

January 25, 2010

Dear PTA Leaders,

As the Local Unit Liaison for the Fairfax County Council of PTAs, I will from time to time contact our local PTAs and provide them with information about happenings with PTA, training's, or in this case ask you for your help.

For years, parents and teachers in Fairfax have complained about the fact that school starts after Labor Day each year. In some years, this means school starts on the 2nd, or 3rd. In other years, school doesn't start until the 7th. When this happens, the last day of school is in late June. If we have to add snow make-up days, this even lengthens the end of school.

This year, we have a chance to make a change. There are a number of bills before the General Assembly this session on this very issue. Two bills that the FCCPTA support are SB412 (Vogel) and HB731 (Albo). The Virginia PTA strongly supports SB412 (Vogel) which gives complete control to the school divisions. Fairfax County Public Schools assisted in the writing of HB731 (Albo) which also gives control to school divisions but provides additional wording that the start could not be before the 4th week of August. Through discussion with the General Assembly in the past, it was felt that this might be the best language to gather support from key individuals.

We need your help. Please motivate your parents and teachers to write. Have your children write their own letters. Make this a PTA project for the entire school. We need thousands of emails or letters to be sent to the Senators and Delegates serving on the Education Committees (email addresses provided below).

Please send an email to all of the individuals listed below and also to your own Senator and Delegate. I've provided information below to help you with the necessary text.

- * Provide a statement showing support of Local Option for School Board to set School Calendar
- * Give a brief description about you and your family. (ages of children or grandchildren in Fairfax or other Virginia schools)
- * Discuss any impact the after labor day start has on your family or job.
- * State SB412 (Vogel) and HB731 (Albo), both provide the flexibility you want School Board to have.
- * The Virginia PTA strongly supports SB412 (Vogel) which gives complete control to the school divisions. Fairfax County Public Schools assisted in the writing of HB731 (Albo) which also gives control to school divisions but provides additional wording that the start could not be before the 4th week of August. Through discussion with the General Assembly in the past, it was felt that this might be the best language to gather support from key individuals.
- * By allowing local School Boards the option to set their own calendar, the State Board of Education will not be involved with having extra business of providing waivers to systems requiring an earlier start because of excessive snow days.

* Thank them for their attention, encourage them once again to support the elimination of the post-Labor Day requirement and give local option to set the calendar to the local School Boards.

* Provide your name, address, and phone number.

I encourage each of you to put a plan of action in place to notify your parents and teachers of this very important issue. Please copy me on your email so we have a count of the number of emails generated here in Fairfax.

I will be out of town for the next few days, but will respond to any of your questions once I return. Please direct questions to me at fairfaxparent2parent@yahoo.com or the Virginia PTA Legislation Chair, Kathy Burcher, kburcher@verizon.net.

Thank you for your assistance in making a difference for our children.

Ramona Morrow,
fairfaxparent2parent@yahoo.com

Email addresses for those needing to receive your email:

district17@senate.virginia.gov
district35@senate.virginia.gov
district18@senate.virginia.gov
district32@senate.virginia.gov
district13@senate.virginia.gov
district11@senate.virginia.gov
district23@senate.virginia.gov
district21@senate.virginia.gov
district15@senate.virginia.gov
district31@senate.virginia.gov
district14@senate.virginia.gov
district02@senate.virginia.gov
district39@senate.virginia.gov
district06@senate.virginia.gov
district01@senate.virginia.gov
DelBTata@house.virginia.gov
DelSLandes@house.virginia.gov
DelSLingamfelter@house.virginia.gov
DelTRust@house.virginia.gov

DelMCole@house.virginia.gov
DelCAthey@house.virginia.gov
DelBPogge@house.virginia.gov
DelJMassie@house.virginia.gov
DelMLoupassi@house.virginia.gov
DelTGear@house.virginia.gov
DelTGreason@house.virginia.gov
DelDBell@house.virginia.gov
DelCStolle@house.virginia.gov
DelJLeMunyon@house.virginia.gov
DelJShuler@house.virginia.gov
DelKAlexander@house.virginia.gov
DelAEbbin@house.virginia.gov
DelOWare@house.virginia.gov
DelJMcClellan@house.virginia.gov
DelRTyler@house.virginia.gov
DelDBulova@house.virginia.gov
DelJMorrissey@house.virginia.gov

Add your own Senator and Delegate if not listed above!