



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Grading policy survey open

Should an F grade be 0 to 59 percent or 50 to 59 percent? The Board of Education of Charles County is considering a proposal to revise the rule and is seeking feedback from the community before deciding. Take a survey at <https://tinyurl.com/y9wm5p68> to chime in by Oct. 15 when the survey closes. The Board will hold a Town Hall on the grading policy prior to an Oct. 22 grading policy work session. Staff will provide a brief overview at 6 p.m. Questions and comments will be accepted starting at 6:10 p.m. and the work session will follow at 7 p.m. Board meetings are held at 5980 Radio Station Road in La Plata. For more information on the proposal, visit www.ccboe.com/pr/board-considers-proposal-to-change-grading-policy/.

Fall chess tournament set

Registration for the Fall Chess Tournament closes on Oct. 17. The tourney is Oct. 20 at Thomas Stone High School and is open to players in kindergarten through 12th grade. Sign-in for registered players begins at 8 a.m.; students must check in by 8:45 a.m. in order to be paired for play in the first round. To register, go to <https://ccpsregistration.wufoo.com/forms/ccps-2018-fall-chess-tournament/>. Questions can be directed to Susan Dobbs at sfdobbs@ccboe.com or Ann Taylor at ataylor@ccboe.com.

Under the (full) dome

The full dome movie, "We are Stars," will be shown 6:45 p.m. Oct. 18 at the James E. Richmond Science Center at St. Charles High School. The 28-minute movie explores the secrets of cosmic chemistry and explosive origins while connecting life on Earth to the evolution of the universe. For tickets, go to www.ccboe.com/science-center/tickets/. The center is at 5305 Piney Church Road in Waldorf.



Welcoming new teachers to CCPS

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) recently held a New Teacher Reception to welcome new educators to the system. Pictured clockwise from top, William A. Diggs Elementary School Principal Debbie Calvert, left, joins staffers Deborah Pence, Richelle Coleman and Christina Smith. Mat-tawoman Middle School teachers Talcarldre Gore, left, Harry McNeil, Joy Burrell, Kendra Omisakin, Robyn Harrison and Garrett Sumlar attended the reception. St. Charles High School teachers Jason Braverman, seated left, Alexis Maunes and LaKesha Craft are joined by Briana Queen, standing left, and Vice Principal Shaneha Harvard-Lamb at the event.



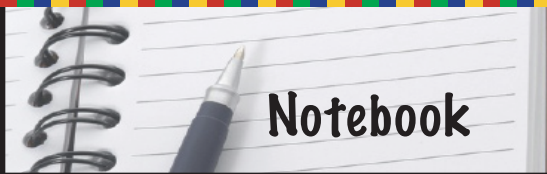
Six schools get in touch with safety radios

Administrative teams of six Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) recently received public safety radios to directly communicate with first responders if a life-threatening emergency arises at a school.

The digital portable radios — Motorola XTS 5000 models — directly connect

schools with Charles County's Department of Emergency Services, prompting a faster response by first responders, said Jason Stoddard, director of CCPS safety and security. The radios were given to Indian Head, Eva Turner, Malcolm, Dr. Gustavus Brown, Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy and Dr. James Craik el-

See Radios, Page 2



On the cover

Pictured on the front of *School News* are Brittany Woodward, a fourth-grade teacher at Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary School; Courtney Milhouse, the administrative IA at North Point High School; and Christine Paul, administrative intern at North Point.

All County concerts

All County concerts are set for this month. The orchestra concert is 7 p.m. Oct. 23 at Thomas Stone High School; the band concert is 7 p.m. Oct. 24 at St. Charles High School; and the chorus will perform 7 p.m. Oct. 25 at North Point High School.

On with the shows

Curtains are rising on high school productions next month. Henry E. Lackey High School will stage "12 Angry Jurors" from Nov. 1 to 3. That same weekend, La Plata High School, will put on "Dog Eat Dog," a play that includes themes that may not be understood by audience members younger than 13. La Plata is not leaving the kids out, though. It will stage the family-friendly show, "The Happy Elf" Dec. 17 and 18. Go down the rabbit hole Nov. 8 to 10 with Maurice J. McDonough High School's production of "Alice in Wonderland." Live forever and learn to fly at North Point High School when it stages "Fame" on Nov. 8 to 10. Thomas Stone High School will perform "High School (Non) Musical" Nov. 15 through 17. That same weekend — Nov. 15 to 17 — Westlake High School will sneak in "Spy School." St. Charles High School will wrap up the season Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 to 2 with "Junglbook," a dramatization of Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book." For more about the shows, tickets, times and other information, go to <https://tinyurl.com/ycuklhf8>.

Honor student volunteers

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) students can apply for the 2019 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards Program, which honors middle and high school student volunteers. The program recognizes students for exemplary acts of volunteer service in their communities. Students in Grades 5 through 12 can apply and must have volunteered within the past 12 months. Students can apply online at <https://spirit.prudential.com/apply/2019>. Deadline is Nov. 6.



Malcolm Elementary School Vice Principal Patricia Mooring, left, and Principal Mary Finneran get a lesson on using the school's new public safety radio by Chris Thompson, assistant chief of Charles County's fire/EMS communications.

Radios

ementary schools.

"Each school has a unique security issue," Stoddard said. Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy and Malcolm are remote, sitting in locations that could increase response time. Eva Turner, Dr. Brown, Craik and Indian Head have open floor plans. "[The radios] are improving our ability to communicate ... to expedient notification of emergency services and get help [to schools] faster," Stoddard said.

The county's department of emergency services donated the \$5,000 radios to the six schools.

With the aid of grant money, Stoddard and his team are striving to place a public safety radio in all CCPS schools by the end of the school year. The radios are among safety enhancements that are happening in county schools as part of CCPS's See Something, Say Something initiative. Updated background checks for employees and volunteers, reconfiguration of school entryways, construction of walls in open space schools and an online reporting tool

continued from Page 1

have been implemented over the summer. Safety enhancement projects continue throughout the county.

At Malcolm, Principal Mary Finneran and Vice Principal Patricia Mooring learned how to use the public safety radio from Chris Thompson, assistant chief of the county's fire/EMS communications. With the radios, schools will be able to directly reach emergency services if a life-threatening situation arises that demands assistance, cutting out the need to call 911.

Following the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2014, Thompson has been pushing for enhanced safety features at area schools. "I'm ecstatic this stuff is happening," he said. "These are kids and we need to care of them."

Teachers at Malcolm will soon each get a walkie-talkie to make interschool communication easier, and the public safety radio brings peace of mind, Finneran said. "It does make us feel safer," she said.

"It's a great first step," Stoddard said. "Little wins equal momentum."

Spooky Science at the JER Science Center

Spooky Science is 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 20 at the James E. Richmond Science Center. Hands-on activities, full dome movies and a Mad Scientist demonstration will be part of the day. Admission is \$8 with children 3 and younger, CCPS employees and science center members admitted free. Go to www.ccboe.com/sciencecenter/tickets-spooky-science/ for tickets.

St. Charles's Conley, staff honored for support of deployed PE teacher

Capt. Mary Dempsey is a soldier in the U.S. Army Reserve who is deployed as a logistics officer in Kuwait. Prior to her March 2018 deployment, Dempsey was an integral part of the physical education department teaching staff at St. Charles High School. She describes the news of her deployment as a whirlwind of events, and credits St. Charles staff for helping her quickly transition.

"This commitment that I made did not come without sacrifices that this school had to make along with me," Dempsey said. To express gratitude to her colleagues, other school staff and principal, Rick Conley, Dempsey nominated her colleagues for the Department of Defense Patriot Award. The award, which recognizes employers for supporting staff who are enlisted in the military, was presented to Conley earlier this week during a surprise announcement.

Warren Johnson, a retired Major with the U.S. Air Force, is part of the Maryland State Committee of the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve, the organization that selects Patriot Award recipients annually. He presented Conley with the award Sept. 25 during a surprise staff meeting. "This award is the most coveted award ... it reaches people who are supporting our military members. It is presented by all branches of the military, the seven seals, including the National Guard and the Reserves," Johnson said.

Key criteria for the award include employer support of flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, family care and providing leaves of absences, if necessary. Because of Dempsey's deployment, she was not present for the award presentation. However, she provided comments to Marquelle Peavy, administrative assistant at St. Charles, to read aloud during the award presentation that reflect Dempsey's gratitude.

"I have always had a lot of military obligations to fulfill while teaching here and I am thankful for everyone's support. I wanted to figure out a way to thank this school for their support and when I heard about the Patriot Award I knew that this school deserved it for how supported I have felt. I have never felt as though my military service was an inconvenience or annoyance," she wrote.

Dempsey joined Charles County Public Schools as a physical edu-



St. Charles High School Principal Rick Conley, left, and the staff of St. Charles received the Patriot Award for supporting a staff members currently deployed as a member of the U.S. Army Reserves. Warren Johnson, a retired major with the U.S. Air Force, bestowed the award on behalf of the Maryland State Committee of the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve.

cation teacher at North Point High School in 2014 and transferred to St. Charles at the start of the 2015-16 school year. Conley said in addition to traditional health and physical education courses, Dempsey led several lifeguard courses that require specialized training. He described her as a community-oriented person who is kind and enjoys giving back.

Peavy worked with Johnson to plan the surprise award presentation to Conley, who said the award is reflective of the entire St. Charles staff. "This is about the school. I was never nervous about how it would impact us here. We put her in touch with the right people and worked with an amazing team to support her as much as we could in her exit," Conley said to his staff. "This award is as much about all of you as it is about me ... even more so about all of you."

Safety takes the wheel with We Care safe driving campaign at high schools

Park your phone. Buckle up. Slow down. Be safe. Those were the messages Superintendent Kimberly Hill, Sheriff Troy Berry and members of the Charles County Sheriff's Office shared with Maurice J. McDonough High School student drivers Sept. 17 during the kickoff of the 11th annual We Care campaign.

McDonough student drivers were greeted Sept. 25 by Berry, Hill, McDonough Principal Steven Roberts and officers who passed out fliers reminding the teens of driving rules and driving safety. It was a safety message repeated at all county high schools where school resource officers, principals and staff members also stopped and passed out flyers to student drivers as they arrived to school.



"We care about you and we want you to be safe," Hill told students as they drove into the parking lot. She reminded students of the dangers of texting and driving as she handed each a flyer with the rules of the road. The We Care campaign was established 11 years ago to get

Superintendent Kimberly Hill, left, greets Maurice J. McDonough High School senior, Megan Gray, as part of the We Care safe driving campaign.

students involved in a conversation about safe driving. While it starts with the morning reminder the first month of school, the We Care program continues throughout the year with assemblies, guest speakers and other activities.

"Since the We Care program started, crashes involving teen drivers have drastically reduced in Charles County. We continue to promote safe driving because we care about our young drivers," Berry said.

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PR Liaisons in Focus

Over the moon for the first day

When Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School students returned to school, Principal Orlena Whatley, left, and Vice Principal Nicole Hawkins were there to greet them, launching them into an out of this world year.

Submitted by Mudd PR Liaison Nathaniel Yake.



The voices of Stethem

Robert D. Stethem Educational Center students, Jaeden Robinson, left, and Sydney Coley, both Westlake High School juniors, make the morning announcements. Robinson is a physical rehabilitation student at Stethem, while Coley studies interactive media at the school.

Submitted by Stethem PR Liaison Sandy Rooney.

Personnel

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

Student Data Technician — Mattawoman Middle School, 12-month position. The person in this position assists in the development and implementation of the master schedules at the secondary level, as well as enters and revises computerized student data for assigned schools. Apply by Oct. 12.

Accounting Assistant — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. An associate degree or higher is recommended with relevant course work in accounting or related field. Applicants should have a minimum of two years of progressive professional accounting or bookkeeping experience that includes accounts payable responsibilities required. Apply by Oct. 19.

Part-time Science Teacher — James E. Richmond Science Center, hourly position.

Applicants must have a master's degree equivalent/Advanced Professional Certificate with a minimum of five years of successful teaching experience with a focus in STEM, math and/or science. Apply by Oct. 31.

Food Service Substitute — all schools, 10-month position. A high school diploma is desirable or sufficient education to have basic skills in reading, record keeping and arithmetic. Cook, food handling and/or cashier experience preferred. Apply by Oct. 22.

Educational Interpreter — all schools. Interpreters work with families who speak other languages other than English with children in public schools. Applicants must be able to work with students who have specific language needs. Full proficiency in both English and another specific language is required. Languages urgently needed include Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Vietnamese, Spanish and French. Additional languages also are needed. Apply by Nov. 2.

Pre-K Special Education Instructional Assistant — all elementary schools, 10-month position. Applicants must have the ability to work in an instructional support role with pre-kindergarten children and be able to work effectively with students with special needs. Position open until filled.

Building Service Worker — location to be determined, 12-month position. The ability to read and write effectively, as well as being able to physically perform manual labor, are required. Applicants must have a willingness to work overtime as required in cases of emergency. Position open until filled.

Home and Hospital Instructor — location to be determined, hourly employee. A bachelor's degree is required. An instructor develops, selects and modifies instructional plans and materials to meet the needs of all students while maintaining appropriate records and following required procedures and practices. Position open until filled.