

ASSOCIATE

Frederick County Teachers Association

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An Interview with
Dr. Theresa Alban:
Our New Superintendent
By Gary Brennan



Dr. Theresa Alban began her tenure as FCPS Superintendent on July 1, 2011. Dr. Alban has been a special education teacher, elementary classroom teacher, G & T teacher and central office administrator. She most recently served as the Chief Operating Officer in Howard County Schools. Dr. Alban has a Ph.D. in Measurement, Statistics and Evaluation from the University of Maryland, College Park.

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Now that you have been on the job for a few months what are your first impressions of FCPS in general and the instructional staff in particular?

Dr. Alban: *The FCPS is a wonderful place to be. I have found staff members who are passionate about what they do and willing to work hard to make things better! There is a strong sense of community in the system and parents are very involved in the schools. The diversity across the county is striking, and yet everywhere I go I see a strong commitment to student success.*

The teachers I have met have been enthusiastic about the work they do. From the curriculum workshops to the new teacher orientation, the energy in the air was palpable. As I have been observing classes in various schools, I have seen teachers working to keep students engaged. There have been many teachers who are asking students to respond to higher level questions, which I think is an essential skill for teachers to have. I have also been impressed by the openness of our students, and their willingness to tell me all about what they are doing!

What are your goals for FCPS and what do you see as the role of the Superintendent in achieving these goals?

Dr. Alban: *I believe the 6 goals from the Bridge to Excellence Master Plan represent an excellent guide for our school system. Those goals provided the foundation for the goals I am asking the Board to approve for me. (If they get approved, I can send you the actual document.) Key areas within these goals that will be a focus for our system are communication, mathematics, rigor, and special education. My role as the Superintendent is to articulate the vision, understand the complexity of the tasks involved, work to ensure that staff have the resources necessary to get the tasks done, and garner community support. I have to be accessible and accountable to all of the customers we serve—students, parents, and community members.*



Dr. Alban (cont.)

One issue of great concern to FCTA members is the coming changes to teacher evaluation. What do you see as the positive opportunities in these changes and what are some of the potential problems we need to avoid as we change our evaluation system to meet new state regulations?

Dr. Alban: I hope we can truly get everyone to understand that the primary purpose for any evaluation system has to be professional growth. If we can focus on growth and improvement as the basis for the evaluation system, I believe we will have a more effective model. The biggest challenge will be trying to design the system before all of the components are available from the state. We can develop excellent tools and means to measure student growth, but we know that the state tests are going to have to be a part of any system—and I'd really like to have more understanding about those assessments as we begin, but that is not going to happen.

What do you see as the role of FCTA in the school system? Your most recent positions were in two counties, Montgomery and Howard, which are known for positive school system/association collaboration. What experience have you had working with employee unions and how might that influence labor-management relations here?

Dr. Alban: The FCTA is a partner in making the FCPS the best it can be. As a voice of the teachers, your collaboration with your fellow union colleagues and school system leadership is an essential component to moving the system forward. As you noted, I have had very positive experiences with unions in both MCPS and HCPSS. In MCPS, I was an evaluator of the pilot of the Professional Growth System that was being jointly developed by the union and the school system. I attended the trainings and surveyed the participants. It was an amazing program and I think we are on a path that could lead us in a similar direction. In HCPSS, I served on the negotiating team and also as a senior leader met regularly with the union representatives. I have seen the importance of ongoing dialogue so that you can deal with issues as they emerge rather than trying to handle major problems at a later time. In HCPSS, I was also the Superintendent's designee for the appeals of non-certificated staff. That was an incredible learning experience for me. I quickly learned the importance of a good relationship with the union representative so that we approached those appeals with mutual respect and integrity. So, as I begin to work with new union leadership here, I want to emphasize collaboration, dialogue, integrity, respect, and a commitment to growth and improvement.

Tell us a little about your experiences as a teacher. What did you learn in that role that still guides you as a school system leader?

*Dr. Alban: I spent 15 years as a classroom teacher. I started in special education center for one year and then moved as a special education teacher to a middle school level. I moved to elementary school where I taught "regular" first grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade. My final classroom experience was as a Gifted and Talented math/science middle school teacher at a technology magnet school. When I left the classroom, I moved into a Central Office position for Professional Development Schools, where I had the opportunity to teach methods courses for elementary preservice teachers. And of course, working in the Professional Development office, I also had many opportunities to teach adults. Your question intrigues me because **everything** I learned as a teacher I use as a leader. I once told someone that I think teachers make the best leaders because of all that is required to be a successful teacher. He replied, "That is because the best leaders are teachers." I think he was right.*

Is there anything else you would like FCTA members to know about you?

Dr. Alban: I want FCTA members to know that I believe leadership is about service. My job is to serve them and to do that well, I need to hear from them. I hope they will welcome me into their classrooms and share their experiences with me. I hope they will participate in the "Talks with Teachers" to be sure their voice is heard. I also want FCTA members to celebrate the wonderful accomplishments that FCPS students have made. The achievement of our students as our population grew more diverse and poverty increased is truly impressive. It shows what an incredible teaching staff we have. There is still much to be done, but I believe we have a great team and that we are up to the challenge!

What Has FCTA Done For You Lately?

- ✓ Through the work of the FCPS Insurance Council, made up of union and management representatives, employee out of pocket expenses for health, pharmacy, dental and life insurance have not increased in 4 years. FCPS employees are paying the same out of pocket expense for benefits in 2011 as they did in 2007. In fact in the 2009-10 school year employees receiving benefits through FCPS received a refund from the surplus built up in the self-insurance fund.
- ✓ The Insurance Council created the “Employee-plus-One” tier which lowered the premium paid by FCPS employees who only cover themselves and one dependent. Rates for those with more than one dependant have remained the same.
- ✓ Insurance coverage for same-sex domestic partners was successfully bargained and is now in the negotiated agreement.
- ✓ An additional personal day for teachers was negotiated.
- ✓ Despite threats from both the County Commissioners and the BOE, no furlough days or pay cuts have been imposed on teachers.
- ✓ Successfully fought to maintain class size. Increases to class size mean fewer teachers and the possible implementation of lay-offs.
- ✓ Convinced the Board to pay a 1.5% “pay supplement” this year to help cover the cost of the increase in employee contributions to the state pension system.
- ✓ We also continue to represent many members in performance and disciplinary disputes with administration, ensuring that FCTA members are treated fairly and in compliance with the contract.

Are You On The List???

Are you on FCTA's email distribution list? FCTA is trying to go green and will be sending future news letters, surveys and other communications electronically. Please send or update any changes to your personal and/or FCPS email address to rjones@mseanea.org



Strength In Numbers

Know a Non-member? Sign Them Up!

At almost 90% FCTA has one of the highest membership rates in Maryland. The teachers of Frederick County know that when we stick together and work for the common good it benefits all educators and our students.

Do you know someone on your team, in your department or down the hall who is not a member? Take the time to invite them to join and be a part of the most active professional association in Frederick County. Remind them that FCTA represents all teachers, guidance counselors, media specialists, teacher specialists, speech and language pathologists, therapists, social workers and athletic directors in Frederick County in contract negotiations and enforcement. All FCPS teachers should be a part of FCTA and a personal invitation from a colleague like you may be just what a non-member is waiting for.

2011 MSEA Convention

OCTOBER 21-22 OCEAN CITY

Exhibits
Workshops
Business

New events, activities highlight MSEA Convention 2011!

There's a lot going on in public education right now. Maryland's 2011 TELL Survey reports that progress is being made in many counties, but as the economy continues to struggle, education funding issues remain a big concern, changes to evaluations are already happening in some counties, and educators are facing pressing challenges in the classroom as demographics continue to shift and local resources shrink.

"With such important and far-reaching challenges facing us, I hope that our members will take this opportunity to connect with MSEA and fellow members," said Clara Floyd, MSEA president. "Our goal is to inform and activate members so that they, with the support of MSEA's strong organization, can help guide policymakers to sound decisions."

This year's MSEA Convention features two special events on Friday afternoon at the Convention Center. Don't miss *Race to Nowhere*, an award-winning film about school culture and the state of education, on Friday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. Director Vicki Abeles will lead a discussion about the film and how to enrich the dialogue on education. Reserve a free ticket at <http://rtnmsea.eventbrite.com> for what *The New York Times* called a "must-see movie!"

Friday afternoon at 1:00 p.m. there will be a panel presentation with top officials from the Maryland State Department of Education sharing information and answering questions about how changes to tenure, certification, and evaluation will affect you. Interim state superintendent Bernie Sadusky will bring greetings.

Ready to go? Here's a quick Q&A for the basics. See you there!

For details, including special events, workshop descriptions, hotel discount information, and more, visit www.marylandeducators.org/convention

I'm not a delegate. Can I attend the MSEA Convention? Absolutely! Mark your calendar today for October 21-22.

What are the convention hours? Workshops run on Friday: 8:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m. and Saturday: 8:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m. Special events, located on the second floor of the Convention Center and in the RA hall, follow the Friday workshop schedule. The exhibit halls are open Friday: 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and Saturday: 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Is it really free?

Yes!

What activities can I attend as a non-delegate?

Visit all of the exhibits located throughout the first floor of the Convention Center, including professional education exhibits, the annual health fair, and the all-member trade show. You can attend any of the professional development workshops and the Friday afternoon special events.

*View the schedule at the end of this newsletter

BOE Election in 2012 – Why Should You Care?

Did you know that in November of 2012, besides electing the President of the United States, Frederick County voters will be electing 3 members to the 7 member Board of Education? The three seats to be elected are currently held by **Donna Crook, Angie Fish and Katie Groth** (Ms. Fish and Ms. Groth were both FCTA recommended candidates in 2008). Why should this matter to you?

Answer the following questions:

- ✓ Who decides what materials of instruction such as books and multi-media resources can be used in our classrooms?
- ✓ Who decides what elective courses we offer in Frederick County Public Schools?
- ✓ Who decides if a charter school application will be accepted or denied?
- ✓ Who approves the FCPS Operating Budget and what will and will not be funded during the school year?

The Board of Education decides many issues that affect the education of the children of Frederick County. They also set the management teams goals and parameters for negotiations. Ultimately they vote to accept or reject our contract.

The BOE election is the most important election of 2012 for you, your students and your school. Please get involved! More information to come!

2011-12 FCTA Governance

Officers:

Gary Brennan, *President*, FCTA Office
gbrennan@mseanea.org

Missy Dirks, *Vice President*, Brunswick Elem.
Patty Madert, *Treasurer*, Kempton Elementary
Shirley McDonald, *Secretary*, Windsor Knolls MS

Board of Directors:

Glenn Blanchard, Tuscarora High
Kathleen Carmack, Gov. TJ High
Jessica Fitzwater, Oakdale Elementary
Paul Guerin, Hillcrest Elementary
Justin Heid, Walkersville Elementary
Gary Kaetzel, New Market Middle
Mel Kidd, Walkersville Middle
Elizabeth Paul, Heather Ridge School
Robin Shortall, Urbana High

2011-12 FCTA Staff

Staff:

John Gates, *MSEA UniServ Director*
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Marsha Meekins, *MSEA UniServ Director*
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Rogene Jones, *Office Manager*
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Holly Changuris, *Receptionist*
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Become a fan of FCTA on Facebook. Find out about upcoming FCTA events by doing something you do everyday --- just logging into your FB account. Search "Frederick County Teachers Association" Then click on the "Become a fan button".

Annual Membership Picnic Highlights



Members Heather Dapsauski (TJ High) and Jessica Fitzwater (Oakdale Elementary) man the 50/50 Raffle at the FCTA/FASSE/FCASA Member Picnic on September 16.



FCTA, FASSE and FCASA members and their families turned out for the annual Fall Picnic and had a great time catching up with colleagues and friends.*

Thanks to the Following FCPS Benefit Vendors who attended the picnic and provided door prizes for our members!

Sandra Clemons Butler – **Aplus NEA members Auto and Home Insurance Program**

James Germaux – **VALIC**

Bob Lockhoff - **Wells Fargo Home Mortgage**

Raynard Scott – **Horace Mann**

Keith Prather – **Met Life**

Joe Crow – **Turning Point Benefit Group**

Harry Swope – **Hershot Financial Group/Lincoln Investments**

Jeffrey Wheeler – **ING Financial Advisors**

DamionDengler (et al) – **Security Benefit**

Mike Markowitz – **Long Term Care – Financial Partners**

Special Thanks to Security Benefit who also provided the beer for the picnic!

*To See More Pictures from the Picnic or other FCTA events go to www.myfcta.org

2011 MSEA Convention

OCTOBER 21-22 OCEAN CITY

Exhibits Workshops Business



Workshop descriptions and presenter biographies are available on the MSEA website.

www.marylandeducators.org/convention

MSEA CONVENTION WORKSHOPS 2011

FRIDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 21, 2011			FRIDAY 1:00 p.m. 2 ND FLOOR Ballroom	SATURDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 22, 2011		
	8:30 – 10:00	10:15 –11:45			8:30 – 10:00	10:15 –11:45
Room 201 Skills for ESP	Coping With Difficult Personalities <i>Veronica Henderson</i>	Math Facts Made Easy as 1, 2, 3 <i>Mary Beth Cuddy</i>	WORKSHOP: Changes in Certification, Tenure & Evaluation	Room 201 Skills for ESP	What's Your Body Saying? Non-verbal Communication <i>Wanda Newman</i>	Get Up & Learn Grammar – An active Way for Students to Learn English Grammar <i>Angela Malicki</i>
Room 202 New Teachers	Fun & Creative Hands-on Games and Activities for All Learners <i>Pamela Mesta</i>	Tips for New Teachers <i>Linda Civetti Vivian Cade</i>		Room 202 New Teachers	Current Adolescent Drug Use <i>Kim Henson</i>	The Terrific Trio: Enhancing Relationships for Student Success <i>Rosemarv Garr</i>
Room 203 21st Century Skills	Why You Could be Replaced by a Computer & Why You Won't Be <i>Bruce Taylor, ASCD</i>			Room 203 21st Century Skills	Interactive Technology for Every Classroom <i>Pamela Mesta</i>	Back to the Future: Bringing Back-to-School Activities from the Past to the 21 st Century <i>Tia Simmons Joy Claud</i>
Room 204 Technology	Screencast-O-Matic as Easy as 1, 2, 3 <i>Laura Brown</i>	The UDL Real World: My Classroom Experience with Universal Design for Learning <i>Jon Mundorf</i>		Room 204 Teacher Evaluation	The Role of Professional Development in Teacher Effectiveness and Evaluation Within the Current Landscape <i>Linda Davin, NEA</i>	
Room 205 Reading, Writing and Literacy	Hands-On Help: Using American Sign Language & Manipulatives in Your Classroom <i>Dr. Judy Sherman, Dr. Ellen Koitz Casey Day-Kells</i>	Monitoring Students' Progress in Writing <i>Dr. Christina Yuknis Dr. RaschelleTheoharis</i>		Room 205 Reading, Writing and Literacy	Restoring Respectable Classroom Behavior <i>Andrea Billingsley Whitfield</i>	Word Warm-ups: Quick Exercises for Word Mastery <i>Debby Mossburg</i>
Room 206 It's Your Life	Staying In the Classroom & Out of the Courtroom: A Look at Legal Issues from the Perspective of a Public School Employee <i>Damon Felton, Esq.</i>	More Month than Money? Understanding Personal Financial Management <i>Michael Gavin, NEA MB</i>		Room 206 It's Your Life	Online Learning for Your Life <i>Dr. Barbara Frank, NEA Ann Smith, NEA MB</i>	Protecting Assets & Healthcare Choices – 2.0 <i>Michael Markowitz, LTC Financial</i>
Room 208 Closing the Achievement Gaps/ Cultural Competency	Bridging the Gap Through ARTS Integration <i>Pat Cruz</i>	Creative Strategies to Reach Urban Youth in the Classroom <i>Dr. Carmen White Lennie Smith</i>		Room 208 Closing the Achievement Gaps/ Cultural Competency	K-12 Classroom Bias: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly <i>Phyllis Lerner</i>	Building Cultural Competence <i>Carolyn Gibson, Kim Bishop</i>
Room 209 ELL	English Language Learners: Culture, Equity & Language Training Module (Part I) <i>Géraldine Duval, Dr. Sandra Duval, Patricia Previdi</i>			Room 209 ELL	English Language Learners: Culture, Equity & Language Training Module (Part I continued) <i>Géraldine Duval, Dr. Sandra Duval, Patricia Previdi</i>	
Room 215 Classroom Management	Good Behavior Game: A Classroom Behavior Management Strategy <i>Dr. LadanRahnema Judi Littman</i>	Refocusing Discipline: A Principal's Guide to Creating Time to Teach <i>Ryan Jeffery</i>		Room 215 Classroom Management	Classroom Management Through the Integration of a Youth Development Approach <i>Thandor Miller Syreeta Evans</i>	Bullies & Victims in Public Schools: Students, Parents, Co-workers & Bosses <i>Dr. James McCleafe</i>