



Prince George's County Board of Education
14201 School Lane • Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772 • www.pgcps.org

June 3, 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian:

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The Prince George's County Board of Education is encouraging families to be prepared for the national switch from analog to digital television. By February 17, 2009, the Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) cable television station aired on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon Channel 38 will begin digital broadcasting. This conversion from analog to digital broadcasting is known nationally as the digital television (DTV) transition.

It was mandated last year by Congress to free up frequencies for public safety communications – such as police, fire, and emergency rescue. It will also provide a more efficient transmission technology with improved picture and sound quality, more programming options for consumers, and more frequencies available for use in commercial wireless services.

Free, over-the-air television programming will be impacted by this change, since the new digital signal cannot be received through a rooftop antenna or traditional “rabbit ears.” Because the PGCPS television station is only accessible through cable or satellite services, viewers of Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon Channel 38 will be able to view the new digital broadcasting through either analog or digital television sets with equipment currently supplied by their service provider.

Families who do not wish to subscribe to pay cable or satellite services, but who currently watch network news for important updates on school closings due to inclement weather and other emergencies, will need to either purchase a converter box or new television with a digital tuner by the February 17, 2009 conversion date. The government is currently providing two \$40 coupons per family to help purchase converter boxes, which easily plug directly into your television. Supplies are limited; to get the coupons, call 1-888-DTV-2009 or go online to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Web site at www.dtv2009.gov. Coupons are good for 90 days from date of issue, and are available until March 31, 2009.

For more information on the DTV transition, you can also visit the Federal Communications Commission Web site at www.dtv.gov.

Sincerely,

Verjeana M. Jacobs, Esq.
Board Chair