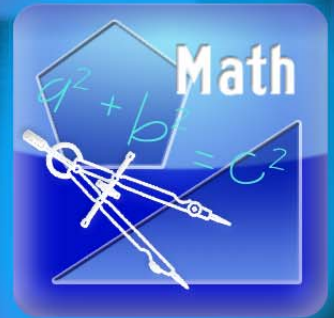
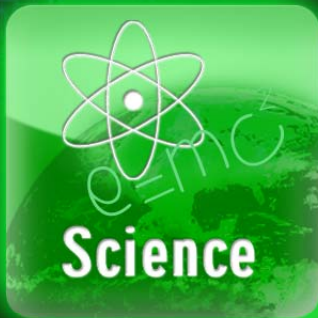


Looking to the **FUTURE**



2010-2011 Annual Report



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Photography, design and writing
(unless otherwise noted)
by: Chuck Lionberger, RCPS

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Roanoke County Public Schools
Office of Community Relations



Welcome to our 2010-2011 Annual Report!

The 2010-2011 school year was filled with plenty of success and challenges. Throughout the course of the year, we've worked hard to make sure we kept our focus on our main priority: providing excellent instruction to our students.

I'm pleased to report that in 2011, Roanoke County Public Schools again earned full accreditation through 2016 from AdvancED (formerly known as the Southern Association for Colleges and Schools - SACS). To earn this accreditation, a review team conducted a thorough analysis of every facet of our school system to evaluate our efficiency and effectiveness.

Speaking of accreditation, I'm also pleased to report that every school in Roanoke County again is fully accredited by the Virginia Department of Education and 25 out of 27 schools met the federal Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements.

We managed to overcome another significant financial challenge due to reduced state funding. Thanks in part to our partnership with the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, we were able to make cuts to our system without the need for layoffs of full-time contracted employees. We began the year with one fewer elementary school and some consolidated operations. The teachers and staff faced these challenges head-on and together we had a successful year.

At the same time, we completed renovations and expansions to four of our schools and are completing the construction of a brand new elementary school, which will open at the start of the 2011-2012 school year. The school board was quick to take advantage of the extremely competitive construction market to help these schools receive badly needed improvements.

Most importantly, I want to thank you for all your support and for giving us the opportunity to teach your children. We take this responsibility seriously. Every employee at Roanoke County Public Schools keeps one goal in mind: to provide learning for all, whatever it takes.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Lange, Ed.D.
Superintendent





David M. Wymer (Chairman) *Catawba District*

David Wymer was first elected to the Roanoke County School Board in 2007 and is serving his first term as chairman. He has served our schools for more than 30 years in many different areas including as a classroom teacher, assistant principal and associate director of testing and remediation. Wymer currently works as a PASS Coach for the VDOE working with underachieving schools to reach school accreditation.

E-mail: dwymer@rcs.k12.va.us



H. Odell "Fuzzy" Minnix (Vice-Chairman) *Cave Spring District*

A graduate of Roanoke County Public Schools, Fuzzy Minnix was a long-time member of the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, serving for 12 years, including three years as chairman. Minnix was elected to the Roanoke County School Board in 2007 and is serving his first term as chairman. He coached football, softball and track teams in Roanoke County Public Schools for 18 years.

E-mail: fminnix@rcs.k12.va.us



C. Drew Barrineau *Windsor Hills District*

Drew Barrineau first was elected to the Roanoke County School Board in 2001 and was most recently re-elected in 2009. He served as school board vice-chair in 2004 and 2008 and was named school board chairman in 2005 and 2009. Barrineau holds a bachelors degree in accounting from Virginia Tech and is a certified public accountant.

E-mail: dbarrineau@rcs.k12.va.us



Jerry L. Canada *Hollins District*

Jerry Canada has served on the Roanoke County School Board since 1992 when he was first appointed to the board. He was elected to the board in 1994 and has served as chairman four times, most recently in 2008. A native of West Virginia, Canada is a retired district manager for the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

E-mail: jcanada@rcs.k12.va.us



Michael W. Stovall *Vinton District*

Born and raised in Vinton, Mike Stovall was first elected to the Roanoke County School Board in 1994 and was re-elected in 1997, 2001, 2005 and 2009. He previously has served as school board chairman in 1997, 2001 and 2010. Stovall was named school board vice-chair in 1995 and 2000. He has worked as an investigator for the Vinton Police Department and currently owns and operates a driving instruction business.

E-mail: mstovall@rcs.k12.va.us



Lorraine S. Lange, Ed.D *Superintendent*

Dr. Lange knows every facet of Roanoke County Public Schools having worked for more than 40 years as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, content supervisor, assistant superintendent and superintendent. She was named superintendent in 2006 and in 2011 was named the Virginia Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Lange's motto for the school system is "Learning for all, whatever it takes."

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Mission Statement

The mission of Roanoke County Public Schools is to ensure quality learning experiences designed to equip all students with the skills to adapt and thrive in a changing global environment.

Beliefs & Assumptions

1. All children can learn.
2. The individual school controls enough variables to assure that virtually all children can be motivated to learn.
3. A school's stakeholders are the most qualified people to implement needed changes.
4. School-by-school change is the best hope for reform.

Focus Areas:

Instruction

Focus 1: Prepare all students, consistent with their ability and potential, to be productive citizens in a democratic and diverse society.

Focus 2: Implement instructional practices and programs that enable students to meet established standards of achievement and foster life-long learning.

Focus 3: Develop an instructional climate centered on dignity and respect.

Focus 4: Meet or exceed state and federal guidelines for student achievement.

Human Resources

Focus 5: Implement practices to support and assist teachers and support staff in the instruction of positive learning for all students.

Health and Safety

Focus 6: Seek to maintain a safe, disciplined and healthy environment that nurtures physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, and the development of social and character competencies.

Community Relations

Focus 7: Establish and maintain positive and effective communication initiatives to build an awareness of the Roanoke County Public School system.

Technology

Focus 8: Improve administration and management of student learning environments and facilitate effective communication.

Facilities and Operations

Focus 9: Supervise the construction of new facilities, update existing facilities, and oversee system upgrades to promote the educational process throughout the Roanoke County Public Schools.

Focus 10: Provide support services to the Roanoke County School system in such a manner as to meet the needs of the school community in a safe and efficient way.

Budget and Finance

Focus 11: Provide accurate and professional financial information for the use of board members, staff, and the community to make pro-active budgetary decisions, plan for future school division needs, assess past financial performance, and optimize the sharing of information.



Renovations and expansions completed at four schools

The 2010-2011 school year saw the completion of four major renovation and expansion projects in Roanoke County Public Schools.

At Cave Spring Elementary, Green Valley Elementary and Mount Pleasant Elementary, a new entrance and administrative wing was added, making room for several new classrooms. Throughout each facility, utilities and fixtures were updated and cafeteria spaces received new kitchens with all new equipment. Cave Spring and Mount Pleasant also are using geothermal heating and cooling to help cut down on utility expenses.

At William Byrd High School, crews built a new entrance and administrative wing, several new classrooms, an expanded kitchen and cafeteria space and a new auxiliary gym, locker rooms and weight lifting facility.

“I’m very thankful to the school board for their vision to undertake these projects during tight economic times,” said Superintendent Dr. Lorraine Lange. “Because of the competitive construction environment, we were able to get much more for our dollar,” Lange said.



New Mason’s Cove Elementary ready for start of 2011-2012 school year

When students enter the doors of Masons Cove Elementary for the start of the 2011-2012 school year, they will be entering a brand new school. Throughout the course of the 2010-2011 school year, crews were busy constructing an entirely new school behind the old school. Crews have completed the majority of the new school and began demolishing the old Masons Cove Elementary over the summer. When the project is finished, the old school will be the site of the new baseball field.

“This new facility is the most energy-efficient school in Roanoke County,” said School Board Chairman David Wymer. “The building will be LEED-certified, something we’re proud of,” Wymer said.



Photo by Alle Willard



Cave Spring Middle School demolition begins, construction soon to follow

The last day of school for the 2010-2011 school year also marked the last day for Cave Spring Middle School, at least the current Cave Spring Middle School. Shortly after students and staff left for the summer, demolition crews began to tear down the school built in 1956 to make way for the construction of an entirely new facility. The gym and auditorium spaces will be retained, renovated and incorporated into the new school's design.

The Roanoke County School Board awarded the \$26.8 million dollar contract to Martin Bros. Contractors of Roanoke.

As part of the new facility, a third story will be added for the west wing, while the main entrance will be moved from Brambleton Ave. to Ranchcrest Dr.

For the 2011-2012 school year, Cave Spring Middle School students will attend other schools; 6th and 7th grade students will attend Hidden Valley Middle School while 8th grade students will attend Cave Spring High School.

"We've worked with parents and staff to ensure the next school year will be as smooth as possible," said Superintendent Dr. Lorraine Lange. "The staff at Cave Spring Middle will be split between Hidden Valley Middle and Cave Spring High, so students will see many familiar faces," Lange said.

"If the weather cooperates, we are hopeful Cave Spring Middle School students will be in the new facility for the start of the 2012-2013 school year," said Dr. Lange. Construction is expected to be completed within 18 months.



Photo by Ails Willard



Image courtesy Spectrum Designs

Artist's aerial rendering of the new facility.

2010-2011 Student Enrollment / Ratios



School	Principal	Students
Cave Spring High School	Steve Spangler	823
Glenvar High School	Joe Hafey	610
Hidden Valley High School	Rhonda Stegall	1095
Northside High School	Frank Dent	991
William Byrd High School	Dr. Richard Turner	1157
Burton Center for Arts and Technology	Andrew McClung	(784*)
Cave Spring Middle School	Steven Boyer	631
Glenvar Middle School	Dr. Juliette Myers	428
Hidden Valley Middle School	Ken Nicely	769
Northside Middle School	Lori Wimbush	694
William Byrd Middle School	Janet Womack	883
Back Creek Elementary School	Karen Mabry	318
Bonsack Elementary School	Melissa Jones	447
Burlington Elementary School	Amy Shank	445
Cave Spring Elementary School	Jodi Poff	435
Clearbrook Elementary School	Karen Pendleton	232
Fort Lewis Elementary School	Kim Bradshaw	233
Glen Cove Elementary School	Jan Nichols	434
Glenvar Elementary School	Danny Guard	355
Green Valley Elementary School	Tammy Newcomb	347
Herman L. Horn Elementary School	Susan Brown	400
Mason's Cove Elementary School	Ashley McCallum	190
Mount Pleasant Elementary School	Ellen Walton	317
Mountain View Elementary School	Leigh Porter	462
Oak Grove Elementary School	Christina Flippen	540
Penn Forest Elementary School	Dr. Linda Wright	544
W.E. Cundiff Elementary School	Sherry Bryant	484
TOTAL ENROLLMENT (as of 5/31/11)		14,264

* Students attending BCAT are included in their home school's enrollment count

Enrollment figures do not include preschool classes



2010 - 2011 Standards of Learning (SOL) Results:

Figures represent the percentage of Roanoke County Public School students successfully passing the SOL test in each subject area.

Elementary Results	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
Reading	94	93	94
Writing	--	--	90
Math	96	93	95
Science	96	--	93
Social Studies/VA Studies	91	95	--

Middle School Results			
English 6	94	Math 6	85
English 7	94	Math 7	89
English 8	94	Math 8	89
Writing 8	90	Algebra 1	100
U.S. History to 1865	91	Geometry	100
U.S. History from 1865	89	Science 8	85
Civics	91		

High School credit-bearing courses	
Reading	96
Writing	97
Algebra I*	97
Algebra II	97
Geometry*	92
Earth Science	94
Biology	93
Chemistry	97
VA/U.S. History	92
World History I	94
World History II	85
World Geography	89

-- means there is no SOL test for that subject in that grade
 * includes middle school scores for the same class

2010-2011 Academic Results:

2011 average scores	SAT - Verbal	SAT - Math	SAT - Writing	ACT	AP (mean)
Roanoke County	518	523	515	23.4	3.200
Virginia	512	512	497	22.3	2.59
United States	501	516	492	21.1	2.67

- **2010* On-Time Graduation Rate: 91.2%** (Virginia average on-time graduation rate: 85.5%)
- **2011 Graduates: 1,166** - (672 Advanced Studies diplomas, 422 standard diplomas, 54 alternate diplomas)
- **More than 90.2% of graduates pursued some form of post-secondary education.**
- **1,394 students took Advanced Placement (AP) exams.**
- **1,058 students took dual-enrollment courses, earning college credit while attending a high school class.**
- **Roanoke County students earned \$7.16 million in scholarships in 2011.**
- **434 graduates successfully earned and passed an industry certification**

* - 2011 On-Time Graduation rate will be released in Fall 2011



Team Achievements:

- **BCAT engine-building team - Mid-Atlantic/Northeast region Champions**
- **BCAT Skills USA: Nine teams took state championships**
- **Bonsack Elem. Math-a-Thon team - national leaders**
- **CSHS girls swim team - State Champions (200 freestyle relay)**
- **GHS boys doubles (Tim Howard, Nick Trinchere) - State Champions (Group A)**
- **GHS boys tennis - State runner-up (Group A)**
- **HVHS girls cross country team - State Champions (Group AA)**
- **HVHS boys basketball - State runner-up (Group AA)**
- **HVHS girls track team - State Champions (Group AA)**
- **HVHS girls tennis - State Champions (repeat) (Group AA)**
- **HVHS girls doubles (Kristin Harter, Emily Seibert) - State Champions (Group AA)**
- **HVMS Destination Imagination team - State Champions and 5th place in global competition**
- **NHS baseball -- State Champions (Group AA)**
- **NHS girls softball - State runner-up (Group AA)**
- **WBHS Girls Swim Team - State Champions (200, Medley Relay)**
- **WBHS Ham Radio Club - Winner of the ARRL School Club Roundup National Championship**



State champion Northside H.S. baseball team

Photo courtesy Northside H.S.

Individual Achievements:

- **Michael Cole (CSHS) - 1st team All-State Football (Group AA)**
- **Ali Horn (CSHS) - State Swimming Champion (Group AA, 200m individual medley and 100m butterfly)**
- **Morgan Shannon and Shannon Craighead (CSHS) - 1st team All-State Volleyball (Group AA)**
- **Kristin Harter (HVHS) - State Girls Singles Champion (Group AA)**
- **Annie LeHardy (HVHS) - State Swimming Champion (Group AA, 1600m meters)**
- **Tyler Callahan (WBHS) - 90th percentile in National German Exam**
- **Kacy Edsall (WBHS) - State Swimming Champion (Group AA, 100m backstroke)**



2010 - 2011 Income	Amount	% of Total Operating Fund	Cost per Pupil
Local Appropriations (County)	\$63,543,357	49.3%	\$4,475
State Funds	\$48,648,483	37.8%	\$3,426
State Sales Tax	\$13,800,000	10.7%	\$972
Federal Funds	\$1,906,901	1.5%	\$134
Other Funds	\$923,009	0.7%	\$65
TOTAL INCOME	\$128,821,750	100.0%	\$9,072

2010 - 2011 Expenditures	Amount	% of Total Operating Fund
Classroom Instruction	\$93,810,634	72.8%
Administration	\$3,400,290	2.6%
Attendance and Health	\$2,573,484	2.0%
Pupil Transportation	\$4,760,979	3.7%
Operation and Maintenance	\$13,632,730	10.6%
Technology	\$2,945,571	2.3%
Facilities	\$196,721	0.2%
Other uses of funds	\$7,501,341	5.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$128,821,750	100%

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) has again awarded the Meritorious Budget Award to the Budget and Finance Department of Roanoke County Public Schools for excellence in the preparation and issuance of the 2010-11 annual budget.

The Meritorious Budget Award is only conferred to school systems that have met or exceeded the Meritorious Budget Award Program criteria. ASBO is a professional association of about 5,500 members that provides programs and services to promote the highest standards of school business management practices, professional growth and the effective use of educational resources.

New technology fosters new communication for special needs students

by Dr. Jessica McClung
Director of Special Education

The Roanoke County Public Schools' special education department has worked diligently to fully utilize technology in our classes, including the use of iPads and iPods for students with disabilities.

Currently, we have approximately 1200 iPads in use in our schools assisting our students with disabilities. iPads assist our students in numerous ways. To begin, the device may be used as a total communication device. In the past, we have paid in excess of \$8,000.00 for an individual communication system. Now, we are able to get the same result for \$500.00. In addition to the cost benefit, the iPads are much easier for teachers and therapists to program, they are light weight and easy for our students to handle, and they have many other apps that only add to their entire educational program.



Klaudia Francisco (left) and Kristin Saunders (right) work together with an iPad.

iPads also assist students with visual impairments by enlarging text, making it more readable and accessible. Speech therapists often use iPads with students who have articulation difficulties, a very common speech problem, by providing an instant, non-judgmental account of how the student is producing target sounds. For other children with limited language, the iPad can pair words with picture and audio in a format that is easily accessible and highly reinforcing to them.

Students also are being motivated to achieve greater developmental progress through the iPads. One student has walked farther than ever before in physical therapy to have time on the iPad. Another child with Down Syndrome can now not only listen to stories but follow along. When students with disabilities are using the iPads, they think they are playing games. What our teachers and therapists really know is that they are enhancing their learning and academic skills.

For students with other disabilities, iPads open opportunities to allow our teachers another avenue to enrich the content of our classes. We can open up the world of technology to our students for a reasonable price with a built in "cool factor." The iPad makes learning fun. There are few limitations on the iPad for teachers and students. Teaching is no longer lecturing to a class. Students must be fully and interactively engaged and iPads are one way to make this happen.

The Special Education department has been able to implement sign language opportunities for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. Currently, we are working on language translation for students who are in our special education programs who do not speak English.

Through the use of new technology, like the iPad, we're helping our students look to the future with a brighter outlook on life.



Dr. Lange named 2011 Virginia Superintendent of the Year

Dr. Lorraine S. Lange, Superintendent of Roanoke County Public Schools, was named Virginia's Superintendent of the Year at the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) annual conference. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the leaders of four Virginia education organizations selected her from among eight regional Superintendents of the Year.

In presenting her with the Virginia Superintendent of the Year Award, VASS President Philip Worrell said, "Lorraine Lange is a tech savvy superintendent who has capitalized on technology to improve instruction and reduce the socio-economic achievement gap in Roanoke County Schools." He continued, "Her bold leadership investing in technology in the face of severe budget cuts has paid off in major gains for the students and staff members in Roanoke County."

As Virginia's Superintendent of the Year Dr. Lange will be eligible for the National Superintendent of the Year Award, which will be presented in Houston, Texas next February by the American Association of School Administrators.



Dr. Lange accepts the Virginia Superintendent of the Year Award.

Photo courtesy VASS



*2011 Golden Apple Award winners and finalists
(left to right: Laurel Look, Christine Stanley, Stephen Biscotte,
Janet Barney and Steve Franco)*

Cave Spring H.S. science teacher wins 2011 Golden Apple Award

In Stephen Biscotte's classes, "the students are expected to DO science, not just KNOW science" – so says one of Mr. Biscotte's colleagues.

The Roanoke County Education Foundation selected the anatomy and physiology teacher at Cave Spring High School as the recipient of the 2011 Golden Apple Award. Among his many accomplishments, Biscotte has implemented several new instructional projects including the PIT (Physicians in Training) Crew and a new green outdoor classroom and eating area.

In addition to the Golden Apple Award, the Education Foundation also named three Golden Apple finalists, one for the elementary school level, one for the middle school level and one for the high school level. In addition, the Foundation recognizes a new teacher with the Green Apple Award. The Golden Apple finalists and Green Apple Award winners are:

- Elementary finalist: Christine Stanley - First grade teacher at Bonsack Elementary
- Middle School finalist: Laurel Look - sixth grade health and P.E. teacher at Glenvar Middle
- High School finalist: Steve Franco - Theatre Arts at Glenvar Middle and High schools
- Green Apple Winner: Janet Barney - a fourth grade teacher at Burlington Elementary School.

An Award-Winning Staff



Roanoke County Public Schools staff members earn many different awards each year. Here is just a sampling of the awards and recognition our staff have earned during the 2009-2010 school year.

- **NAMM Foundation Top Communities for Music education (8th time since 2002)**
- **VASCD Outstanding Supervisor/Curriculum Leader of the Year (Dr. Julie Myers)**
- **2011 Elementary Art Educator of the Year (Beth Campbell)**
- **2011 Roanoke Region Librarian of the Year (Heather Balsley)**
- **VSBA Green Schools Challenge - Silver Certified School Division**
- **2011 Governor's Award for Educational Excellence for the following schools**
 - Cave Spring Elementary (repeat winner)
 - Cave Spring High School (repeat winner)
 - Clearbrook Elementary
- **12 schools earned the 2011 Board of Education Excellence Award**
- **7 schools received the 2011 Board of Education Competence to Excellence Award**
- **Certificate of Achievement and Excellence in Financial Reporting**
- **2011 Digital School Districts Survey - 9th place (mid-size divisions)**
- **Distinguished Title I schools (* - repeat winners)**
 - Clearbrook Elementary*
 - Glen Cove Elementary*
 - Glenvar Elementary
 - Green Valley Elementary*
 - Masons Cove Elementary
 - Mount Pleasant Elementary*
 - Mountain View Elementary*
 - Oak Grove Elementary
- **2011 Virginia School Nutrition Awards:**
 - President's Award for Excellence: Tammy Graham (CSMS)
 - Physical & Nutrition Education Award: Kimberly Stevens (HVHS)
 - Administrator of the Year: Rhonda Huffman
 - Louise Sublette Award: Denise Farber (W.E. Cundiff Elem.)
 - Friends of the SNA-VA: Mike Brancati (CSMS)
- **For the 2010 Annual Report:**
 - PRSA-Blue Ridge Silver Summit Award
 - PRSA-Richmond Capital Award of Excellence
 - Hermes Gold Award
- **For the 2010 Graduation Live event:**
 - PRSA national Bronze Anvil Award of Commendation
 - PRSA-Blue Ridge Silver Summit Award
 - PRSA-Richmond Capital Award of Merit
 - NSPRA Golden Achievement Award
- **For Accent Excellence:**
 - Hermes Gold Award
 - Marcom Gold Award
 - Ava Gold Award
- **PRSA-Blue Ridge Silver Summit Award for Bandfest 2010**
- **Gold Hermes award for the Roanoke Co. Public Schools Web site**
- **2010 Communitas Awards for Excellence in Community Service**
 - United Way campaign
 - Pack The Bus campaign





Bonsack Elem. students top the nation in fundraising for St. Jude's Foundation

Each year students at Bonsack Elementary hold a "Math-a-Thon" to raise money for the St. Jude's Foundation. For the past two years, Bonsack Elementary students have topped the nation in total amount raised to support St. Jude's, raising about \$47,000 for the foundation just this year. A Bonsack 5th grader also raised the most money in the nation to support St. Jude's.

This year, Bonsack Math-a-Thon coordinator Joy Watson was recognized as the top Math-a-Thon coordinator in the nation by ALSAC and St. Jude. In her six years with the Math-a-Thon program at Bonsack, Watson has raised more than \$180,000.



Joy Watson (center-left) with St. Jude/ALSAC representatives and Bonsack counselor Katy Nancy (right)

Photo courtesy Katy Nancy

Education Foundation awards more than \$60,000 in scholarships to graduating seniors

The Roanoke County Public Schools Education Foundation held their annual scholarship awards presentation May 9 at Northside Middle School. In all, the Foundation awarded 84 scholarships totaling \$60,000. In addition, a special \$1000 scholarship, was awarded by RRMM Architects to a student in honor of Dr. Lorraine Lange, who recently was named the 2011 Superintendent of the Year by VASS.

"The students receiving these scholarships are outstanding young men and women who are the best of the best in Roanoke County Public Schools," said Foundation chairman Lenora Downing. "The scholarship selection committee had a very difficult time selecting the winners from many outstanding applications," Downing added.

"We would not be able to award these scholarships without the generous donations of our sponsors and individual donors," said Downing. "We very much appreciate all their support," Downing added.

Since its inception in 1991 the Roanoke County Public Schools Education Foundation has awarded more than \$1.2 million in scholarships to students and classroom teachers. Much of the funding for these scholarships comes from individual and corporate donations. To learn more about the Education Foundation, please see their Web site at <http://www.supportroanokecountyed.org>.

ROANOKE COUNTY EDUCATION FOUNDATION 2010 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Lenora Downing, *President*
National College

Doug Eggleston, *Vice-President*
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Rick Ramsuer
Kroger

Cindy Smith
Blue Ridge Copier

Jamie Soltis
Roanoke County Schools/GHS

Lew Thompson
State Farm

Tara Wiedeman
Carilion Clinic



As we get closer to the 2013 deadline when all school systems must achieve 100% on SOL assessment tests, or be labeled as a failing school division, school systems around the nation are calling for reform at the national level. Currently, elementary and middle school students only have one opportunity to pass their SOL test – essentially a “one strike and you’re out” system.



In Virginia, Roanoke County Public Schools is working with four other school systems (Albemarle, Fairfax and Henrico counties and Virginia Beach City) to lobby the Virginia Department of Education to allow each system to implement a pilot program where middle school students take English and Math SOL tests at the end of the first semester. Those students who pass the SOL test will be exempt from the end-of-year test and would have the flexibility to experience additional instruction that goes beyond the SOLs and allows students to develop and enhance critical thinking and problem solving skills – skills colleges and businesses tell us are greatly needed.

Students who do not pass the SOL the first time are given additional remediation and then have the opportunity to re-take the SOL test at the end of the second semester, similar to what currently is in place for high school students.

“Our intention is to improve the testing process, especially for our middle school students and to give our students the time to explore more rigorous and in-depth instruction. High school students already have the option to re-take SOL tests. Why? To give those students another chance to pass the test and earn credits toward graduation. We feel the same opportunities should be given to middle school students, even though they are not required to pass the SOL tests,” said Dr. Lorraine Lange.

Our students start the 2011-2012 school year with a few new changes including new start times, a new grading scale and, for secondary schools, block scheduling. All these changes are being implemented to help ensure our students receive the best education possible and will be as competitive as possible as they apply for colleges around the nation. In addition, the School Board fully has restored the one-to-one laptop initiative in our high schools, meaning all students have access to a take-home laptop for educational use.

Tomorrow's financial horizons also give us cause for concern. With the recent talk of a possible double-dip recession, the administration and the school board will keep a very close eye on the possible implications to future state funding for education. We will remain diligent in controlling spending at every level and will continue to find ways to operate more efficiently and effectively.

No matter what tomorrow's horizons bring, one thing always will remain constant: Roanoke County Public Schools is committed to ensuring quality learning experiences designed to equip all students with skills to adapt and thrive in a changing global environment – in short to provide *Learning for All, Whatever it Takes*.

iGallery - Images of the year



Cave Spring Middle School students head home for the last time before the school is rebuilt.



AFJROTC students at William Byrd High School hold a ceremonial flag retirement ceremony on Veterans Day 2010.



Dr. Richard Turner addresses the 2011 graduates of William Byrd High School.



School board chairman David Wymer (right) tours a newly constructed greenhouse at Glenvar Middle School.



A Herman L. Horn Elementary student competes in the standing jump event at the 2011 Special Olympics Little Feet Meet



Dr. Pat Wright, Va. State Superintendent, reads to students at Clearbrook Elementary.



The Northside High School state champion softball team meets Governor McDonnell.



Glen Cove Elem. students create and then fly their own kites.



Cave Spring High School students build an outdoor classroom that will use solar panels to provide power for laptops.



Nick Misa, 2nd grade student at Green Valley Elementary, catches a trout during the annual Trout Rodeo in Salem.



Maria Strzelczyk and instructor Wojciech Kopczak, from Opole, Poland, perform for students at several schools.