



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Afterschool activities

Afterschool professional development continues this winter and spring. There are classes for teachers of all grade levels and experience. To register, login at <http://registration.ccboe.com>. The workshops offer a stipend to teachers of \$25 per hour and do not offer CPD credit. For more trainings, go to www.ccboe.com, click "Staff," then "Staff Development." For more assistance, email dschaeffer@ccboe.com.

Communication nation

The Communications Advisory Committee is a 15-member group composed of parents and staff who advise Communications' staff from a parent and staff perspective about how they receive information from the school system and how to improve communications. Volunteers for the CAC must commit to attend three evening meetings each school year.

Vacancies will be filled immediately, and the next CAC meeting is 5:30 p.m. March 28, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata.

To apply for the CAC, send an email or letter of interest including your name and contact information by Jan. 13 to Katie O'Malley-Simpson, Director of Communications, Charles County Public Schools, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646 or email komalley@ccboe.com.

Summer session

CCPS will offer enrichment camps this summer for students in grades kindergarten through eight and is looking for teachers interested in leading a session.

Teachers can choose their session, the week of participation and earn extra pay. Interested teachers must complete a proposal form by Jan. 13. The proposal form is posted at <http://bit.ly/2hBGuYM>. Email ataylor@ccboe.com or jcampbell@ccboe.com with questions.



Academic Warriors

La Plata High School took the top spot for the fourth consecutive year in Charles County *It's Academic* competition held Dec. 7 at Maurice J. McDonough High School. The winning team was made up of James Hume, left, Justin Cortez, the captain, and Michael Gill. La Plata's team will be featured on the April 8 broadcast of *It's Academic* on NBC4. North Point High School came in second place and St. Charles High School placed third in the local competition.

Premium rate increase effective with Jan. 6 paycheck

New year, new you and new premium rate increases for the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) sponsored health insurance plan through CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield and Caremark. The increases are effective with the first paycheck of 2017, Friday, Jan. 6.

CCPS offers eligible employees benefits that include medical, dental and pharmacy services.

All changes made during open enrollment are effective Jan. 1, 2017, through Dec. 31, 2017.

The two plan options for employees included CareFirst Preferred Provider Plan (PPO/PPN) and Blue Choice Opt-Out Open Access. While co-pays have not increased, premium rates for 2017 have increased

slightly and are as follows. New premium rates for 2017 are:

- PPO/PPN plan – individual, \$204 per month (bi-weekly, \$102) — increase of \$6; family, \$546 per month (bi-weekly, \$273) — increase of \$16.
- Open Access – individual, \$150 per month (bi-weekly, \$75) — increase of \$12; family, \$432 per month (bi-weekly, \$216) — increase of \$36.

The primary factors driving the increased spending in health care are high-cost claimants, specialty pharmacy benefits and overall medical inflation.

And while health benefits did not change this year, the flexible spending account provider changed from Wage Works to Select Plan.

See BENEFITS, page 2

Benefits

continued from page 1

Those enrolled must file all claims incurred in the 2016 calendar year to Wage Works no later than March 1.

Video Visit

CareFirst Video Visit is new this year. When a primary care provider is not available, CareFirst Video allows patients to securely connect with a doctor via computer, tablet or smartphone at any time. To register, visit www.carefirst.com/needcare and click on a Video Visit link or download the CareFirst Video Visit app.

Get carded

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield will only mail new medical and dental cards if a plan change is made for 2017. Current members will not receive a new prescription card. Welcome letters were mailed from SelectAccount for employees who enrolled in the 2017

flexible spending plan year. The letter included a SelectAccount ID to register online at <https://www.selectaccount.com>. Once registered, members can file claims and request additional FSA debit cards for family members.

Employees participating in flexible spending programs will need to access the online benefit enrollment site to enroll in the unreimbursed medical expense and child care flexible spending accounts.

The accounts are active from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31 annually.

Unreimbursed medical expenses include allowable expenses not covered but not fully reimbursable by any benefit plans, such as a co-pay or deductible, and expenses not covered by any benefit plans which are prescribed by a physician.

Board approves school calendar for 2017-18 year

The Board of Education at its Dec. 13 meeting approved the Charles County Public Schools 2017-18 school calendar.

The calendar meets the requirements included in the Governor's executive order and includes a start date for students of Tuesday, Sept. 5, 2017.

Other changes for the calendar for next school year include:

- Schools and offices are closed Nov. 22-24 for the Thanksgiving holiday
- Winter break for students and teachers is Dec. 25, 2017, through Jan. 1, 2018
- Spring break is March 30 through April 3. Schools reopen for students and teachers on Wednesday, April 4.
- The last day of school for students is Friday, June 15, 2018 (with five inclement weather days built into the school calendar)
- The last day of school for teachers is Monday, June 18, 2018 (with five inclement weather days)

Any inclement weather days not used during the school year will be deleted from the end of the school year in the fol-



lowing order: June 15, June 14, June 13, June 12 and June 11.

Earlier this school year, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan announced an executive order requiring all public schools to open no earlier than the day after Labor Day and end for students by June 15.

The Board examined two options developed by staff and surveyed the community on the options to gather feedback.

A copy of the approved calendar is posted on the school system website at www.cbboe.com/aboutus/calendar/Board-ApprovedCalendar201718.pdf.

Notebook

On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees honored by the Board of Education at its December meeting. Pictured from left are Subha Nathan, an instructional assistant at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School; Christine Chinault, an art teacher at Malcolm Elementary School; and Autumn Britt, an art teacher at St. Charles High School.

Hear the buzz

The 2017 Charles County Spelling Bee will be 6 p.m. Feb. 16 at Theodore G. Davis Middle School at 2495 Davis Road in Waldorf.

Erly birds get the awards ...

The Maurice Erly Professional Development Award is given to educators in the Educational Systems Federal Credit Union system, including those in Charles County.

The \$1,000 award can be used toward continuing education, including workshop registration, certification fees and tuition. The award was named for Erly, who retired from the Prince George's County Board of Education after 38 years of service, with more than 25 of those years spent as the Coordinating Supervisor of Staff Development.

For guidelines, go to www.esfcu.org/MauriceErly. The deadline to apply for the award is April 3. Email completed applications to supporteducation@esfcu.org.

Social network

Stay connected with what's going on with the Charles County Board of Education on social media platforms.

Go to www.facebook.com and search for the Charles County Board of Education, give the page a "like" to find out inclement weather notices, as well as information about closures, events and what's happening in schools around the county.

If you like your news in 140 characters or less, find Charles County Public Schools on Twitter.

Go to <https://twitter.com/CCPS> to find out the latest goings-on in the school system. CCPS also posts inclement weather and breaking news information on social media and the school

Nominate Outstanding Classified Personnel for 2017 awards program

Charles County Public Schools is looking for award nominees for the 2017 Outstanding Classified Personnel Awards program.

Award categories include building service, food service, instructional support, secretary, maintenance, information technology and central office support staff.

This includes staff who work at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, or the Annex I or Annex II buildings.

All nominations are due by Wednesday, March 1 to the office of human resources. Award winners will be announced and recognized at the June 13 Board of Education meeting.

Nominees must meet the following criteria: works full-time, has been employed with the school system for a minimum of three school years in the area for which they were nominated, and not have received this award within the past five years. Nominees must also meet criteria in the following areas:

- Resourceful in seeking and completing job duties;
- Seeks new knowledge and skills;
- Knows and understands all aspects of their assigned jobs;
- Utilizes technology where appropriate;
- Fosters cooperative relationships with students, colleagues and

the community; and

- Demonstrates outstanding leadership.

Nomination materials must be included in a presentation binder and should not exceed 15 pages. All binders must include a cover page, career summary, description of contributions in the nomination criteria areas and statements of support.

Nomination binders for the building service, food service, instructional support, and secretary awards must include a minimum of 10 letters of support, including one from the principal/supervisor, three from co-workers and six from students, staff or the community.

Binders for the maintenance, information technology and central office support staff award nominations must include a minimum of eight letters of support, including one from the division supervisor and immediate supervisor, three from other department supervisors, and three from co-workers or staff.

Binders are due to Ramona DiBenedetto by Wednesday, March 1. Contact DiBenedetto at 301-934-7242 or dibenedetto@ccboe.com for more information.

Nomination materials also are posted on the school system website at <http://www.ccboe.com/jobs/emprec.php>.

North Point electrical construction program partners with Siemens for SIschool

The average house in the United States is 43 years old. The average age of an electrician is 56. Trends are changing with a push toward renewable, efficient energy and solar power, while older homes need renovation to support today's technology. Skilled electricians are needed for all of it.

"The industry is at the tipping point," David Quatela, brand strategy manager at Siemens, a manufacturing and electronics company, said during a recent presentation to members of the electrical construction program at North Point High School. "You guys will be on the front lines. There is lots of work for you."

North Point was named a SIschool, one of seven in the country to offer hands-on training in the field of low voltage electrical engineering training. Siemens provides residential electrical equipment for students to practice advanced wiring skills while becoming familiar with technologies used in the electrical engineering field, according to information provided by the company.

"The technology is always evolving," said Valerie Schicho, a Siemens representative. "We look at what's going on in the market and work on solutions to help meet the needs."

There is a push to renovate older homes — houses not equipped to handle big screen televisions, computers and the household appliances of the 21st century. "This is the stuff we're running into," Schicho said. "People can't microwave and watch TV at the same time without tripping [the electrical system]."

The 28 electrical construction students at North Point have already started working on the Siemens donated equipment. Some students will likely go further with the knowledge they gain in the program; others will go into other lines of study.

Joel Mulbah, a senior, said he is interested in owning his own business, but doesn't know exactly what he wants to do. He was interested

in learning about the trends in the construction business. "I'd like to be involved in everything," Mulbah said.

"You're just starting out," Keith Gascon, electrical construction teacher, said to his students. "Our program is designed to get you started. We're trying to expose you to all the different places you can go. You're learning the basics. But there's a whole heckuva a lot more to learn."

"The electrical engineering landscape has changed dramatically even over the last 10 years, so we need to ensure that the workforce of tomorrow is prepared," Barry Powell, head of Siemens Low Voltage & Systems, said in a news release. "By providing schools with the latest in engineering technology, students can have a true hands-on approach to learning that we hope will help develop the next generation of great American engineers." The trends point to builders focusing on renewable and environmentally sound energy.

"But they have no one who knows how to install it properly," Schicho said. "We're coming into a field of growth that we have never seen before. Electricians and plumbers are in the highest demand in construction right now."

"The jobs are there, and they pay good." Jim Lawson, a sales manager for Shepherd Electric who works with Siemens, agreed. Based in Frederick, he sees how the local market is booming. "In the Baltimore-Washington, D.C., area — we don't make anything here, except laws," he said. "But we have hospitals, universities, the federal government. There's a lot of baby boomers and not a lot of you guys. Your generation has to pick up where we left off."

"If we don't have people to do the work, the work is not getting done," Schicho said.

"The world is wanting for what's running through your heads," Lawson said. "The industry is waiting to hear your ideas."

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Board of Education agenda for Jan. 10 meeting

The Board of Education's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, Jan. 10 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 also are streamed live on the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) website, www.ccboe.com. The following meeting agenda is subject to change.

Executive session – 12 p.m.

Call to order – 1 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance – Henry E. Lackey High School

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman
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
- Making a Difference: Non-traditional high school completion programs
- CIP update
- Elementary school 22 update

• Superintendent's proposed FY2018 operating budget

- School naming committee report
- Legislative update

Unfinished business

- Policy No. 5117: Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation

New business and future agenda items

- New business
- Future agenda items

Recognition – 4:30 p.m.

- Resolutions: Black History Month; Career and Education Month; National School Counseling Week; and Gifted and Talented Education Month

- Students

- Employees

Public Forum – 6 p.m.

Action items

- Minutes

- Personnel

- Policy 5117: Bullying, Harassment and Intimidation

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

Benefits Assistant — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Applicants must have a degree in human resources, business administration or a related field from an accredited college or university, as well as three years progressively responsible experience in benefits administration. Proficiency in Microsoft Office, an ability to work professionally and discretely with extremely confidential information and a strong focus on accuracy and attention to detail is a must. Position will be open until filled.

Building Service Worker — John Hanson Middle School, 12-month position. Applicants must be able to read and write effectively, be physically capable of performing manual labor, have good verbal communications and

human relations skills, and a willingness to work overtime if required. Apply by Jan. 17.

Electronics Technician III — Annex I, 12-month position. High school diploma required with a degree from an accredited technical school or college preferred. The position involves the installation, repair, overhaul, fabrication, tuning, alignment, modification, calibration and testing of electronic equipment and related devices. Candidates should have two years minimum industry installation and repair technician experience. Position will be open until filled.

Special Education Instructional Assistant — Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School, 10-month position. Applicants must have an interest in and aptitude for working with school-aged children, as well as the ability to work with students with a variety of mental abilities and disabilities. Excellent human relations skills, good oral and written communication skills and an ability to

communicate effectively is a must. A high school diploma and experience working with children are required. Apply by Jan. 9.

Fingerprint Technician/Office Assistant — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, temporary — part time. Applicants should hold or be eligible for certification as a biometrics technician through the state and hold or be eligible for commission as a Notary Public. Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED and one year of successful customer service experience. Apply by Jan. 6.

Substitute Teacher — Applicants must be 18 or older and have at least a high school diploma or GED. Substitutes assume the duties and responsibilities of the regular teacher and follow lesson plans provided by the teacher. Maintaining appropriate records in the absence of the teacher and supervising students are among the duties of a substitute teacher. Apply by June 30.