



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Tax changes in 2018

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) updated the income-tax withholding tables for 2018 reflecting changes made by the tax reform legislation enacted last month. The new withholding tables are implemented for the Feb. 2 payroll run.

Payroll changes required each year are made by employers; employees are not required to take any steps. However, employees should review their withholding to make sure that is accurate.

Payroll employees can't advise employees on how to complete the W-4 form. For questions, go to www.irs.gov or talk with a tax advisor.

Musical interlude

Henry E. Lackey High School is hosting the U.S. Navy band, The Commodores, 7 p.m. Feb. 6 at the school at 3000 Chicamuxen Road in Indian Head. The Commodores are the Navy's premiere jazz ensemble that was formed in 1969 and has 18 members. The concert is free and open to the public. For more information about the band, go to <http://www.navyband.navy.mil/commodores.html>.

Woodcock Johnson training set

Mid-year Woodcock Johnson training is 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. The training is open to certified new special education teachers who did not receive training in the beginning of the school year.

The full-day training goes over how to administer the Woodcock Johnson Assessment, write assessment reports and how to report Individualized Education Program (IEP) for determining eligibility for special education services. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/2rJRdcC>. Email Larry Johnson at lwjohnson@ccboe.com with questions.



Reading partners

Reading Partners visit Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School once a week to work with students in first and second grades. Second grader Denis Ortega-Jolliffe, left, reads to Linda Turner. Also pictured are students Blake Laroque, his reading partner Betsy Stine, Jamey Fisher and his reading partner Amanda Bowling.

Graduation rates increase, dropout rate declines

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) graduation rate rose to a record high this year, with more than 94 percent of the class of 2017 graduating on time, according to data released today by the Maryland State Department of Education.

The 94.74 percent graduation rate for the class of 2017 is the highest for CCPS students since the 2010-11 school year when Maryland standardized the way schools report rates. The graduation rate rose from 92.17 percent in 2016. The CCPS graduation rate has increased steadily since 2011, more than 10 percentage points, when 83.36 percent of all students graduated within four years.

"High school graduation is among the most important achievements in education, coupled with students who graduate career and college ready. Our goal is for all students to finish with their class, and each year more

and more Charles County students are staying in school until graduation," Superintendent Kimberly Hill said.

Six of seven high schools posted graduation rates greater than 90 percent.

- Henry E. Lackey High School: 95.2 percent

- La Plata High School: 97.3 percent

- Maurice J. McDonough High School: 88.83 percent

- North Point High School: 96.71

- Charles High School: 96.13

- Thomas Stone High School: 91.22

- Westlake High School: 95.7.

Most minority groups and subgroups saw a rise in on-time graduation rates in 2017.

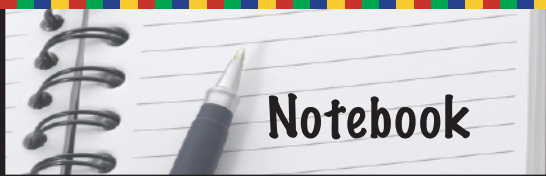
- Asian: 97.26 percent;

- African American: 94.53 percent;

- Hispanic/Latino: 82.08 percent;

- White: 97.27 percent;

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On the cover

Piccowaxen Middle School employees are featured on the front cover. From left are Keri Mona, instructional assistant; Michael Keener, sixth-grade social studies teacher; and Maggie Fitzgerald, eighth-grade Spanish teacher.

Gallery setting

The Seven Up Art Show will be Jan. 26 to Feb. 11 at Mattawoman Creek Art Center in Smallwood State Park. The show features select artwork of high school students from the county's seven high schools.

It is a judged show and gives student-artists a chance to see their work in a professional gallery setting. A reception is 1-4 p.m. Jan. 28. The art center is open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday-Sunday. For more information, go to www.mattawomanart.org.

Chess tourney Feb. 24

The kings and queens of Charles County will participate in the Winter Chess Tournament Feb. 24. Held at Henry E. Lackey High School, the tourney is open to students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Sign in opens at 8 a.m., with games starting at 9 a.m. Players must register by Feb. 21 with no walk-in registrations accepted. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/2Dh1X4z>.

College essentials

The Charles County Scholarship Fund, Inc. website is up and running for seniors who are heading to college. Go to <http://www.ccboe.com/ss/charles-county-scholarship-fund-inc/>.

Bright lights, spring plays

CCPS high schools are warming up for spring plays. St. Charles High School's show "Once Upon an Island" is March 9 to 11; Thomas Stone High School will stage "Beauty and the Beast" March 22 to 24; Maurice J. McDonough High School is performing "High School Musical" from April 12 to 15; Henry E. Lackey High School's "The Pajama Game" is set for April 19 to 21; North Point High School's show — the show has not been announced as of press time — is slated for April 19 to 21; "Sister Act" will be performed April 26 to 28 by Westlake High School's theater department; and La Plata High School goes under the sea with "The Little Mermaid" from May 3 to 5.

National Board Certified Teachers

Shelby Fletcher



Certification area: English Language Arts/
Adolescence and Youth Adulthood

Position held: English teacher at North Point High School

Years of teaching experience: 10

Years with Charles County Public Schools: 10

Education:

Bachelor of Arts in English in Secondary Childhood Education, Thiel College
Master of Science in Education, Youngstown State University

Memorable Moment:

I teach the novel *Lord of the Flies* using literature circles to my tenth graders. One year, during homecoming spirit week, one literature circle group came in for Character Day dressed as characters from the novel. It warmed my English teacher heart.

Graduation

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- Two or more races: greater than 94.23 percent;
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander: 100; and
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 90.91 percent.

Hill credits the increased rate to the persistence and hard work of CCPS teachers and staff. "Our teachers and administrators work hard every day to ensure students are achieving, both academically and personally. Our teachers adapt instruction to the learning needs of all students and strive to push them toward success and graduation. This success is a result of the dedication and commitment of our staff. They are the driving force behind our increased graduation rates," Hill said.

Special education students saw the highest increase in graduation rates, increasing the number of students graduating on time by 10 percentage points.

However, gaps persist between all CCPS students and students identified in the special education, free and reduced-priced meals (FARMS) and Limited English Proficiency subgroups. Hill said she is encouraged by the growth among its spe-

cial population subgroups; however, the school system still has work to do.

The superintendent's proposed fiscal year 2019 budget includes a request for the addition of 10 permanent instructional assistants for English Language Learners (ELL) and special education. Charles County's special education and ELL student population increases are among the highest in the state.

Graduation rates for other subgroups include:

- Free and reduced-price meals (FARMS): 89.06 percent, up from 83.33 percent;
- Special education students: 80.63, up from 70.52 percent; and
- Limited English Proficiency: 44.44 percent, a decline from 73.33.

The percentage of students dropping out of school decreased.

The CCPS four-year cohort dropout rate decreased from 4.31 percent in 2016 to 3.12 in 2017. The state's dropout rate was 8.21 percent in 2017. Dropout rates provide a cumulative rate across the four years since the cohort first entered Grade 9.

Clements, Jenkins earn national certification from NBPTS

Two Charles County Public Schools teachers, Kimberly Clements at the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center and Kathryn Jenkins at La Plata High School, recently achieved national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

They join nearly 40 other school system teachers who completed a rigorous and challenging performance-based assessment to become National Board Certified Teachers.

The assessment measures what accomplished teachers should know, and candidates must demonstrate how their activities strengthen student performance and achievement.

Clements is the interactive media production instructor at Stethem. She earned National Board Certification in the area of career and technical education/early adolescence through young adulthood. Her certification covers career and technology education (CTE), information systems and technology, communications and the arts. She is the first CCPS teacher to receive national certification in CTE.

Clements joined Stethem staff in 2010 after teaching graphic communications for several years at the Dr. James A. Forrest Car Two Charles County Public Schools teachers, Kimberly Clements at the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center and Kathryn Jenkins at La Plata High School, recently achieved national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

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Clements joined Stethem staff in 2010 after teaching graphic communications for several years at the Dr. James A. Forrest Career and Technology Center in St. Mary's County.

She advanced the interactive media program at Stethem by pursuing national accreditation through Adobe, a leading digital media software company. Her students learn about writing, editing, graphic design, video production and media arts, and develop promotional materials to help market Stethem's CTE programs.

Clements also launched a SkillsUSA chapter at Stethem in which students have earned first place in broadcast news production and third place in digital cinema.

Clements partners with representatives from local businesses in the media production industry to review curriculum, evaluate student work and provide suggestions for software and equipment updates. She said collaborating with leaders in the production industry helps her students and the program. "Industry participation is vital to the success of my program as I am teaching students the skills necessary to enter the workforce," Clements said.

Clements is a member of the SkillsUSA Maryland Board of Directors and the only teacher in Maryland who has taught both graphic communications and interactive media. She also implemented Stethem's

participation this year in the National Technical Honor Society. Clements has a bachelor's degree in fine arts from St. Mary's College of Maryland, and a master's degree in leadership education from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland.

Jenkins is a mathematics teacher at La Plata, where she teaches Advanced Placement (AP) statistics and foundations of algebra. She has also taught courses in trigonometry and honors geometry. Jenkins earned National Board Certification in the area of mathematics/adolescence and young adulthood.

She joined CCPS in 2003 as a mathematics teacher at Milton M. Somers Middle School. She taught at Somers for six years and worked with students in algebra I, algebra II and Gateway to Technology classes.

Jenkins then took a position as a gifted education resource teacher and worked at both Somers and Benjamin Stoddert Middle School. She joined the teaching staff at La Plata in 2012.

Jenkins has served as a math tutor, summer academy math and reading teacher, high school swim coach, adjunct math professor at the College of Southern Maryland and sponsor of the cupcake-decorating club at La Plata. She also completed her administrative internship at Somers and has her administrator I certification.

Jenkins said she has experienced several memorable moments throughout her career, but the best are when graduates visit her and tell her what they learned in her class helped them with their future.

"My most favorable moments come from my students who have passed my class, graduated and then returned, just to tell me how my class has helped them in their future endeavors. Those are the best," she added.

Jenkins has a bachelor's degree in mathematics from State University of New York at Geneseo, and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from McDaniel College.

National Board Certified Teachers must complete a review of their skills and work, which includes a portfolio, student work samples, videos and a thorough analysis of their classroom teaching and student learning.

Teachers also complete a series of written exercises that probe the depth of their subject-matter knowledge and their understanding of how to teach that material to students.

Clements and Jenkins join 5,470 nationwide teachers who completed the certification process in 2017. Certification is valid for 10 years after which a teacher may complete the renewal process. Maryland has more than 3,000 nationally certified teachers and is one of the top 15 states with the highest participation in the certification process.

By achieving National Board Certification, CCPS teachers are eligible for a stipend as long as they maintain their certification status. Information about the application process is posted online at <http://www.nbpts.org/>.



Kimberly Clements



Kathryn Jenkins

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Up high

Eva Turner Elementary School kindergarten students always enjoy extra help from parent volunteers. Cherice Smith, right, volunteers at the school, giving students praise and feedback for a job well done. The school relies on home and school collaboration for academic success.

Submitted by Keith Juarez, Turner's PR liaison



Davis Strings

Anne Marie Patterson, right, instrumental music teacher at Theodore G. Davis Middle School, leads orchestra students in a number.

Submitted by Davis PR liaison Gregory Bongiorno



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

Building Service Worker — C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School, 12-month position. Applicants must have the ability to read and write effectively, and be physically capable of performing manual labor. Good verbal communications and human relation skills, as well as a willingness to work overtime is required in cases of emergency. Apply by Feb. 2.

Attendance Secretary — J.C. Parks Elementary School, 11-month position. A high school diploma is required and the ability to type 50 words per minute. Applicants need to have the capacity to work with pupils, teachers, parents, administrative personnel and school visitors in a manner conducive to good working relationships. Apply by Feb. 5.

Life Skills Instructional Assistant — Henry

E. Lackey High School, 10-month position. A high school diploma is required, as well as experience working with children or adults who have special needs. Applicants must have the ability to work and interact with students with significant mental and physical disabilities and knowledge of special skills required to work with students having special needs. Apply by Feb. 5.

Administrative Intern — Location to be determined, 11-month position. Administrative interns are appointed for a year term, with the possibility of re-appointment for up to two additional years. A bachelor's degree and Standard Professional Certificate issued by the Maryland State Department of Education is required along with three years of successful teaching experience. Applicants must be enrolled in school administration program of study at the master's level. Apply by Feb. 14.

Pest Control/Small Engine Technician — Annex 1, 12-month position. The position

calls for the performance of tasks necessary to protect the health and comfort of students and staff within the facilities from pests and performs routine operational checks and repair work on small engine equipment. Applicants must have a high school diploma, a Maryland Pest Control License in Categories 6, 7A, 7B and 7D and five years of experience in pest control and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices. Position open until filled.

School Psychologist Intern — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. CCPS is offering a master's or doctoral level internship placement for the 2018-19 school year. The program provides interns with an opportunity to integrate knowledge acquired. The internship is designed to meet the training standards of the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), as well as the training requirements for school psychology certification as outlined by the Maryland State Department of Education. Apply by March 1.