

*It's All About Teaching
and Learning.*

Charles County Public Schools

School News



Important Dates Coming Soon

Bunkyo students welcomed

Student teachers from Bunkyo University in Japan arrived in Charles County earlier this week. During a two-week visit, the 30 university students will work in schools and teach lessons on Japanese culture. They will teach at William A. Diggs, Indian Head, Malcolm, Mary H. Matula, Walter J. Mitchell, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd and J.C. Parks elementary schools and Theodore G. Davis and Milton M. Somers middle schools. A Sayonara party is set for Feb. 25 at North Point High School. This is the 26th year the school system has hosted Bunkyo students.

Commodores to play Feb. 26

Henry E. Lackey High School is hosting the U.S. Navy Band Commodores, the Navy's premier jazz ensemble, at 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 26. Admission is free and the concert is open to the public. The 18-member group is led by Senior Chief Musician William C. Mulligan. Their performances feature a mix of traditional big band music, jazz vocal arrangements and new instrumental music written specifically for the Commodores. Visit <http://www.navyband.navy.mil/commodores.html> to learn more about the Commodores.

Sotomayor promoted

Charles County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Kimberly Hill recently named Randy Sotomayor Executive Director of the Office of Finance and Business for the school system. He will officially take the reigns May 1 and replaces Assistant Superintendent Paul Balides, who is retiring. Sotomayor began his career with CCPS in 1996 as a financial analyst. He earned his bachelor's degree from Drexel University and his masters of science in education from Indiana University Bloomington. He serves as the treasurer for the Association of School Business Officials.



Present and ready for another 100 years

Members of the Charles County Board of Education visited the Port Tobacco one-room schoolhouse Feb. 17 to celebrate the first 100 days of school and to kick off the 100th anniversary of the Charles County Board of Education. From now to October, the school system will collect historical information, photographs and artifacts about the area's public schools. Past board members, as well as teachers, students and others can share information by emailing boardmail@ccboe.com. Pictured are Jennifer Abell, from front left, Margaret Marshall, Board Chairman Virginia McGraw, Mark Crawford, Vicki Kelly and Barbara Palko.

Charles County Public Schools celebrates centennial

February 17 was the 100th day of school for the 2015-16 school year and the Board of Education of Charles County is celebrating by announcing its 100-year anniversary.

Members of Board XVI met at the Port Tobacco one-room schoolhouse Wednesday to kick off a series of activities designed to raise awareness of the Board of Education, its rich history and its role in the success of Charles County's public school system.

The theme for the celebration is Chalkboards to Tablets: Looking Back, Moving Forward.

The Board of Education of Charles County, along with Boards of Education across Maryland, was legally organized as a

Public Body Corporate in 1916.

Previously, a Board of School Commissioners governed the county's schools, most of which were one-room schoolhouses.

The first Board meeting minutes reflecting the change were taken Oct. 17, 1916, and signed by Superintendent of Schools Thomas M. Carpenter.

Between now and October, the Board will host a number of activities, including a four-part educational lecture series, an interactive history and event search, historic displays, and a reception recognizing the contributions of past Board members.

Additionally, the Board is compiling

See 100 Years, page 3

Taylor has excellent chemistry with teaching

Tiffany Taylor, a chemistry teacher at St. Charles High School, was recently named a recipient of the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Robert E. Yager Foundation Excellence in Teaching Award. The award is given annually to six science teachers nationwide who demonstrate excellence in teaching and innovation in the field of science education. Eligible awardees include science teachers who work with students in grades kindergarten through 12.

Taylor has been teaching with Charles County Public Schools for the past five school years and started her career at Mattawoman Middle School, where she taught life and physical sciences. She transitioned to the high-school level in 2014 when St. Charles High School first opened for students. Taylor said she is humbled by her selection for a national award.

"I never thought I would be chosen for a highly sought after National award. Not because I am a poor educator, but because the pool of great teachers is so large. It goes to show, even after 11 years of teaching, that the only way you won't get something is to do nothing," Taylor said.

As an award recipient, Taylor was invited to attend the NSTA's National Congress on Science Education in Denver this summer to present. During the Congress, she will be honored during a formal award presentation ceremony. The award honors Robert Yager, a retired professor of science education at the University of Iowa and the Iowa Academy of Education who spent his career advocating for science education, inquiry-based teaching methods for students and making science education accessible for all students.

Recipients are selected by an awards committee based on criteria that includes excellence in the field of science education; effective planning and presentation skills; the ability to motivate and challenge students; proficiency in science education; participation in professional growth and leadership roles; and demonstrated support of the next generation science standards.

Taylor's career in science education started in a Prince George's County Public Schools Biology classroom in 2005. It

was her first year as a teacher after a career change from working in a pharmaceutical lab and Taylor said she used experiences from her former career to connect her students with classroom content. "My experiences opened the door to their curiosity about Biology and thus engaged their desire to learn more, even beyond the walls of the classroom," she said. One of her priorities as a teacher is to engage the curiosity of her students through science. To support this goal, Taylor incorporates technology into her lessons and provides students with access to several hands-on activities so they can learn by doing.

She attends workshops at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and uses her experiences to develop activities for her classes. She recently went to a workshop at the Milwaukee School of Engineering to learn about molecular modeling and three-dimensional printing. Taylor incorporated what she learned in to a lesson on molecular designs in which students had to present on the biological action of a molecule based on its structure.

These activities help support another goal Taylor has as a teacher: building student engagement. "All of these experiences of enriching students' learning with hands-on and inquiry activities has allowed me to increase my students' engagement in the sciences. By presenting them with these opportunities, we can then have more in depth conversations about content in the classroom," she said.

Taylor will receive a \$1,000 award, travel expenses toward attending the NSTA National Congress on Science Education and a plaque. Taylor has a bachelor's degree in Biology and a master's degree in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in educational technology. She is also active in the American Chemistry Society as a ChemClub Sponsor and received a Hach Professional Development Grant from the organization last year.



Tiffany Taylor

Notebook

On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees recognized by the Board of Education at their Jan. 12 meeting. Pictured, from left, are Maritza Davis, secretary to the principal, William B. Wade Elementary School; Sandy Rooney, secretary to the principal, Robert D. Stethem Educational Center; and Deborah Luehe, media instructional assistant, Matthew Henson Middle School. The Board honors exemplary employees monthly.

Free math webinars set

Free interactive math webinars for educators will be held in March. All of the webinars will start at 4 p.m. On March 1, "Using Technology to Support the Learner-centered Mathematics Classroom" will be held. "Using Close Reading Strategies to Solve Math Word Problems" will be March 9. "Questioning and Discussion Techniques in the Elementary Math Classroom — Part 1" will be March 16 and Part 2 is scheduled for March 23. "What does the PARCC assessment ask students to do and how can you help students be better prepared for the test format" will be discussed in the March 30 webinar. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/2016MATH>.

Survey says?

Charles County Public Schools is looking for feedback on the school calendar. The Board of Education approves school calendars two years in advance to provide for adequate planning and notification time. The Board was presented with a proposal from CCPS staff at their Feb. 9 meeting for review, and will discuss the 2017-18 calendar at their March 8 meeting, followed by approval at the April 19 meeting. The proposal is posted on the Charles County Public Schools website at <http://www.ccboe.com/calendar/Draft1718.pdf>. A survey with short questions about the calendar is on the school system website at <http://www.ccboe.com/aboutus/calendar/general.php>.

Socially acceptable

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 inclement weather notices, as well as information about closures, events and what's happening in schools around

historical information and archives. Board Member Vicki Kelly, at the February Board meeting, said, “The Board’s history is made up of thousands of stories. Those stories include the people who have served as Board members, and also those who studied here, taught here and trained here.”

She asked the public to share their stories and photos with the Board through email (boardmail@ccboe.com) or the Charles County Board of Education Facebook page.

“We are excited about providing Charles County residents with opportunities to learn more about the Board of Education and Charles County Public Schools. We hope you will join us throughout the year at activities we think will be both educational and fun,” Kelly said.

The public also can follow the Board’s centennial celebration news by following @ccps on Twitter and using #ccboe100.

About the one-room schoolhouse

The Port Tobacco Schoolhouse served children in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1916, the future of the little school was in doubt as Port Tobacco’s population decreased.

Community members, according to a 1976 article in the “History of the One and Two-Room Schools in Charles County,” were able to keep the school in Port Tobacco until 1923 when students were transferred to the La Plata Public School. Today, the Charles County Retired Teachers’ Association maintains the schoolhouse and provides living history lessons for second graders throughout the school year.

Charles County Public Schools graduation rates continue to climb, set record high

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) graduation rate hit 92.36 percent in 2015, setting another record high and posting its fifth increase in five years, according to data released by the Maryland State Department of Education last week. As student graduation rates increase, the CCPS dropout rate continues to decline.

The CCPS four-year cohort graduation rate jumped nearly one percentage point from 91.4 percent in 2014 and has improved more than five points since 2010. The CCPS average exceeds the state graduation rate of 87 percent.

“I can’t tell you how proud we are of the accomplishments of our students,” Superintendent Kimberly Hill said. She credited principals, teachers and staff for helping students stay in school and graduate with their class.

“None of this would have been possible without the hard work of students and staff and a strong commitment to the academic success of all students,” Hill said.

Five of six high schools posted graduation rates greater than 90 percent. Henry E. Lackey High School’s graduation rate jumped from 90.57 in 2014 to 91.75 in 2015. La Plata High School posted a 2015 rate of 95.93, up from 92.82, and North Point High School’s graduation rate was 95.82, a slight decline from its 95.94 rate in 2014. Westlake High School improved its graduation rate to 93.13, up from 91 percent in 2014. Maurice J. McDonough High School increased its graduation rate from 89.07 to 92.24 in 2015, and Thomas Stone High School rate remained stable at 87.1, down slightly from its 2014 rate of 87.36.

Four-year cohort graduation rates by race/ethnicity are:

- Asian: 95.31 percent;
- African American: 91.93 percent;
- Hispanic/Latino: 87.74 percent;
- White: 93.63 percent;
- Two or more races: greater than 92.31 percent; and
- American Indian or Alaska Native: 81.25.

Graduation rates for other subgroups include:

The graduation rate for students receiving free or reduced-price meals (FARMS) increased, from 82.2 percent to 84 percent. The graduation rate for special education students was 74.03 percent.

The four-year cohort graduation rate for females dropped slightly from 94.37 in 2014 to 94.27 in 2015. A higher percentage of males graduated in 2015, up nearly 2 points from 88.56 in 2014 to 90.50 in 2014.

Hill said, “We still have work to do to close the achievement gaps for these subgroups.”

The percentage of students dropping out of school also continues to steadily decline. The CCPS four-year cohort dropout rate reduced from 4.97 percent in 2014 to 4.30 percent in 2015.

The State’s dropout rate was 8.08 percent in 2015. Dropout rates provide a cumulative rate across the four years since the cohort first entered grade 9.

This rate includes dropouts as those students who did not graduate after four years but did not return for a fifth year.

Six years ago, Maryland moved to the cohort graduation rate, which follows a set group of students from freshman year through their senior year. The State includes both the four-year cohort and five-year cohort rate in its accountability program.

Data released this week is for the four-year cohort graduation rate for the class of 2015 and includes summer graduates. The calculation follows students from the time they first enter grade 9 and includes those who graduate after four years.

Graduation Rate – Four-year Cohort Rates at a Glance

Charles County Public Schools – All Students

School	2014	2015
Henry E. Lackey	90.57	91.75
La Plata	92.82	95.93
McDonough	89.07	92.24
North Point	95.94	95.82
Thomas Stone	87.36	87.1
Westlake	91.0	93.13
Charles County	91.4	92.36
Maryland	86.39	87.0

More information about graduation and dropout rates, along with other Maryland accountability measures, can be found on the 2015 Maryland Report Card at <http://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/>.

School News is published by
Charles County Public Schools
301-932-6610
301-934-7220
Fax: 301-932-6651

Board of Education Members

Virginia R. McGraw, *Chairman*
Michael Lukas, *Vice Chairman*
Jennifer S. Abell
Mark Crawford
Victoria T. Kelly
Margaret T. Marshall
Barbara S. Palko
Pearson Benson, *Student Member*

Superintendent of Schools

Kimberly A. Hill, Ed.D.

Editor/Writers

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

The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Dr. Patricia Vaira, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Pamela K. Murphy, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 coordinator (employees/ adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.



Members of the SkillsUSA chapter at North Point High School recently volunteered at Our Place soup kitchen. Pictured from left are Jenna Williams, president of the school's SkillsUSA chapter, health occupations teacher Jill Bodamer, Joseph McGuigan, chapter treasurer and Jordan Lloyd. Culinary arts teacher Pam Jones is in the background.

SkillsUSA students put together recipe of kindness

Members of North Point High School's SkillsUSA chapter spent a recent Thursday putting their talents to good use when they volunteered at Our Place soup kitchen.

Our Place holds a free dinner once a week for anyone in need of a meal.

Held 5 p.m. Thursdays at Good Shepherd Methodist Church in Waldorf, about 60 people show up each week to share dinner, said Veronica Haileyesus Bullock, who along with Deanna Gerhart founded the soup kitchen.

This is the second year that North Point's culinary arts students have cooked a meal and

SkillsUSA members helped serve guests, said health occupations teacher, Jill Bodamer.

"We do it to help the less fortunate," said Aki-ra Moss, a senior studying culinary arts. "I like to cook and I like to see people's expressions when they have good food."

The Builder's Clubs of Benjamin Stoddert and Theodore G. Davis middle schools will host a dinner in March at Our Place.

In April, dinners will be held on Mondays and Thursdays.

For more information about Our Place or to volunteer, visit www.ourplacewaldorf.com.

Personnel

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

Job openings

Secretary — F.B. Gwynn Educational Center, 11-month position. High school diploma, positive human relations skills and good computer literacy skills, including working with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and the Internet, required. Capacity to work with students, teachers and parents, and knowledge of efficient office practices and procedures preferred. Good oral and written communication skills. Apply by Feb. 25.

Special Education Instructional Assistant — Life Skills — Mary B. Neal Elementary School, 10-month position. High school diploma required. Experience working with children or adults with special needs. Ability to work and interact with students with significant mental and physical disabilities also pre-

ferred. Knowledge of special skills required to work with students having special needs also preferred. Excellent human relations and organizational skills. Apply by Feb. 26.

Food Service Assistant Manager — location to be determined, 10-month position. High school diploma or equivalent. A minimum three years experience in food service. Ability to perform duties and responsibilities such as meal production, planning, scheduling, safety and sanitation. Good verbal communication and human relations skills. Must be ServeSafe certified within 12 months of assuming position. Apply by Feb. 29.

School Counselor Secondary — location to be determined, 11-month position. Master's degree in school counseling and eligibility for certification in school counseling as determined by the Maryland State Department of Education. A minimum of a 600-hour practicum or experience teaching or counseling in a school setting. Evidence of exemplary human

relations skills. Demonstrated ability to plan and organize and knowledge of appropriate counseling skills. Apply by Feb. 29.

French Teacher — location to be determined, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree required and meets certification requirements established by the Maryland State Department of Education. Knowledge of subject matter and appropriate instructional methodologies preferred. Evidence of excellent human relations skills, organizational and planning skills and the ability to work effectively with students, parents and staff. Plans and provides for appropriate learning experiences for students. Apply by Sept. 1.

Extra pay positions

Unified Track Coach — La Plata High School. Call Rich Paule, athletic director, at 301-753-1754 to apply.

Assistant Basketball Coach — North Point High School. Call Andy Shattuck, athletic director, at 301-753-1759 to apply.