



# School News

## Important Dates Coming Soon

### Keep in touch

CCPS uses email, phone calls and text message alerts as part of systemwide and school-based parent and staff communication. The notification system, School Messenger, uses data from the CCPS student information and staff data systems.

Parents must provide a valid phone number and email address on their child's emergency card and should notify their child's school of any changes.

Text message alerts are available as an opt-in feature, meaning parents must opt-in to receive messages. Text Y or YES to 67587. Text STOP to 67587 at any time to opt out.

### Volunteer procedures

Parents and community members interested in volunteering in CCPS schools as well as those who attend special events, such as field trips, must complete registration procedures in order to volunteer. All volunteers are required to complete a background screening and participate in training requirements. Volunteer approval is for one year.

Any approved volunteer from last year must complete the process again for the 2019-20 school year. Visit the volunteer page for additional information at <https://www.ccboe.com/index.php/volunteer-information-ql>. CCPS staff is no longer required to complete the screening, as CCPS launched additional background screenings for staff this school year.

### #btsccps19

Help CCPS celebrate the start of another exciting school year. Email your photos to [communications@ccboe.com](mailto:communications@ccboe.com) or tag us in your social media posts with #btsccps19. A gallery featuring shared content will be posted in an online photo gallery.



### Prep for the new year

Teachers and Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) staff are returning to school and getting ready for the 2019-20 school year. Top, Billingsley Elementary School first-grade teachers Janee Johnson, left, and Layla Ali, learn the ins and outs of a new reading program the school is piloting this year. Left, Karena Bennett, the science chair at Maurice J. McDonough High School, tries to find balance in the world.



### Power of words, safety are focus of institute

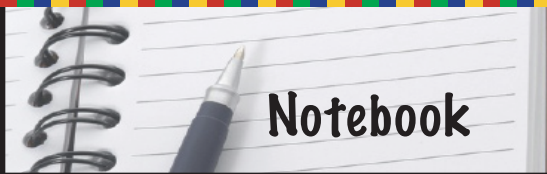
School leaders from Charles County's 37 public schools and centers kicked off the 2019-20 school year recently during the annual Administrative Leadership Institute. The annual event welcomes Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) principals, vice principals and administrative assistants with three full days of professional development to kick off the new school year.

The Institute was held Aug. 14-16 at North Point High School. The 2019 theme was "The Power of Your Words." The Insti-

tute featured several guest speakers invited to talk with school administrators about relationship building with students, ensuring equity in teaching and learning, and lessons in school safety. Manny Scott, a Freedom Writer featured in the 2007 movie "Freedom Writers," was the opening keynote speaker on Wednesday. In his comments, Scott delivered a message of hope and being the difference for students.

The author of "Even on Your Worst Day You Can Be a Student's Best Hope," Scott

See LEADERSHIP, Page 3



## On the cover

Pictured on the front cover at CCPS employees who work at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. From left are Natalie Guess, fingerprint technician; Kessandra Stubblefield, executive assistant to the Charles County Board of Education; and Mary Aron, switchboard operator and front desk receptionist.

## Meet the Principal

Charles County Public Schools TV features a series of stories on principals who are new to their schools in 2019-2020. Principals featured include Kevin Jackson of Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary School; Dr. Melinda Johnson of J.P. Ryon Elementary School; Gary Lesko of Eva Turner Elementary School; William Miller of William B. Wade Elementary School; Shanif Pearl of Thomas Stone High School; Nancy Seifert of Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School; Erica Williams of Benjamin Stoddert Middle School; and Todd Wonderling of T.C. Martin Elementary School. Go to [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) and click the CCPSTV button. The Meet the Principal series is located in the On Air section of the site.

## Bus hotline

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is sponsoring a bus hotline for parents to call with questions about school bus routes. Call 301-932-6655 to access the hotline. The hotline is available 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 29 and 30, and 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 3 and 4.

## Meal prices go up 5 cents

Breakfast and lunch prices increased by 5 cents this year for students. Breakfast is \$1.35 for elementary school students and \$1.45 for middle and high school students. Lunch prices are \$2.70 for elementary school students and \$2.95 for middle and high school students. Click here for the meal selections posted online. CCPS uses an online cafeteria prepayment system called MyPayments Plus. Parents can add money and monitor their child's meal accounts. Some students may be eligible for reduced price or free meals. Parents can apply online for free and reduced price meals at <https://www.myschoolapps.com/Home/PickDistrict>.



Dee Dixon, a food service worker at Mary B. Neal Elementary School, prepares breakfast kits before students arrive for the day.

## Free breakfast offered the first week of school

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) will offer all students free breakfast the first week of school, Sept. 3-6.

The goal is to provide students with a jump-start to the new school year and an opportunity to start the day with a healthy breakfast.

Breakfast items to be served include milk, cereal, juice and fruit with an additional option of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for high school students.

"We want students to come back to school ready to not only begin a new school year, but to practice healthy eating habits. Kids need energy and nourishment to focus in class. We are committed to helping our students learn about healthy eating

habits and making breakfast part of their daily routine," Superintendent of Schools Kimberly Hill said.

On the first day of school, Tuesday, Sept. 3, some elementary schools may not serve breakfast in order to accommodate student arrivals and classroom transitions. Additionally, free breakfast offerings during the week at the secondary level do not include a la carte items.

CCPS will also offer free breakfast to students during the week of Jan. 2-10, when both students and teachers return from winter break.

Menu options, including breakfast, lunch and a la carte choices, are posted on the school system website at [ccboe.com](http://ccboe.com).

## Student ID badge program expands this year

CCPS has expanded the use of student identification (ID) badges to all seven high schools, two middle schools and one elementary school.

The badge program is part of the school system's increased focus on school safety and security.

Badges include a student's name, school of attendance, class grade and school year.

Each ID features a unique barcode for use with procedures such as tracking late

arrivals and early dismissals, purchasing meals in the cafeteria or checking materials out of the school library.

The program was piloted last school year at La Plata High, John Hanson Middle and J.P. Ryon Elementary schools. Hanson and Ryon will continue use this year. General Smallwood Middle School will also launch the program this school year. Plans are also underway to launch the program at Billingsley later this school year.



# LEADERSHIP

continued from page 1

shared his story of how a complete stranger and a teacher helped him change the direction of his life. Scott, who dropped out of school at age 14, went back after a drug addict sat next to him on a bench and urged him to go back to school to avoid becoming like him. Scott went back to school and later went on to graduate from high school, attend UC Berkeley where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees. He is now working on his doctorate degree.

Scott said he was the kid who took the issues of his household and crime-ridden neighborhood to school. However, it was an English teacher who made him believe in himself, and his potential. The teacher, Erin Gruwell, pushed Scott and his classmates to graduate by providing unending support, high expectations and encouragement for them to believe in themselves. "Your words have the power to keep people living or push someone over the edge," he said.

Also greeting the more than 140 school administrators during the first day of the Institute was Russell McClain, an associate dean for diversity and inclusion and academic achievement program director at the University of Maryland's Francis King Carey School of Law. McClain has spent much of his career researching psychological factors that affect academic performance, including stereotype threats and implicit bias.

In his comments, McClain discussed how stereotypes and bias affect student learning and lead to achievement gaps. He shared strategies about developing a growth mindset, and how those strategies can help children and educators battle the effects of stereotypes on student learning. "How can we expect them to be capable of greatness if we do not believe it ourselves?" McClain said.

Wednesday and Thursday of the Institute also featured team-building activities, such as Jenga with shoes, professional development sessions on topics such as crisis intervention, gradebook updates and formative assessment, and updates in Maryland and special education laws. Friday was dedicated to the topic of school safety and security and featured a guest speaker with firsthand experience with a school crisis.

Michele Gay is the co-founder and executive director of Safe and Sound Schools, an organization that seeks to better protect schools with a mission of working with schools and



**Michele Gay, second from right, was a guest speaker at the annual Administration Leadership Institute. Gay, co-founder and executive director of Safe and Sound Schools, is the mother of the late Josephine, who died in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012. Gay is pictured with Superintendent of Schools Kimberly Hill, left, Jason Stoddard, CCPS director of School Safety and Security, and Virginia McGraw, chairman of the Board of Education.**

school communities to provide safe and secure schools for children and educators. Safe and Sound Schools features several Sandy Hook parents, educators and community members as part of the organization, as well as safety and security experts, mental health professionals, and survivors from other crises, such as the Virginia Tech school shooting.

Gay lost her youngest daughter, Josephine, in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012. As she spoke to CCPS administrators on Friday about her experiences as a parent on the day and time after the shooting, Gay emphasized the mission of Safe and Sound Schools. "We have learned a tremendous amount from this. We are in a new position... we have the power and hindsight to prepare for the worst day ever. Simple measures, such as locking doors, can save lives," Gay said.

Gay was invited to speak during the Institute by Jason Stoddard, CCPS Director of School Safety and Security. Stoddard met Gay during a conference last year and invited her to share her experiences with CCPS staff. After sharing her experiences of the loss of her daughter, Gay talked about what she focuses on to keep moving forward. "I have three pillars of what holds me up: family, friends and

faith. I remember on that day, I sat in my car and prayed. As you begin another school year, think about your pillars... what holds you up on those days. And remember that you are a pillar for someone in the community," she shared.

Preparing for the future is a goal for Stoddard this school year. During the Institute, Stoddard rolled out updated safety and security procedures and reviewed drills for students and staff. The drills include a lockdown, lock-down, evacuate, shelter and hold, and include directions for both students and teachers. Additional enhancements this year for schools include trauma kits, of which Stoddard secured grant funding to supply every school with, enclosed main entrance areas for six additional schools and the application of safety film on windows at several schools.

CCPS is also implementing the student ID badge program at all seven high schools, two middle schools and continuing its pilot use at J.P. Ryon Elementary School. Stoddard and staff from the CCPS Office of School Safety and Security plan to visit staff at every CCPS school next month to review safety and security updates.

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## Students get back to nature with Nature Inventor's Workshop

Middle school students unplugged for the week and got in touch with the great outdoors during Nature Inventor's Workshop, a day camp that combines STEAM — Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math — practices with activities like fishing, canoeing and making s'mores.

Open to sixth, seventh and eighth graders, the camp is held at the Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center. It includes less traditional camp activities like making kites out of trash bags, building a simple motor craft out of bamboo, rubber bands, pencils and washers, knotting a survival bracelet made of paracord and indulging in molecular gastronomy which resulted in bacon fat snow, fruit caviar and exploding bananas.

"Nature Inventor's Workshop has students using things in nature to create something," said Jen Young, an environmental education assistant. During free time, the campers head outside to explore the forest or the ponds, catching frogs and turtles.

"I really like nature," said Ada Donohue, a seventh grader at Milton M. Somers Middle School. "We all should learn how to help our environment and learn how to have fun ... not just playing on a phone. Which is what I would be doing if I wasn't here."

This is the second year Eric Ghrist, a Theodore G. Davis Middle School seventh grader, attended summer camp in Nanjemoy. "I liked it and I like



**Timothy Emhoff, right, environmental education resource teacher at the Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Education Center, helps Cohen Foote, a sixth grader at Matthew Henson Middle School, work on a simple motor project during Nature Inventor's Workshop camp.**

STEM, so, 'Hey, why not?'"

Ghrist said canoeing was one of his top activities during the week and he liked the new things he was introduced to. "Like making a kite," he said. "I wouldn't do that unless I was here."

## Personnel

*Apply for positions online at [www.ccboc.com/jobs/currentopenings.php](http://www.ccboc.com/jobs/currentopenings.php). All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.*

**Attendance Secretary** — Milton M. Somers Middle School, 10.5-month position. Applicants must have positive human relation skills and have good computer literacy skills. Apply by Sept. 4.

**Office of Instruction Secretary** — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Applicants must have the ability to read and interpret documents like legal documents and procedure manuals. Experience with Microsoft Word, Excel, Access and Publisher is required. Apply by Sept. 4.

**Compliance Facilitator** — Henry E. Lackey High School, 10-month position. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree and Maryland Standard Professional Certificate with special education endorsement. Three years of satis-

factory special education classroom teaching experience required. Knowledge and experience with IEP procedures needed. Position open until filled.

**Computer Science Teacher** — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree and meet certification requirements as established by the Maryland State Department of Education. Apply by Sept. 27.

**IEP Facilitator** — Location to be determined, 11-month position. A bachelor's degree is required, master's degree preferred. Applicants must hold or be eligible for a Maryland Standard Professional Certificate with special education endorsement and have three years of satisfactory special education classroom teaching experience required. Knowledge and experience with IEP procedures required. Apply by Sept. 30.

**Principal Pool** — A master's degree from an

accredited college or university, a Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate with Administrator II endorsement and three years satisfactory teaching experience are required. Apply by Dec. 31.

**Reading Intervention Instructional Assistant** — Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School, 10-month position. An interest and aptitude for working with elementary school-aged children. A high school diploma and a minimum of 48 college credits, associate degree or passing score on the ParaPro test are required. Position open until filled.

**HVAC Mechanic II** — CCPS Maintenance Shop, 12-month position. High school diploma and any combination equivalent to four years journey-level experience in HVAC trade are required. Applicants must have a valid Maryland Board of HVACR Contractor's Journeyman License and a valid Maryland driver's license. Position open until filled.