for high school, while 6th and 7th grade students are registering for courses for next year as well. About 2/3 of our 8th grade students will be attending Sherwood High School, while the remaining students will attend one of the three schools in the Northeast Consortium (Blake, Paint Branch, and Springbrook) or other schools. By the time you receive this newsletter, all students should have submitted registration materials to their guidance counselors, and we will have had our parent information meetings. If you missed any of this information or have any questions, please contact your child's counselor or the Important Contacts included in this newsletter.



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Please note that staffing decisions and final course offerings are determined based on this course registration process over the next few weeks. When making decisions about course selections, honors courses, or math placement, please call or email the teacher or other specialist with any questions. Please note that teacher recommendations are an important part of the placement process, but parent input, test scores, interest, motivation, and student work habits/effort are also important variables. Multiple factors must be considered when making decisions about your child's schedule (see below).

## **Enrollment**

Our enrollment is currently approximately 625 students, with an expected enrollment of about 600 students for 2010-11. I do not expect the decrease in enrollment to have a major impact on student programs. However, please note that elective programs and final course offerings are driven by student registration, so courses without sufficient enrollment may not be offered.

## **MSA Testing March 8-17**

The Maryland School Assessments (MSA) will take place March 8-17. These are the annual state assessments that are used to measure our Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act. Please encourage your child to take these tests seriously, as they are an important measure of how your child is performing in reading, writing, and math. There is no need to "study," but please be sure your child gets a good night's sleep, eats in the morning, and comes to school on time. Look for additional information in our weekly News and on our website about modified bell schedules to accommodate the testing schedule. Testing dates are as follows:



MSA Reading:	March 8-9	Grade 6
	March 10-11	Grades 7, 8
MSA Math:	March 12,15	Grade 6
	March 16-17	Grades 7, 8



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We are also planning culminating activities that will allow students to choose from an in-school dance, basketball and field sports, classroom movies and more to celebrate the end of MSA testing on March 15 (grade 6) and March 17 (grades 7-8).

## **Summer Programs- Save The Date!**

Summer programs will [hopefully] be held in the month of July from 7:45 – 11:30 a.m. Intervention programs in reading and math will be offered, as well as opportunities for acceleration or bridging to a higher level math courses such as Math 7 or Algebra. Please note that final summer offerings are budget contingent, so details will be published as soon as they are made available.



We will also be offering our annual Writer's Workshop course to develop writing skills, prepare for rigorous high school courses, and write creatively. Please see the information enclosed in this newsletter and contact Mr. Heifetz with any questions. (Adam\_M\_Heifetz@mcpsmd.org).

## **Beauty and the Beast, Basketball, & After-School Activities**



Rehearsals for our spring musical, Beauty and the Beast, Jr. are in full gear. Under the direction of Ms. Erin Lorenz, English teacher and theater director, and a corps of dedicated parents, the cast and crew are now spending countless hours rehearsing in preparation for the main stage production April 23-25. We hope the entire community can join us for the show!

Basketball season is nearing its conclusion, as our boys and girls teams are having exciting seasons under the direction of Coach Green (girls) and Coach LaSota (boys). The spring seasons are just around the corner, with soccer tryouts beginning on March 9. Meanwhile, a myriad of other after-school activities are taking place each Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday with activity bus transportation provided. Please check the announcements in this newsletter and in our weekly News for new extra-curricular activities this spring.



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## **Roadrunner Night Coming!**

Mark your calendars for the biggest night of the year—Roadrunner Night on March 19, 2010. We hope the entire community joins us for this exciting annual event. Stay tuned for more information!

Interim reports will be mailed on or about March 2, and all students should receive a report in the mail.

Despite the interrupted schedule, the 3rd marking period will still end on March 26 and report cards will be distributed April 14. Please note: due to the snow closures and a modified schedule for MSA's, fewer assignments may be graded this marking period.

In the meantime, enjoy the last month of winter, as "spring fever" is right around the corner! Thank you again for your ongoing support of our school community, and as always, please feel free to contact us if there is anything we can do to assist you or your student in the educational process.

Sincerely,

*Scott W. Murphy*

Principal



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## Message from the PTA President, Joe Griffin



We are finally back to normal after digging out of the historic blizzard of 2010. I like to think of it as nature's way of stopping the world and giving us time to enjoy being together as a family and catching up with each other. I know I enjoyed being snowed in and playing games with my kids....for the first four days. On the fifth day I found myself shoveling a path in the street. There was no determined destination to the path other than someplace quiet. On day six I awoke to

a loud beeping noise outside and upon seeing a plow out my window I dropped to my knees and sobbed. While the first day back to school presented many challenges, Montgomery County did better in getting the children back to school on time than any of our surrounding counties.

I want to thank our teachers and administrators for the outstanding work they do for our children. The curriculum which these teachers must complete with our children is very demanding. It is a challenge for the teachers to cover all of the material in the time allotted and to make sure the students actually understand the concepts as they should. Now these teachers have the increased difficulty of accomplishing these requirements in less time due to the unprecedented number of snow days this year. I applaud the teachers and administrators for their hard work and dedication. We as parents can help the teachers and of course our children by being extra vigilant that our children do their homework and remain caught up on their assigned work.

Helping our children with their homework can be very challenging. I know when I help my children with their math they always have to show their work as to how they arrived at the answers, and evidently I went to school in the stone ages and everything is done differently now. The good thing is MCPS has homework resources for parents and students on the internet. This is a great tool and because it is set up by our school system it is much more accurate than googling for answers which might lead you to the math formulas I was taught. Go to either MCPS or FarquharMS website and look under resources.



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Our next PTA meeting will be in the media center on March 9th starting at 7pm. States Attorney John McCarthy will give a presentation on gangs in our schools and what is being done to stop them, starting at 7:30 pm. Please join us to learn more about this important topic and to address Mr. McCarthy with any questions.

Mark your calendars for Roadrunner night/Silent auction on March 19th. As always this is the biggest event the PTA sponsors each year and it is a tremendous amount of fun for the whole family. I hope to see you all there.

I hope everyone has a happy and healthy snow-free month.

Joe Griffin  
PTA President



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## IMPORTANT CONTACTS 2010-11

Keep this for future reference!

### Counseling/Registration/Scheduling/Student Support:

(301) 924-3113

Jason Ingram, Incoming 6th Grade Counselor

Jason\_R\_Ingram@mcpsmd.org

Maria Kohlerman, Current 6th Grade Counselor

Maria\_F\_Kohlerman@mcpsmd.org

Susan James, Rising 8th Grade Counselor/Dept Chair

Susan\_C\_James@cpsmd.org

Heather Sobieralski, ESOL/ELL Counselor and Student Groups/Programs

Heather\_R\_Sobieralski@mcpsmd.org

**6th Grade Team Leaders:** Marcie Leibowitz, Reading IRT  
Marcie\_J\_Leibowitz@mcpsmd.org

Sharyn Tolkach, Math IRT  
Sharyn\_L\_Tolkach@mcpsmd.org

**7th Grade Team Leaders:** Carla Britt, Math IRT  
Carla\_R\_Britt@mcpsmd.org

Michael Whiteford, Social Studies IRT  
Michael\_C\_Whiteford@mcpsmd.org

**8th Grade Team Leaders:** Adam Heifetz, English IRT  
Adam\_M\_Heifetz@mcpsmd.org

Jeff Levine, Science IRT  
Jeff\_A\_Levine@mcpsmd.org



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**6th Grade Math Placement:** Sharyn Tolkach, Math IRT  
Sharyn\_L\_Tolkach@mcpsmd.org

**7th/8th Grade Math Placement:**  
Carla Britt, 7th Grade Team Leader, Math IRT  
Carla\_R\_Britt@mcpsmd.org

**Special Needs:** Kathy Finan, Special Education Chair  
Kathleen\_A\_Finan@mcpsmd.org

**Reading Specialist:** Laurie Rose, Reading Specialist  
Laurie\_E\_Rose@mcpsmd.org

**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL):**  
Jonathan Dworin, ESOL Teacher  
Jonathan\_M\_Dworing@mcpsmd.org

**Library Media Center:** Marti Ladd, Media Specialist  
Martha\_J\_Ladd@mcpsmd.org

**Student Service Learning (SSL):** Lisa Rodriguez, SSL Coordinator  
Lisa\_L\_Rodriguez@mcpsmd.org

**ADMINISTRATION:**

Scott Murphy, Principal  
Scott\_W\_Murphy@mcpsmd.org

Scott Gitchell, Assistant Principal  
Scott\_Gitchell@mcpsmd.org

Simone Geness, Assistant School Administrator  
Simone\_A\_Geness@mcpsmd.org



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**After School Activities:** Laurie Rose  
Laurie\_E\_Rose@mcpsmd.org

**Health Room/Medical Concerns:** (301)924-3111  
Mary Rafferty, School Nurse  
Mary\_K\_Rafferty@mcpsmd.org

Patricia Tyler, Health Technician  
Patricia\_A\_Tyler@mcpsmd.org

**Athletics:** (301) 924-3116 Rick Eisenacher, Athletic Coordinator  
Richard\_L\_Eisenacher@mcpsmd.org

**Enrollment/StudentFiles/Residency:** (301) 924-3113  
Judy Lucas, Guidance Secretary  
Judith\_A\_Lucas@mcpsmd.org

**Edline Accounts/Webmaster:** Beth Hopkins, Webmaster  
Beth\_A\_Hopkins@mcpsmd.org

**Attendance:** Ramona Lastre, Secretary  
Ramona\_Lastre@mcpsmd.org

**Finance Office:** Judy Yu, Financial Assistant  
Judith\_C\_Yu@mcpsmd.org

**Security:** Bill Collins, Security Assistant  
William\_A\_Collins@mcpsmd.org

**Building Services:** (301) 924-3112  
Claude Musy, Building Service Manager  
Claude\_B\_Musy@mcpsmd.org

**Cafeteria:** (301) 924-3118  
Barbara Bishop, Cafeteria Manager  
Barbara\_J\_Bishop@mcpsmd.org



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## Department Chairs:

### English/Reading

Adam Heifetz

Adam\_M\_Heifetz@mcpsmd.org

### Math

Carla Britt

Carla\_R\_Britt@mcpsmd.org

### Social Studies

Michael Whiteford

Michael\_C\_Whiteford@mcpsmd.org

### Science

Jeff Levine

Jeff\_A\_Levine@mcpsmd.org

### Foreign Language/ ESOL

Jennifer Stanton-Brand

Jennifer\_Stanton-Brand@mcpsmd.org

### Arts/Electives

Linda Lindstrom

Linda\_O\_Lindstrom@mcpsmd.org

### Physical Education/Health

Rick Eisenacher

Richard\_L\_Eisenacher@mcpsmd.org

### Staff Development

Karen Becker

Karen\_I\_Becker@mcpsmd.org

### Counseling

Susan James

Susan\_C\_James@mcpsmd.org

### Special Education

Kathy Finan

Kathleen\_A\_Finan@mcpsmd.org



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## Counselor's Corner



"Counselors care. Keep us posted!" This is our February theme to celebrate National School Counseling Week. In addition to kicking off registration season, we took advantage of this national celebration as a chance to remind students of all the various ways their school counselors can help. To reinforce the message, counselors sponsored a college gear dress up day and daily counseling tips on the morning announcements. Future events include sponsoring a Roadrunner Jam (music during all three lunches) on

March 3rd, when the counselors will be handing out small post it notes to the students as a reminder to "keep us posted."

FMS Counseling Staff

Ms. Kohlerman-6th grade counselor

Ms. James-7th grade counselor

Mr. Ingram-8th grade counselor

Ms. Sobieralski-small group counseling and school programs

Ms. Lucas – School counseling secretary

Counselors are here to support your socially, academically and emotionally. If you have a concern, please contact us.

Upcoming Counseling Groups:

- Divorce and separation (Feb)
- Grief and loss (April)
- Stress and internalizing feelings (April)

Please contact Ms. Sobieralski or your child's grade level counselor if you would like more information about small counseling groups.



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## Lead the way on the MSA!



As you know, the MSAs are rapidly approaching! Here are some tried and true test-taking strategies that you can reinforce with your child at home.

- Get a good night sleep.
- Eat a healthy breakfast.
- Get to school on time.
- Have your pencils and calculator ready.
- Take your time.
- Write as much as you can.
- Use the POE (process of elimination) to figure out the correct answer.
- Check your answers.
- Relax! You can do this!
- Congratulate yourself for a job well done!



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## SIXTH GRADE NEWS



Getting back into the groove after our unscheduled snow break has been a challenge and Spring fever is right around the corner. Parents are urged to help the students return to and maintain their academic routines, such as completing homework and studying – especially with spring break and the MSA's approaching. Make sure your child continues to complete all homework assignments. You are able to help by looking the work over for neatness and completeness. Check with your child to be sure he/she has all the necessary materials to be successful such as pens, pencils, notebook paper and a calculator. It is always a good idea to look through your child's binder on a regular basis to see what is going on in their classes and to help them organize and do a bit of cleaning. Teachers are using regular e-mail newsletters, Ed-line, homework agenda handouts, and other methods to help parents stay informed. Don't let the winter doldrums set in.

### Former Farquhar Student Wins Photo Contest!



Former 8th grade student: Gracie Lunden was chosen to represent Farquhar in a Youth Photo Exhibit "Points of Departure" sponsored by VisArts. Over 250 photos were submitted and the quality of work was very high. Fewer than 1 in 10 photos were selected by an all-star jury of Canon Explorers of Light. Her winning photo, "Violin," will be displayed at the Vis Arts gallery from February 5th to March 27th Congratulations Gracie. Farquhar is proud of you.



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## Junior Volunteer Summer Program



We are now accepting applicants, age 13-18, for the 2010 Junior Volunteer Summer Program. This program will run from June 21, 2010 through August 27, 2010.

Volunteer and be involved in this summer's camps and day cares as classroom assistants, teacher's aides and more!

Learn and acquire new skills and earn SSL credit hours at the same time!

Interested individuals should visit our website at [www.arcmontmd.org](http://www.arcmontmd.org) for more information and to register for one of our orientations!

Orientations are on Saturdays: February 20, March 6, 13, 20 & 27, April 17 & 24.

The Arc of Montgomery County  
11600 Nebel Street  
Rockville, MD 20852

Phone: 301-984-5777

Fax: 301-816-2429

Email: [Volunteer@arcmontmd.org](mailto:Volunteer@arcmontmd.org)

Web: <http://www.arcmontmd.org>



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Be on the lookout for upcoming information regarding Farquhar's April 13 Science Expo!

Teachers and students are working hard to prepare projects. We look forward to seeing you there.

## **English News:**

**Farquhar's Summer Writing Class Is Now Enrolling!**



Does your child read very well but struggle with writing assignments?

Want to prepare for Advanced English 7 or 8?

Our class is designed for high level & highly motivated students who want to improve on their writing skills.

Our summer writing class, taught by Farquhar staff, will prepare each student for the writing prompts that they will see in the fall.

This course also includes creative writing, time to talk with other students about writing, and individual instruction.

Papers will be typed and saved for future reference.

Tentative Dates: July 12-30; a 3 week class.

Time: 7:45-11:30; bus transportation provided

Price: \$150-class fills quickly, sign up soon! Registration forms available in your child's English classroom.

Registration link: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/farquhars/admin/FMS%20EYP%20Registration%20Form%202008.DOC>