



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Golden anniversary planned

Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School will hold its 50th anniversary celebration noon to 3 p.m. Oct. 15 at the school at 400 Willow Lane in La Plata. A time capsule will be opened, there will be speakers and the school's chorus will sing songs from the past five decades. There will be school and classroom tours, entertainment, food vendors and items will be added to the time capsule.

Flu vaccine offered

The Charles County Department of Health is offering the flu vaccine at all schools. The clinics will be held at J.P. Ryon Elementary School — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 15; Westlake High School — 3 to 7 p.m. Oct. 18; La Plata High School — 3 to 7 p.m. Oct. 20; Piccowaxen Middle School — 3 to 7 p.m. Nov. 1; General Smallwood Middle School — 4 to 7 p.m. Nov. 10; Thomas Stone High School — 3 to 7 p.m. Nov. 15 and La Plata High School — 3 to 7 p.m. Nov. 17.

Public hearing on school name

The Charles County Board of Education's School Naming Advisory Committee is holding a public hearing to accept information or comment on names submitted and to accept additional school naming suggestions from the public. The hearing is set for Monday, Oct. 17, 6:30 p.m. in the boardroom at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building at 5980 Radio Station Road in La Plata. Residents may begin to sign up to speak at 6 p.m. The committee will begin hearing testimony at 6:30 p.m. but will allow speakers to sign up until 7 p.m. Speakers will have three minutes to present, and committee members may ask questions about their nominee. The committee asks that speakers leave a copy of their written testimony for the record. The hearing will be aired live on the system website at www.ccboc.com.



Going mad for science

Kathy Cahn, left, a biology, AP biology and Project Lead the Way biomed teacher at La Plata High School, talks with senior Ailani Bautista about her AP biology project. Bautista is in Jacqueline Doucette's Biomedical Innovation class.

School system infuses technology at every grade level

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is launching new programs and initiatives this school year to better infusing technology into curriculum while enhancing teaching and learning for students.

While students and teachers enjoyed their summer break, school system technology staff were busy working to increase Internet access and networking capabilities at all schools, centers and system buildings. According to Pete Cevenini, chief of technology for CCPS, changes were made to increase the bandwidth access, which helps to support new technologies and network access at schools. "We increased our bandwidth to handle a larger caseload. We have quadrupled access for users," he added.

The increased web capabilities allow CCPS to move forward with offering the Bring Your Own Device, or BYOD, program

to students and teachers in all 36 schools. Schools that use BYOD for learning allow students and staff to use a personal device for approved instructional activities.

These activities enhance the learning environment for students in which all have access to instruction designed around discovery, connectivity and experience.

As part of the program, Internet permissions and social networking access have been customized for elementary, middle and high schools. Several schools and centers are currently participating in BYOD instructional activities.

The BYOD program isn't the only technology initiative supported by the increased network and Internet capabilities for the school system.

New to sixth graders this school year is a Discovery Education online resource

See BYOD, page 2



On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are Maurice J. McDonough High School staff members. Pictured, from left, are David Stephenson, school nurse; Chelisse Perry, art teacher; and Stephen Fitzgerald, library media specialist.

Direct deposit

Employees can sign up for direct deposit by Oct. 31 to ensure holiday paychecks will be direct deposited. The paydays of Nov. 25 and Dec. 23 fall on a scheduled holiday for CCPS employees. All paper paychecks will be mailed to the employee's address on file on the day prior to payday with no exceptions.

Retirement meeting

The Charles County Retired School Personnel Association, the State of Maryland Pension System, along with the Office of Fiscal Services, is hosting a closed retirement planning session for Charles County Public Schools employees who are enrolled in the State of Maryland Pension System. The session will be 5 to 8:30 p.m. Nov. 16, in the cafeteria at St. Charles High School. Guest speakers and retirement planning handouts will be provided. Contact the Office of Employee Benefits at 301-934-7289 or email BenHotline@ccboe.com to RSVP by Oct. 20.

#ThankaPrincipal

The National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the American Federation of School Administrators are honoring the hard work and dedication of America's principals this month. National Principals Month is an opportunity to say "thank you" to principals. Follow @CCPS on Twitter to see collages of our principals this month.

Follow us on social media

Stay connected with what's going on with the Charles County Board of Education on Facebook. Go to www.facebook.com and search for the Charles County Board of Education, give the page a "like" to find out about closures and events. CCPS is on Twitter too. Follow @CCPS to see pictures of what is going on in the schools, as well as breaking "need to know" information.

In Memoriam Joyce V. Yates

Joyce V. Yates, a special education instructional assistant at the F.B. Gwynn Educational Center, passed away Oct. 9, 2016. She worked for Charles County Public Schools for nearly 30 years.

A La Plata High School graduate, Yates began working for Charles County Public Schools in 1987 as a substitute teacher.

In September 1999, she started as a special education job coach.

She began as a special education instructional assistant at the Gwynn Center in 2005 where she and teacher Heather Mehallow worked with prekindergarten students.

Before starting her career with CCPS, Yates worked for National Grange in Washington, D.C.



Joyce V. Yates

Yates was one of the brightest lights at the center, coworkers said.

She was dedicated to the students and greeted them with hugs and excitement as they arrived at school.

Yates, the mother of a daughter, was a fervent Pittsburgh Steelers fan and could be relied on to participate in Relay for Life events. Due to her

creativity, Yates was a natural choice to oversee bulletin boards that brightened the hallways of the school. Staff at the Gwynn Center are planning a memorial for Yates at the school. "It's a big loss to our building," Principal Daphne Burns said of Yates' passing.

As of Oct. 13, services were being finalized.

Renovations refurbish McDonough, La Plata gyms

The gyms of Maurice J. McDonough and La Plata high schools received a facelift over the summer with new bleachers and wood floors.

Charles County Public Schools started the renovation projects started after school let out in June, and anticipates finishing in early October. The bleachers were replaced due to age, not out of safety concerns, said Steven Andritz, director of planning and construction for Charles County Public Schools (CCPS).

While bleachers are inspected annually and maintained, the old bleachers were not fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and were becoming dated, Glenn Belmore, risk manager for CCPS, said.

The seating at McDonough was more than 20 years old, and La Plata's bleachers were first placed in 1979, making them nearly 40 years old. The new seating in both gyms is fully ADA compliant. The seating capacity at La Plata is 1,126.

McDonough's bleachers seat 981.

T.J. Distributors installed the new bleachers at both schools, as well as curtains — the dividers in gyms that allow the space to be broken into smaller areas. McDonough had one curtain installed, allowing the gym to be split into two spaces. La Plata now has two curtains, which lets the area be portioned into three spaces, Andritz said.

"Once some of these projects were falling into place, we started to look at other projects," Andritz said, adding that painting was refreshed; and doors and lighting were updated in the gyms too.

The total for the La Plata project is \$425,000 including floors, bleachers, curtains, painting, doors, hardware and lighting. McDonough's renovations cost \$352,000.

Also over the summer, Thomas Stone High School's wood gym floor was resurfaced, a practice flooring experts suggest take place every 10 years.

called Techbook. Techbooks are web-based interactive text books that feature multi-media learning components so students can better learn how to solve real-world problems, learn about complex topics and use inquiry-based activities to reinforce literacy and critical thinking skills.

Techbooks are being piloted at all middle schools in sixth grade mathematics, science and social studies classes. “We are very excited about this pilot program and are anticipating these new resources being very engaging for students. Techbooks have the unique ability to update information each year so the ‘textbook’ is always current,” said Amy Hollstein, CCPS deputy superintendent.

Another component of this pilot program is an added bonus for teachers. All teachers using Techbook in classes this school year will soon receive a new laptop to support incorporating the content into lesson plans, student activities and assessments. All Techbooks can be accessed by any electronic device, making the content accessible by students, parents and teachers at any time.

Hollstein said Techbook teachers received their new laptops at a teacher training. “If the pilot is a success, we will move forward for Board approval and if the Board is in favor of adopting the textbook, we will consider the new techbook to replace existing textbooks,” Hollstein added.

Another new resource available to middle school students this year is MobyMax, a web-based instructional resource for math, science and language arts classes that provides teachers with additional tools to differentiate lesson plans and activities for students at all ability levels.

MobyMax also features an advanced assessment tool that teachers can use to better identify content and skill areas in which students struggle, enabling them to personalize learning even more and targeting gaps in specific learning areas.

Middle schoolers aren’t the only students with access to new technology and enhanced instruction this year.

A group of about 23 CCPS students opted to do so through a mix of online learning and regular classroom settings. These students enrolled in the school system’s Virtual Academy (VA), a new offering this school year for high school students.

Based out of the Robert D. Stethem

Educational Center, the Academy is available for sophomores, juniors and seniors who prefer a mix of online learning with direct classroom instruction as an alternative to the traditional school setting. Students who attend the VA are required to spend five consecutive hours per day at Stethem, Monday through Thursday, and complete the same requirements as all other CCPS high school students.

The Academy employs five full-time teachers who provide face-to-face instruction and support the online learning aspect of the program in which students use Apex Learning online courses. The courses are standards-based and provide a complete course of study that integrates real-world examples to help students apply knowledge.

VA students must commit to complete one full school year in the program and can transfer back to their assigned high school the following year.

More than 30 course offerings are available and include English, Earth and space science, biology, chemistry, financial literacy and Algebra.

Another program the school system is planning to expand this year is virtual learning for home and hospital students and others who are not physically able to attend classes. Last school year, CCPS piloted the use of a programmable robot featuring a camera, iPad and adjustable pole, and combined its use with telepresence, or distance learning, technology. The technology provides an opportunity for a student who is not physically able to be in class to virtually participate in all lessons, class discussions and course content.

The student navigates the robot by using an app on a phone, tablet or computer from their home or hospital. The robot can maneuver through school hallways and in and out of classrooms on the adjustable pole, and students at school “see” their classmate through a live video feed on the attached iPad.

Middle and high school students aren’t the only students exposed to new ways of learning this year through enhanced technology.

In September, CCPS welcomed the Class of 2030 to elementary schools across the county – prekindergarten students.

During their open house events, some prekindergarten students not only met their teacher, but received an iPad for use in the classroom and at home as part of a new technology initiative geared at exposing

younger learners to technology while boosting parental involvement.

Kristin Shields, director of Title I programs for CCPS, coordinated the implementation of the initiative and said the goal is to not only connect children with technology, but to support and encourage parental involvement. “Technology is an important part of children’s education at home and school. Research shows that parental and family involvement increases academic achievement. Technology is a great learning tool for children and parents to use together,” Shields said.

Parents and family members received basic iPad training so they could support use of the device at home. Parents were also encouraged to engage their child in conversations about what they were learning and work together on app activities. The iPads came preloaded with three free apps — Starfall, Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame Street, and PBS Parents Play and Learn — that focus on reading, mathematics and social skills.

A committee of prekindergarten teachers and technology facilitators selected several apps for use on the iPads, which students will use at least every other week in class, and as part of activities at home with their parents and families.

All of the new initiatives and programs planned for this school year are part of Superintendent of Schools Kimberly Hill’s focus on enhancing technology access, providing students with the skills necessary for their future in a technology and digitally driven environment and providing teachers with the best tools for using multi-faceted approaches to reach children.

Hill also recognizes the users behind these new resources and emphasized the importance of a strong teacher in the classroom.

“We will continue to be relentless in looking for innovative ways to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. Technology is an effective tool to use in the classroom, but the significance of an outstanding teacher can never be replaced by technology. iPads, smartphones, video games, robots or whatever else the next cutting edge technological device is can never replace the influence of an outstanding teacher. We understand that and value the work that our teachers do each and every day to build positive relationships with our students,” Hill said.

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301-932-6610
301-934-7220
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Editor/Writers

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

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Board of Education agenda for the Oct. 18 meeting

The Board of Education's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, Oct. 18, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building on Radio Station Road in La Plata. The public portion of the meeting begins at 1 p.m. The meeting is televised live on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12, and is rebroadcast throughout the week. Board meetings are also streamed live on the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) website, www.ccboe.com. Click on the middle of the main page to start the live streaming. The following is a meeting agenda, and is subject to change.

Executive session – 12 p.m.

Call to order – 1 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance – North Point High School

Superintendent's update

Reports of officers/boards/committees

- Correspondence/board member updates
- Education Association of Charles County update
 - American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees update
 - Student board member's update
 - Policy 5117
 - Technology
 - Digital textbooks
 - Visitor sign-in system
 - New student information system

- Mentoring initiatives
- Redistricting update
- Selection of redistricting committee members

- FY 2016 Independent financial audit

- Staffing update
- 2017 Legislative positions

Unfinished business

New business and Future agenda items

- New business
- Future agenda items

Recognition – 4:30 p.m.

- Resolutions – American Education Week and American Freedom Week

- Students
- Employees

Public Forum – 6 p.m.

Action items

- Minutes
- Personnel
- FY 2017 Comprehensive maintenance plan

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

ROTC Instructor — St. Charles High School, 11-month position. Applicants must demonstrate attention to detail and work well in group problem solving situations. The instructor may need to manage difficult or emotional customer relations and will need to respond promptly to customer needs and requests for service and assistance. Apply by Oct. 17.

Reading Resource Teacher — location to be determined, 11-month position. A master's degree or eligibility for a Maryland Advanced Professional Certification with an endorsement in Reading is required. Five years of satisfactory teaching experience is a must. Applicants must demonstrate knowledge of appropriate instructional and

curricular methodologies and a knowledge of best practices in teaching reading. The position will be open until filled.

Building Service Worker — Henry E. Lackey High 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 required and a willingness to work overtime as required in cases of emergency is preferred. Apply by Oct. 17.

Building Service Worker — Mattawoman Middle School, 12-month position. Applicants must have the ability to read and write effectively and are physically capable of performing manual labor. Good verbal communications and human relation skills required and a willingness to work overtime as required in cases of emergency is preferred. Apply by Oct. 17.

Secretary — Theodore G. Davis Middle

School, 11-month position. Applicants must have positive human relation skills and an aptitude for the successful performance of duties and responsibilities such as good computer literacy skills. Apply by Oct. 19.

Benefits Assistant — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Associate's degree in human resources, business administration or related field from an accredited college or university is required. Three years progressively responsible experience in benefits administration and proficiency in Microsoft Office required. Apply by Oct. 24.

Extra pay positions

Head Varsity Wrestling Coach, Assistant Wrestling Coach, Head Indoor Track Coach, Assistant Indoor Track Coach, Head Outdoor Track Coach and Assistant Outdoor Track Coach — Thomas Stone High School. Call Brad Criss at 301-843-0074 to apply.