



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Schools, offices closed

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) schools and offices are closed Monday, Jan. 20 in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. Schools are closed for students only on Jan. 21 for semester break.

Polar Plunge set Jan. 23

The Special Olympics Polar Plunge is Jan. 23 at Sandy Point Park in Anne Arundel County. The Maryland State Police tradition of plunging in the Chesapeake Bay raises money for Special Olympics Maryland. CCPS students and staff take part in the Cool Schools program of the fundraiser. Go to <https://plungemd.com/> for more information.

Robotics volunteers sought

Volunteers are needed for Feb. 1 and 15 VEX Robotics events set to take place at Theodore G. Davis Middle School. Interested volunteers can sign up by completing an online application. There is one application per each event, as volunteer shifts and need differ by event. Volunteers must be 16 or older and will receive lunch, training and a volunteer certificate. Volunteer duties do not include the direct supervision of children. For more information and to find links to sign up online, go to <https://tinyurl.com/tnwnv7t>.

Budget hearing set

The Board of Education has scheduled a public hearing on the Superintendent's proposed budget on Jan. 27, 6 p.m., at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata. A budget work session will immediately follow the public hearing. The budget proposal is available at <https://www.ccboe.com/index.php/budget>. Read more about the proposed budget on Page 2.



Taking control at Girl Powered

C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School fourth graders, Ariana Gonzalez, left, and Brooklyn Cannon, maneuver a robot through an obstacle course during Girl Powered, a robotics and programming workshop held Jan. 4 at North Point High School. Read more about at www.ccboe.com.

Winter (Guard) is here. High schoolers form group



La Plata High School freshman Lana Stevens practices during a meeting of the Charles County Public Schools Winter Guard.

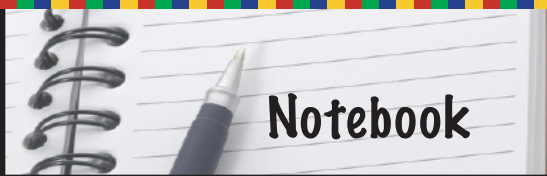
Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) students come from five high schools to make up a team for winter guard, an indoor activity that combines choreography and props to tell a story or convey a theme.

Simply put, "You have probably seen a color guard perform with a marching band before, winter guard is the same, just without the band," said Alyssa Engle, a computer science and engineering Project Lead the Way teacher at Westlake and artistic director of the winter guard.

Sixteen high school students — eight from La Plata, two from Maurice J. McDonough, two from North Point, one from St. Charles and three from Thomas Stone — make up the CCPS Winter Guard, with only six having prior experience as members of their school's color guards.

For three years, Engle has been a color guard instructor at La Plata, St. Charles and

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On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees honored by the Board of Education at its January meeting. From left are Leslie Schroeck, resource teacher, La Plata High School; Barbara Brandau, special education teacher, Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School; and Shanelle Savoy, technology facilitator, Eva Turner Elementary School.

U.S. Navy band at Lackey

Henry E. Lackey High School is hosting the U.S. Navy Band jazz ensemble, Commodores, 7 p.m. Feb. 6 at the school. Admission is free.

A cappella quarterfinals set

CCPS high school singers will take the stage 7 p.m. Feb. 22 at St. Charles High School. A cappella groups from metro-area high schools will compete in the Mid-Atlantic quarterfinals including groups from Maurice J. McDonough, North Point, St. Charles and Thomas Stone high schools. Go to <https://tinyurl.com/wvfbu3s> for tickets and <https://tinyurl.com/uqvrte> for more information.

Scholarship Fund open

The Charles County Scholarship Fund has more than 50 scholarships for Charles County seniors. Application requirements include a resume, personal statement that details academic and career goals, two letters of recommendation, a high school transcript and a copy of the first semester senior year report card. The application window is open through March 1. Go to <https://www.ccboe.com/ss/charles-county-scholarship-fund-inc/>.

ESFCU educator award

The Support Education Foundation of Educational Systems Federal Credit Union (ESFCU) awards administrators, support staff and teachers funding to support professional development. The Maurice Erly Professional Development Award is a one-time \$1,000 award that can be used toward continuing education fees, workshop registrations, certification fees and tuition. Applicants must be ESFCU members. The application is available online here. Deadline to apply is April 1. Click the application link for more details.

In Memoriam Carrie Bier

June 20, 1955-Jan. 2, 2020

Carrie Bier, a family and consumer science teacher at St. Charles High School, passed away suddenly on Jan. 2, 2020.

She began her career with Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) in 2014 and was hired to help open St. Charles.

During her time at St. Charles, Bier taught with the Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM) program, oversaw the Kiddie Junction pre-school program and served as sponsor of the Educators Rising club.

Additionally, Bier organized the annual Hallow-Spartan-Ween safe trick-or-treat event for the school community.

Prior to joining CCPS, Bier was a family and consumer science teacher



Carrie Bier

with East Stroudsburg Area School District in Pennsylvania for four years.

She also taught with Essex County Public Schools in Pennsylvania for two years, and oversaw the school-to-work program at Monroe Career and Technical Institute in Bartonsville, Pa., for eight

years. Bier earned her master's degree in marketing education from Temple University in 2003. She also had a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology and art from the College of New Jersey.

Bier is survived by her husband and two sons. A family service was held in Florida last week.

Superintendent proposes FY20 budget

Salary increases, a comprehensive elementary reading program, and additional mental health and student support programs are among Superintendent Kimberly A. Hill's top priorities in a \$411 million budget proposal submitted to the Board of Education on Jan. 14.

Hill's proposal includes a \$17.9 million, or 4.6 percent increase, that focuses on students, classrooms and schools, and adds teachers to support a growing student population. The budget requests \$12.1 million in additional funding from the county and \$6.9 million from the state. State funding will not be final until the end of the Maryland General Assembly's legislative session in April.

There is \$8.8 million in reserve for collective bargaining, including salary increases and competitive teacher salaries to help with teacher retention. Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) negotiates with two employee groups — the Education Association of Charles County (EACC) and the American Federation of

State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) — between January and April. The proposal also includes implementation of the State's minimum wage increase.

"Charles County Public Schools is a people business. The majority of CCPS revenue — 81 percent — goes to salaries and benefits for employees. Over the past two years, with the backing of the Board of Education and funding from the Charles County Commissioners and the State, we have been able to make our starting salary for beginning teachers competitive, restore back STEPs for employees, and adjust our certificated salary scales to help with teacher retention," Hill said.

A public hearing on the Superintendent's proposed budget is Jan. 27, 6 p.m., at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata.

The budget proposal is available at <https://www.ccboe.com/index.php/budget>.

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Thomas Stone. The position helps her network and develop relationships with high school band directors. Kate Sellers, the group's administrative director, is the band director at La Plata and Scott Shuttleworth, an instructor with the guard, is Westlake's band director. McKenna Whalen, a 2019 La Plata graduate, rounds out the staff, as the group's choreographer.

When the idea of a county-wide winter guard surfaced, band directors promoted it through their respective music programs. The group was open to anyone who wants to give it a go. "There were no tryouts," Engle said. "If you are dedicated to learning something new, you are welcomed on the team."

Valente Ortiz, a North Point senior, learned about winter guard from his band director. A saxophone player, Ortiz plans to study music education at Towson University in hopes of becoming a band director. Learning about all facets of directing a band appeals to him. Plus, "I wanted to experience something different," Ortiz said. "It's a personal challenge."

While she's a dancer and involved in the performing arts at St. Charles, junior Lisa Fleet has found winter guard a new challenge. "It's a great opportunity for me to explore a new thing," she said. The sport requires a different set of skills. "It's dance, it shouldn't be too hard," Fleet said. "But it is."

Members perform choreography and use flags, wooden rifles and sabers, along with other props to convey a theme to a panel of judges. The CCPS group's show is called "Dignity & Honor" and uses the songs "Reflection" and "I'll Make a Man Out of You" from "Mulan," the 1998 Disney animated feature. The theme came from Engle's need to exert the team's sense of strength and a request from Sellers that the



Dani Bailey, a Thomas Stone High School senior, practices choreography during a rehearsal for the Charles County Public Schools Winter Guard. Teachers Alyssa Engle, Scott Shuttleworth and Kate Sellers lead the group of students from five CCPS high schools.

group shows its sensitive side.

Winter guard is not a new activity in the county — groups have existed in the past at La Plata and Westlake high schools — but this the first time a multi-school group has been established, Engle said.

The winter guard practices twice a week, with extra sessions on Saturdays as needed. The group is preparing for competitions next month held on the Atlantic Indoor Association Guard circuit with three regular season competitions and a championship competition in March.

CCPS staff visits Japan to celebrate 30-year partnership with Bunkyo Univ.

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) was represented by Kimberly Hairston, director of equity and diversity, Margo Champion Alam, instructional specialist for staff development and Eriko Meneses, a CCPS parent, when the three traveled to the suburbs of Tokyo to celebrate the 30-year partnership of CCPS and Bunkyo University.

While on the trip from Nov. 26 to 29, they met with the president of the university, the dean of education and the director of the Bunkyo-U.S. teacher training program, as well as professors who support the students in Japan and when they travel to America. Meneses, a long-time host to Bunkyo students who visit Charles County, served as an interpreter for Alam and Hairston.

Highlights of the visit included the 45-minute forum where Hairston and Alam presented to Bunkyo students and staff about why embracing diversity in schools is necessary. The students were presented with methods they can use to support a diverse classroom learning environment. Keynote speakers at 30th anniversary forum, Hairston and Alam met with students who will travel to the States in February. During the meeting, they were able to review the students' lessons, offer feedback and commendations.

The trip would not have been complete without visits to Japanese schools. It was exam time for the secondary schools, however Alam, Hairston and Meneses were able to observe and interact with students



Pictured from left are Steve Fukuda, Bunkyo University associate professor; Kenji Kondo, president of Bunkyo University; Kimberly Hairston, director of equity and diversity for Charles County Public Schools; Margo Alam, instructional specialist for staff development with CCPS; Masahiro Teshima, Bunkyo professor; Masahiko Idei, Bunkyo dean of education; Eriko Meneses, a parent of a CCPS student and interpreter; and Masanobu Sato, Bunkyo professor.

in two elementary schools with students in first through sixth grades. Japan is in the process of requiring all schools to teach English as a second language, so many students were enthusiastic to practice their English skills with Alam and Hairston.

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Everyday superheroes are a marvel at Somers

Staff members at Milton M. Somers Middle School recently got into the spirit of things and dressed in superhero-theme shirts and outfits.

Submitted by Somers' PR liaison Nicole Smith

Getting to know you

Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School holds Friday morning meetings for new teachers. At a recent meeting, teachers and staff participated in a restorative circle exercise to learn more about each other. From left are Thomas Mazor, second-grade teacher, William Bennett, fifth-grade teacher and Joya Sutton, reading recovery teacher.

Submitted by Brown's PR liaison Yvette Rosas



Personnel

Apply for positions online at www.ccboe.com/jobs/currentopenings.php. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Special Education Teacher EA Program — St. Charles High School, 10-month position. Apply by Feb. 28.
Language Arts Teacher — All middle schools, 10-month position. Apply by March 27.
Mathematics Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by March 27.
Physical Education Teacher — Location to be determined. 10-month position. Apply by March 27.

Science Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by March 27.

Social Studies Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by March 27.

Technology Education Teacher — North Point High School, 10-month position. Apply

by March 30.

English Teacher — All high schools, 10-month position. Apply by March 31.

ESOL Teachers — All schools, 10-month position. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree and meet certification requirements as established by the Maryland State Department of Education for certification in English for Speakers of Other Languages. Position open until filled.

Food Service Assistant Manager (6 hours) — All schools, 10-month position. A high school diploma or the equivalent is required. A minimum of three years of experience in food service preferred. Must be ServeSafe certified within 12 months of taking the job. Position open until filled.

Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Cloud system administrator — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Bachelor's degree in information

technology, computer science, business management or a related field is required with a master's degree preferred. Position open until filled.

Prekindergarten Title I Instructional Assistant — All Title I elementary schools, 10-month position. The ability to work in an instructional support role with pre-kindergarten children is required. Position open until filled.

Special Education Instructional Assistant — F.B. Gwynn Educational Center, 10-month position. Position open until filled.

Technology Facilitator — All elementary schools, 10-month position. A high school diploma, along with an associate of arts degree or passing the ParaPro Assessment, are required. Understanding of Microsoft Office Suite and instructional software, and the ability to learn new software programs are a must. Position open until filled.