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Middle school principal to step down

Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School Principal Rochelle Friedman announced publicly, today, that after this school year, she will not return. In a letter sent home to middle school parents, the 33-year education veteran explained that her decision is health-related.

“A few years ago, I was diagnosed with a chronic medical condition,” Friedman said. “While it is not a life-threatening condition, some days present a challenge. As a result, I have reassessed my priorities and have requested and been granted long-term medical leave. This has been a difficult decision, but one that I think is in the best interest of our school community.”

Dr. Friedman began working in the Falls Church City Public Schools 14 years ago when she became Principal of what was then George Mason Middle School. Under her leadership, the school earned the distinction of being named a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education. She also led the planning process for the grades 5 through 7 program at what is now Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School, and she is a recipient of the Frank E. Flora Lamp of Knowledge Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions to the field of public education in the commonwealth.

“My years in Falls Church have been among my most rewarding in education,” Friedman said. “I have had the great privilege of working with incredibly talented teachers in a very supportive community.”

Prior to her service in Falls Church, Dr. Friedman served in various leadership positions in the Albemarle County/Charlottesville City, Virginia Public Schools where she served as principal of Murray High school, which became the first non-traditional accredited high school in the commonwealth. She also served as a classroom teacher/department head in the Broward County, Florida Public Schools, and as a classroom teacher in the Buffalo, New York Public Schools. She has also served as an adjunct professor at the University of Virginia, Louisiana State University and at Nova University in Florida.

Because transitions are difficult this time of year, Dr. Friedman said she is committed to serving as Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School principal through the end of this school year. Her long-term medical leave begins July 1, 2006.

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