



MANTUA PTA NEWS

www.mantuapta.org

April 2004

Carole Thomas President's Message

Did you know that Mantua, as well as every other school in Fairfax County, has a School Improvement Plan. The School Improvement Plan is the guiding force that strives to ensure academic success for all students throughout all aspects of the curriculum. Fairfax County Public Schools and the Virginia Department of Education require schools to assess needs and collaboratively develop a School Improvement Plan to address those needs.

- In FCPS, the School Improvement Plan is considered a “living document” continuously revised with annual updates in the fall.
- Every school's improvement plan focuses on student achievement in four core areas: Math, Language Arts, History/Social Science and Science as well as any division wide strategic targets that indicate a need for improvement.
- Each plan serves to communicate improvement efforts to a variety of audiences.

Elements of continuous school improvement are noted through a reflection of our diverse school profile, a strategic plan for student learning, documentation of targeted student achievement, and a clear, compelling vision of Mantua Elementary School.

In keeping with the PTA's goal of making the PTA meetings not only an opportunity to conduct our business, but also an opportunity to educate and inform parents about school issues, Principal Jan-Marie Fernandez will provide an overview of Mantua's School Improvement Plan at the next PTA meeting on Wednesday, May 5th at 7:00 in the school library. I encourage everyone to attend this meeting to learn from your school's administrators, teachers and PTA members what is happening at your child's school.



The last Principal's Coffee of the school year will be held on Thursday,

May 13th at 9:30 a.m. at the home of Barb Suidikas at 3819 Acosta Road. The topic is Mantua facilities and how to make the most out of our tight quarters. We also hope to have the most current news about the Woodson Renovations available. For more information or to RSVP, contact Barb at 703-385-0358 or Suidi-barb@aol.com.



The whole family is invited to

Literacy Night

Thursday, April 29

from 7:00—8:00 p.m.

Come to see the “Experience, Exposure, and Expression” Mantua is creating.

Jan-Marie Fernandez, Cheryl Thompson, and Tina Tingler **Notes From the Mantua Principals' Office**

As we move into the fourth quarter, the beautiful sunny days bring an excitement and energy level to our students that make it difficult for them to stay focused. Luckily, students are able to have outside recess more frequently and have opportunities to enjoy the sunshine. But, spring also brings required state and county testing for many of our students. As we welcome a spring that feels an awful lot like summer, please remind your children of the importance of continuing to follow school rules and being respectful to all.

As the days become sunnier, longer and warmer, please remind your children that they are not to wear sandals or any kind of open-toe shoe to school. These shoes are not safe for running outside, moving around on playground equipment and for physical activity during PE class. Also, as the days become warmer, please make sure that your child does not arrive to school too scantily dressed.

This May, Standards of Learning (SOL) testing will be administered to students in third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades. Here is the test schedule:

Tuesday, May 18, 2004	Fourth Grade - Social Studies
Wednesday, May 19, 2004	Third Grade and Fifth Grade – Reading
Thursday, May 20, 2004	Third Grade English and Fifth Grade Science
Tuesday, May 25, 2004	Third Grade and Fifth Grade – Math
Wednesday, May 26, 2004	Third Grade and Sixth Grade – Social Studies
Thursday, May 27, 2004	Third Grade - Science

During April and May our ESOL students will be tested individually to determine their progress in development of their English language skills. In addition, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) will be individually administered to all first and second grade students from May 12, 2004 through June 9, 2004. This assessment documents the reading achievement of our primary students.

Here are some test preparation suggestions noted in Report to Parents, published by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP):

- **Encourage, don't pressure** – Encourage your children to do their best, but avoid putting on the pressure. Too much pressure can cause test anxiety and lead to worse, not better scores. Understand that SOL's are just one way schools measure a child's ability.
- **Put them to bed** - Sleepy children have a tough time succeeding academically. It's particularly important for your children to get a good night's sleep the night before the test. For most elementary school children, 10 hours of sleep every night is best.
- **Give them "brain food"** – Give your children a healthy breakfast the morning of a big test – and remember that good nutrition fuels brains year-round. Food high in fat or sugar doesn't provide the nutrients children need to do their best.
- **Help them prepare** – Make sure your children have the supplies they need for the test. These could range from sharpened #2 pencils with erasers to calculators and dictionaries.

As with any testing, encourage your child to do their best and help them believe that they will do well. Finally, during these last few months of school, please try and keep your children on their regular routine as much as possible. This will help your child to be well-rested for the many important activities they will be involved in during these last few months of school.



GIRL SCOUTING: A World of Friendship

Girls Scouts?

Have you ever wondered what Girl Scouts is all about? Here is your chance to find out more info! Don't miss Girl Scout Information Night at Mantua Elementary! Parents come learn about the Girl Scout program, who they are & what they do. Learn how you and your daughter can register in a troop & join in on all the fun! No daughter? No problem... You too can be involved! Join us to find out more! Mark your calendars for **Monday, May 3rd at 7:30 p.m.** in the Cafeteria. If you have any questions or want more information, contact Barbara Hinton at chevalmom@hotmail.com or (703) 385-0682.

W.T. Woodson Crew Yard Sale

Over 60 families will be participating in this year's annual yard sale, which benefits W. T. Woodson Crew. It's Saturday, June 5, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Woodson gym, rain or shine. Tax deductible donations can be dropped off at the Interstate trailer at W.T. Woodson from Wednesday, June 2 through Friday, June 4, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Donation receipts are available. This is a great way to clear out your house of those unwanted items and also help Woodson Crew. Unfortunately, crew is not county-funded, and many of the crew student athletes at Woodson (and future rowers!) live in our neighborhood. So please donate or stop by and shop on June 5th. For more information, contact Colleen Blessing at 703-425-0247.

Counselor's Corner

Looking for some parenting tips this Spring? From home, you can get interesting ideas on a daily basis by going to Mantua Elementary School's Home Page (www.fcps.edu/MantuaES/) and clicking on "Programs." Then click on "Guidance Counseling" (and read about all the interesting things that we do) until you come to a website link about "schoolsucces," then click and enjoy. There is a wide variety of topics included, from supporting your child's dreams for the future, to helping them deal with their "body image."

If you would like a "hard copy" of some interesting information to read, please visit our new PTA Parenting Library. The PTA has allocated funds for books for parents to check out, and they are now housed just inside the school library doors (to the left when you walk in.) Please stop in and look through the titles and see if there is a book that "speaks to you!"

The Woodson Coalition is also a great opportunity to get involved with other parents in community efforts focusing on keeping our students and the community healthy and drug free. Please keep an eye on the PTA Alert News for ongoing information about the Coalition activities. For more information, please contact Mantua parents, Leanne Stynchula and Jennifer Cooper, the Coalition Coordinators.

During the month of April, the K-2 students are participating in Guidance lessons on the topic of feelings. The purpose of these lessons is to help the children increase their ability to identify and verbalize their feelings, so they can reduce frustrations and communicate better with others. The 3rd grade students are reviewing many important strategies for successful test taking, in preparation for their SOLs. The 4th and 5th grade students are exploring career awareness and interests. This month, the 6th grade lessons were supplemented by visits from the Woodson High School "Power Team," a group of students who are specially trained to share information about strategies for dealing with peer pressure in middle school.



4th Annual Mantua Raccoon

5K & Mile Fun Run
Saturday, May 8, 2004
8am/830am

Sponsored by the Kids Care Club

Benefiting Fairfax Inova Hospital Life with Cancer

In memory of Roberta Romano

Register now, on line, at www.mantuapta.org--the race is just two weeks away. Volunteers on race day are always welcome. Contact Jennifer Cooper, 703-426-2490 or jalcooper@aol.com or Joyce Montgomery, 703-323-5053 to say you will help. See you and the rest of the neighborhood at the race!

KIDS CARE CLUB—A GREAT YEAR—ONE MORE PROJECT!!!!

It has been another wonderful year for the Kids Care Club. The students have done so many wonderful projects, Red Cross collection for our troops, eyeglasses for the Lion's Club and Lenscrafter's project, leaf raking for our senior neighbors, holiday baskets for two families in need, 4th annual Share to Care Talent Show for Cameron's Cause, Read Across Mantua, and the 4th annual Raccoon Run for Life with Cancer. And there's one more project to do. All year long the children have wanted to do something for our animal friends. They have decided to support the **Fairfax Animal Shelter** on West Ox Road by collecting donations of needed items. The list includes blankets and towels, animal toys, canned kitten food, kitten formula, pet food and treats, toys, leashes and collars. Your donations can be left in the box across from the office starting April 27th. The Kids Care Club will make a special delivery on May 17 to the shelter. Thanks in advance for supporting this effort. If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Cooper, 703-426-2490 jalcooper@aol.com.

WOODSON COMMUNITY COALITION

The Woodson Community Coalition (WCC) is a partnership of schools, businesses, professional communities, government agencies, religious and civic organizations, citizens, parents, and youth working together to prevent violence and substance abuse among youth in the Woodson pyramid of schools. The WCC provides information and education for parents and children on drug and violence prevention, and promotes and sponsors safe and drug-free activities for youth. It is funded by Federal grants administered by the Safe and Drug free Youth section of the FCPS and donations from members of the community.

The Coalition's goal this year has been to foster parent awareness regarding substance abuse and issues facing our student population. We initiated this effort with a Parent Agreement similar to the one in place at Frost. The agreement was well received with over 350 agreements in all. In the 2004-2005 phone directory we will “ * ” those families that have signed the agreement. In March we sponsored our first annual, Saturday Night in the Suburbs, an evening of dialogue with a panel of Woodson seniors to discuss drugs, alcohol abuse, parties and communication with parents. On April 20th, a follow up program, Truth or Consequences, was offered. A mock trial similar to the one at the Fairfax Chocolate Festival was presented followed by a panel discussion in which the realities of underage drinking and possession of alcohol were addressed. In addition, parents were made aware of the common drug and alcohol paraphernalia available to our children. For our students, an excellent MADD video/presentation is scheduled prior to the end of the year, prom, graduation and summer break.

The Woodson Community Coalition is planning its seminars and events for next year that will help educate parents on what our teens are exposed to and how to help guide them through these challenging years. We hope to be advocates that partner with you, our parents. If you have any ideas, or thoughts, on programs you would like to see, please contact the Coalition Coordinators, Jennifer Cooper at jalcooper@aol.com or 703-426-2490 or Leanne Stynchula at stynchula@cox.net or 703 273-5742. And thanks for your support.