

# Neighborhood News

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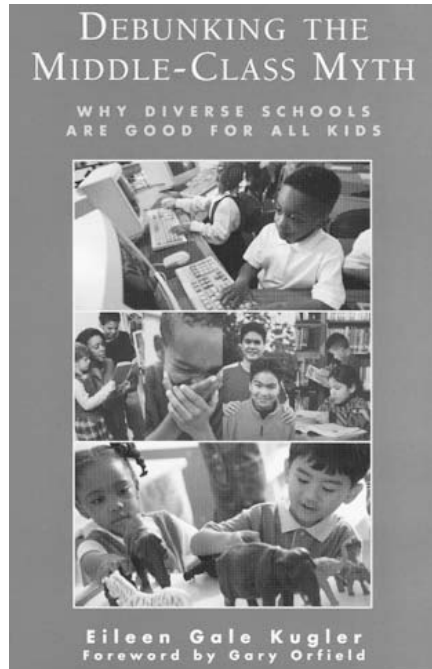
## FANS Highlight Resources for Parents

At their June 20 meeting, FANS (Fairlington Advocates for Neighborhood Schools) distributed copies of the book "Debunking the Middle-Class Myth: Why Diverse Schools are Good for All Kids" (Scarecrow Education Press, 2003).

The author, Eileen Gale Kugler, is a white, middle-class woman whose children attended one of the most diverse high schools in Fairfax County, Annandale High School. Kugler identifies seven myths that often cause parents to shy away from such schools. She then takes apart each misunderstanding with first-hand experience and examples from successful diverse schools across the country.

For instance:

Myth #1: The best school for my child is the one with the highest standardized test scores. "The biggest problem with using test scores to choose a school," Kugler says, "is that average scores don't have any significance for how an individual child will score." In fact, the *Washington Post* analyzed test scores in Montgomery County and found that children from middle-class backgrounds consistently scored very high on reading and math tests, regardless of whether they were in schools with high concentrations of low-income students.



Kugler's book is serving as a resource for FANS members and the community. Book jacket image courtesy of Amy Suardi.



Nevertheless, Kugler argues, you can't get much insight into a school from statistics found on the Internet. To learn what a school is really like, Kugler says, "You need to talk to teachers and administrators about what is valued. You need to talk to parents whose kids are there today (not a mother whose son graduated in 1980, or a father whose daughter goes to a different school). You need to talk to students about what they learn from other students, in addition to their teachers. [...] And most of all, you need to walk the halls of the school."

One of the goals of FANS is to connect prospective parents and kids with current parents and their Abingdon students. FANS can also arrange for tours and mini-orientations with the school's principal and teachers.

Debunking the Middle-Class Myth is a great resource for any parent who is considering a diverse school, or who is searching for the language or evidence to back up his or her instincts. The book is available on Amazon or from [www.embracediverseschools.com](http://www.embracediverseschools.com) for \$24.95. FANS also has several lending copies available. For more information, please contact FANS at 703-820-0656 (Amy) or [fans@fastmail.net](mailto:fans@fastmail.net).

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