



Charles County Public Schools

School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Bilingual story time

Take the time for a story with the ESOL Bilingual Story Time. Stories for the youngest Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) learners are read in both English and Spanish. To start watching, [click here](#).

Graduation 2021 plans

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) will [celebrate the Class of 2021](#) during in-person graduation ceremonies at Regency Furniture Stadium from May 28 to June 3.

COVID-19 safety guidelines, mask wearing and social distancing measures will be in place for the ceremonies, and tickets for families are limited to three per graduate.

As in previous school years, all CCPS high school graduation ceremonies will stream live to the school system's YouTube channel and at [ccboe.com](#). The graduation schedule is:

- Friday, May 28 — **St. Charles High School**, 9 a.m.
- Tuesday, June 1 — **Westlake High School**, 9 a.m.
- Tuesday, June 1 — **Henry E. Lackey High School**, 1 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 2 — **Thomas Stone High School**, 9 a.m.
- Wednesday, June 2 — **La Plata High School**, 1 p.m.
- Thursday, June 3 — **Maurice J. McDonough High School**, 9 a.m.
- Thursday, June 3 — **North Point High School**, 1 p.m.

CCPS has the approval of Charles County Health Officer Dr. Dianna Abney to host in-person graduation ceremonies at the stadium.

However, Abney has the authority to revoke her approval for CCPS to hold large gatherings based on COVID-19 positivity rates.



Swing into spring

T.C. Martin Elementary School third grader Aubree Lydon, enjoys warmer temperatures and sunshine at recess.

Dr. Craik's Eaton is 2021 CCPS Teacher of the Year

In a world of hybrid teaching, Alexis Eaton is rocking it with her fourth graders. Like most Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) teachers, Eaton has some students in-person at school and some in the online virtual classroom. Eaton is almost always on her feet, navigating her desk and camera set up, moving around her classroom and making sure her students are having fun while learning. She challenges them to take ownership of their success while encouraging them to put forth their best effort each day.

The passion Eaton has for teaching is displayed in her smile and demeanor when she welcomes her students to class each day. Eaton's passion for education makes her a standout teacher and why she was named the 2021 Charles County Teacher of the Year. While Eaton knew she was Craik's teacher

of the year nominee, she still struggles with the reality that she was chosen for this year's honor.

"I still struggle to fully wrap my brain around it. I feel like I work with and know so many incredible educators that are so deserving of recognition that I find it hard to comprehend that I was selected," Eaton said. Last week, Eaton was surprised by Superintendent of Schools Kimberly Hill with the news on her selection as Teacher of the Year.

Eaton began her teaching career with CCPS in 2009 as a fifth-grade teacher at Craik. She strives to build relationships with



Alexis Eaton

See EATON, Page 3



On the cover

The Board of Education of Charles County honored outstanding employees at its March meeting including Carolyn Scott, kindergarten instructional assistant, Gale-Bailey Elementary School; and Monica Strobel, language arts teacher, Milton M. Somers Middle School.

Summer camps planned

Summer is around the corner which means summer camp will start soon.

This year, **enrichment camps** will be held in-person and virtually. The kindergarten camp will be held at William A. Diggs Elementary School with Theodore G. Davis Middle School hosting camps for students in first-eighth grades.

Nanjemoy Creek Educational Center will hold a camp for middle school students in August.

The **Lackey Summer Youth Camp** at Henry E. Lackey High School will be open June 21 to July 16 (closed July 5) for kids entering the second grade in the 2020-21 school year through age 13. [Click here](#) to get the latest information on CCPS summer camps.

How to update Zoom

Zoom releases program updates for Windows users from time to time. To check your Zoom account for an update, log in and click on your user name initials in the upper-right hand corner. Then, select the Check for Updates menu option. [Click here](#) for directions on how to check updates.

Employee Assistance Program

CCPS has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, Deer Oaks EAP Services.

The EAP benefit covers six confidential short-term counseling visits for contracted employees who work more than 20 hours per week and their immediate families. Deer Oaks coordinates with CCPS's health plan for cases that require treatment under the medical benefit.

For information, call 888-993-7650 or go to www.deeroakseap.com. The member login and password are ccboe.

In Memoriam Sharon Florence

Sharon Florence, an occupational therapist with Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), passed away April 7, 2021.

Florence was a native of Louisville, KY, who graduated from Spalding University in Louisville with a bachelor of science in occupational therapy. She started working for CCPS in 2017.

Florence is being remembered by colleagues as a advocate for children and the OT profession.

"She was a tireless and dedicated occupational therapist who went above and beyond for the students," Gail Bacon, OT/PT Team Leader for CCPS, said.

Florence was collaborative and caring, peers said.

"She always had a smile on her face, was energetic and full of life. As a team, we loved working with her," Holly Houghton, an occupational therapist who knew Florence for several years, said. "She was a wonderful coworker, helping to solve problems and provide a listening ear to work related or personal struggles."

"She was not only a colleague, advocate, teacher and occupational therapist — but most importantly she was a dear friend," Chuck Reppucci, a SOAR teacher at J.C. Parks Elementary School, said. "She would do anything



Sharon
Florence

for anyone, the good, bad, and the ugly."

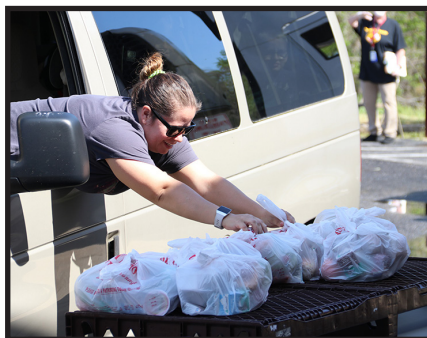
Florence had an upbeat attitude. "Sharon was such a very positive and inspirational staff member," F.B. Gwynn Educational Center Principal Daphne Burns said. "She was always friendly and full of energy."

Nicholas Adam, principal at Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School, said that although she didn't have students at Mitchell, she was a familiar face who would stop by to consult with fellow OTs and could be counted on to help a staff member. "When teachers were at a loss for ways to help a student, Ms. Florence was able to reach in her bag of tricks and provide a new idea," Adam said.

Florence was an OT who worked with students at many schools including Indian Head, Gale-Bailey, Berry and J.C. Parks elementary schools; and General Smallwood and Matthew Henson middle schools. Most recently, she was the occupational therapist at Parks, Lackey and Gwynn.

"Her Parks ACHIEVE and SOAR students looked forward to every Monday when they would see Ms. Sharon," Samantha Gannon, ACHIEVE teacher at Parks, said. "Ms. Sharon had a way to make everyone feel special and loved. She is already greatly missed. In true Ms. Sharon fashion, this is not a good-bye, but instead it is a 'See you later, Gator.'"

Meal changes on the menu as Phase 4 starts



The hours for curbside meal pickup are changing to 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The change is effective Monday, April 19, as students in Phase 3 and 4 return to school buildings for in-person instruction.

Formerly the hours for curbside pickup were 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The last day for mobile meals was today, April 16. For more information, visit www.ccboe.com/freemeals/.

EATON

continued from Page 1



Alexis Eaton, right, interacts with students — those in the building and those attending virtually. Fourth grader Kendra Ogline, works with classmates on a math lesson.

her students on mutual trust and respect. She encourages students to take charge of their success so they continue through school with a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Eaton also engages the families of students so they see learning as a partnership between school and home. “By working with parents as a collaborative team, it allows me to develop and extend relationships with students to meet their needs,” Eaton said.

Eaton joined the fourth-grade team at Craik in 2014 and now serves as the team leader. She is known among her colleagues as a role-model leader and master of virtual learning. She shares knowledge with her peers and is committed to the success of not only herself, but her colleagues and their students as well. The COVID-19 pandemic caused CCPS to start this school year in a virtual platform. Eaton embraced the challenges of online learning and implemented a variety of instructional strategies in her classroom.

Teresa Schinasi is a member of the fourth-grade team at Craik and has worked alongside Eaton for the past eight years. She said Eaton’s true commitment is to her students. “Her teaching is a reflection of the huge heart she has for each and every one of her students. This school year has been a challenge for all of us, however Alexis has risen to the top by adapting to all of the demands placed on her. She has always been a successful educator, but this year she has been able to master virtual learning almost seamlessly,” Schinasi wrote

Read more

We are celebrating the 2021 Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Teacher of the Year nominees.

To read more about the nominees and their contributions to CCPS, [click here](#).

in a nomination letter.

Craik fifth grader Makena Pauole was in Eaton’s class last school year and wrote a letter to support her nomination. In her letter, Pauole describes Eaton as a kind and friendly teacher who makes learning about any subject fun. “Her goal was to see each of us do our best. She helped encourage students when they were stuck and always walked us through challenging things. I will always remember her big smile,” Pauole wrote.

Eaton not only strives to build relationships with students in her classroom, but with all Craik students. She treats every student as her own. At any time throughout the school day, Eaton may have a fifth grader in her classroom using a timer and learning tools, or a third grader who needs help on an assignment.

Students know Eaton and trust her because they know she is helpful, kind and passionate about teaching. Craik parent Michelle West said that Eaton not only helped her child with math but provided strategies she could use

with her child at home.

“I recall a parent/teacher conference where I was able to witness Mrs. Eaton walk Milana through a math problem on the white board. Her encouragement of Milana as she worked through the problem was awesome. Mrs. Eaton may not have realized this, but she was also teaching me how to help Milana work through these problems at home,” West wrote in a nomination letter.

Eaton is not only a leader among her peers at Craik, but at the county level as well. She is an Education Association of Charles County (EACC) senior representative and involved with curriculum design and development. Eaton provides professional development to new teachers and helped to develop a countywide fourth-grade social studies unit. She has contributed to reading curriculum for special education students and English Learners (ELs). Eaton has also served as the math team coach at Craik and helped her students place at the county competition. Eaton said she developed a passion for helping children at a young age. Each day in the classroom for Eaton confirms that she pursued the right calling in life to teach. She views each day as an adventure and celebrates the accomplishments of her students. One of her main goals as a teacher is to instill in her students a love for learning.

“I have moments every day that confirm for me that this is my calling. Everyday my students make me laugh, make me proud and inspire me to do my best to help them grow academically, socially and emotionally. Every day is a new adventure with ‘my kids’ and the love I have for each and every one of them ensures that I will never question my calling,” Eaton said.

Eaton is one of 24 state finalists eligible for the Maryland Teacher of the Year Award. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will select and announce the Maryland Teacher of the Year later this year.

Eaton will be honored by the Board of Education at an upcoming meeting. Eaton has a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Towson University, and a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from the American College of Education.

School News is published by
Charles County Public Schools
301-932-6610
301-934-7220
Fax: 301-932-6651

Board of Education Members

Latina L. Wilson, *Chairperson*
Virginia R. McGraw, *Vice Chairperson*
Jennifer S. Abell
Tajala Battle-Lockhart
Elizabeth C. Brown
David Hancock
Michael Lukas
Ian Herd, *Student Member*

Superintendent of Schools

Kimberly A. Hill, Ed.D.

Editor/Writers

Katie O'Malley-Simpson
Shelley Mackey
Sara K. Taylor

The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Kathy Kiessling, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Nikial M. Majors, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (employees/ adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.

CCPS provides nondiscriminatory equal access to school facilities in accordance with its Use of Facilities rules to designated youth groups (including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts).

Board of Education to meet April 20 for monthly meeting

The Board of Education's next regular meeting is 1 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20. The Board will meet in person at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. The meeting will stream live on the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) website, www.ccboe.com.

Public forum for this meeting will be held in a hybrid format of both in-person and virtual speakers. Speakers must register in advance to participate in public forum. [The registration form is available here](#). Deadline to register is 12 p.m., Monday, April 19. Late registrations will not be accepted. Registered speakers will receive additional information by email.

The following is a tentative meeting agenda and subject to change.

Executive session – 11:30 a.m.

Call to order – 1 p.m.

Superintendent's update to the Board

Reports of officers/boards/committees

- Board Member correspondence
- Education Association of Charles County (EACC) update
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) update
- Student Board Member update
- Reopening of schools
- Graduation 2021
- Intercategory budget change

- Project status update
- Transportation update
- Legislative update

Unfinished business

- Proposed Students' Voices on Committees resolution discussion

New business and future agenda items

- New business
 - *Suspension of Board policies
- Future agenda items

Virtual recognition – 4:30 p.m.

- Resolutions: *Teacher Appreciation Week*, *Administrative Professionals Week*, *Child Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week*, and *National Physical Education and Sport Week*
- Students
- Employees
- Instructional Assistants recognition
- James E. Richmond Leadership Award – recipient, Katie O'Malley-Simpson, director, communications

Public forum – 6 p.m.

- Preregistered speakers only

Action items

- Minutes
- Personnel
- Intercategory budget change
- Adjournment

Personnel

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

Job Openings

Operations Foreman — Annex 1, 12-month position. A high school diploma is required along with college coursework, trade school or a minimum of five years of related work experience. Apply by April 27.

Math Teacher — Theodore G. Davis Middle School, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 23.

Science Teacher — Mattawoman Middle School, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 23.

Special Education Teacher (ACHIEVE program) — Theodore G. Davis Middle School, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 27.

Language Arts Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Jan. 31.

Music Teacher (Instrumental) — Location

to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Jan. 31.

Music Teacher (Vocal) — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Jan. 31.

Physical Education Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Jan. 31.

Social Studies Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Jan. 31.

Spanish Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Jan. 31.

Technology Education Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Jan. 31.

Administrative Instructional Assistant — All elementary schools, 10-month position. A high school diploma is required. Position open until filled.

Food Service Assistant Manager — Location to be determined, 10-month position. A high school diploma or equivalent is required. Position open until filled.

Food Service Substitute — Location to be determined, 10-month position. High school diploma or sufficient education to have basic skills in reading, record keeping and math required. Position open until filled.

Kindergarten Instructional Assistant — All elementary schools, 10-month position. A high school diploma is required, with an associate's degree preferred. Position open until filled.

Spanish Teacher — North Point High School, 10-month position. Position open until filled.

Staff Accountant (Internal Controls/Audit) — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. A bachelor's degree required with a master's degree or CPA preferred. Position open until filled.