



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Winter break closures

Schools will be closed from Dec. 23 through Jan. 3 for winter break. Administrative offices are closed Dec. 23 through Dec. 27 for winter break. Offices will also be closed on Wednesday, Jan. 1, for New Year's Day. Indoor pools at Henry E. Lackey and North Point high schools are closed Dec. 24, Dec. 25, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. Schools reopen on Monday, Jan. 6.

It's almost testing time

High School Assessment (HSA) testing begins Jan. 6 and ends Jan. 17.

Payroll announcements

Due to the winter break schedule, payroll is adjusting processing dates for pay periods affecting the Jan. 3 and Jan. 17 pay dates. The changes affect all hourly employees, including but not limited to temporary workers, substitutes and food service workers. Hours included in the Jan. 3 paycheck will include those worked between Dec. 9 to Dec. 17 (seven days). Hours included in the Jan. 17 paycheck will include those worked between Dec. 18 to Jan. 3. Salaried employees are not affected by this change. Normal pay periods will resume with the Jan. 31 payday.

Employees that receive live/paper checks and are not signed up for direct deposit will receive their Jan. 3 pay check through the mail at their home address listed on the employee portal. All employees that receive paper checks should check their mailing address listed in the portal to ensure the information is correct.

Information, 24 hours a day

The Charles County Public Schools 24-hour information line contains the most up-to-date news and calendar information. Call 301-934-7410 or 301-932-6656 to hear a recorded message.

Birds and pigs unlock the secrets of computer code

It was Angry Bird against the pig, and the pig didn't stand a chance with fourth graders from Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School controlling the moves. Instead of playing Angry Birds, Sarah Harmon and her classmates were creating the bird's move through computer coding. Harmon plotted how to move her Angry Bird and eliminate the pesky pig. She was creating rather than playing the game as she figured out how many moves and which way the bird would need to turn to get the pig.

Last week in computer lab, all Mt. Hope kindergarten through fifth-grade students learned about computer coding through an "Hour of Code," a nationwide campaign to expose students to an hour of computer coding through drag and drop programming. Students learned how to complete steps with video tutorials taught by Microsoft cofounder Bill Gates and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, and were encouraged by Mt. Hope's Hour of Code Coordinator Lisa Sweeney as she walked around helping children when they got stumped by a code.

"Anybody can learn computer code. That means everybody in this room can learn," Sweeney told the class.

"This is going to be fun," echoed through the class as the Angry Bird maze popped up on computer screens.

During the Hour of Code, taught through free tutorials on Code.org, students learned how to think ahead, figure out which way the bird needed to turn and how many steps it would take to get to the pig. Then they programed the game, dragging and dropping code. With each step, they learned something new. They learned to combine steps and repeat code.



Jesse Jorgensen develops code for an Angry Bird game during an Hour of Code session at Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School.

Coding was fun, said Harmon as she reluctantly signed off her computer at the end of the hour. "This was fun. You just keep repeating steps over and over and then you learn one move might move the Bird and you don't have to overdo it," Harmon said.

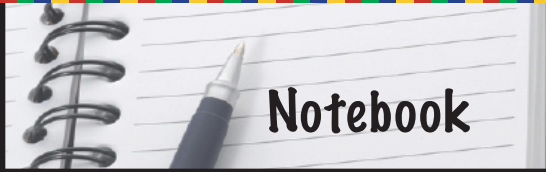
When they got through enough

screens, they were rewarded with the Zombie, a favorite with this fourth-grade class. Student Sierra Simpson was excited to reach the Plants versus Zombie level and said it was fun to learn coding. "It got harder each time, but it is not too complicated," she said as she counted and recounted before dragging and dropping code to help her Zombie get the sunflower without bumping into a Zombie-eating plant.

Hour of Code offers interactive coding lessons for every age group. Sweeney used the Angry Birds tutorial for the older children and a program called Scratch for younger students that taught how to use code to change a puppy's costume and appearance.

Hour of Code was held in schools across the nation and in several in Charles County Public Schools during the week of Dec. 9-15, which is Computer Science Education Week.

Hour of Code was designed to encourage school systems to teach computer science, a concept Superintendent Kimberly Hill embraces. Hill, along with computer science teachers, has been working to enhance computer science for all students. "We are working on enhancing our computer science classes by creating a K-12 computer science experience for our students. Next year, we will begin offering more computer science classes. In the meantime, we are working to infuse computer science concepts at all levels," Hill said.



On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees from Westlake High School. Pictured, from left, are Kathryn Wathen, social studies teacher; Steffy Henderson, social studies teacher; and Anthony Cianfichi, media instructional assistant.

JROTC cadets serve community

A group of 36 Army JROTC cadets from Thomas Stone High School participated in the national Wreaths Across America project on Dec. 14 at Arlington National Cemetery to honor veterans for their service. The event demonstrated the students' outstanding character and holiday spirit, and the cadets helped to unload trucks of wreaths and place them on grave sites in section 54. Additionally, a group of nine student cadets from Stone served as escorts during the Victorian Christmas event held at the Dr. Mudd House the weekend of Dec. 7-8. Each year during the holiday season, the house is decorated as it would have been during the Victorian period.

Check your information

Charles County Public Schools employees should check their name on their pay statements or in the employee portal to ensure the information is accurate. Names must be correct and match your Social Security card. If an employee's name has changed from marriage, divorce or other circumstances and does not match their Social Security information, contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) or visit their website, www.ssa.gov, for more information. The IRS may impose a \$100 penalty to the employee and the school system for every W-2 received that does not match the SSA information.

To update your name or address, fill out a status change form and submit it to the office of human resources. The form is available on the InsideCCPS section of the website, under the employee portal.

Band students march in NYC

Three North Point High School band students were selected to perform during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade in New York City. Seniors Tony Teleky and Noah Gibson, and Benjamin Busch, a sophomore, marched in the parade that was featured on Channel NBC 4. This is the third time Teleky has participated in the parade and the second time for Gibson.



Tyler Francisco, a first year JROTC member from Maurice J. McDonough High School, led the color guard at the Joint Services Military Ball held Dec. 6.

Senior cadets honored for JROTC participation

The Charles County Public Schools Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp (JROTC) program provides student cadets with learning opportunities that are deeply rooted in military traditions. These traditions range from participating in the Color Guard and drill meets to serving as leaders in their school communities. For the 191 senior cadets enrolled in the program at Charles County's six high schools, the Joint Services Military Ball is a tradition held annually to honor and celebrate their participation in JROTC.

This year's ball was held Dec. 6 at North Point High School, and is the seventh annual event coordinated by the school system. As part of the ball, cadets participate in a variety of ceremonial military traditions including the Presentation of Colors by the Joint JROTC Color Guard, a toast to honor military personnel, leaders and ball guests, and the selection of a military court. Senior cadets are also presented with certificates of participation from their program instructors to honor their JROTC commitment.

Thomas Stone High School senior cadet Brianna Allen-Hall and Tierra Marbray, a senior cadet at North Point, served as the mistresses of ceremonies. The toast portion of the ball featured references to the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, JROTC instructors and to all cadets in attendance. Following the toasts, a celebratory dinner was held and senior cadets

were called on to the floor by high school to receive their certificates. Students also participated in two other military ball traditions: cake cutting and the presentation of the military court.

The military court consists of a king and queen who are selected from students who have participated in their school's JROTC program each year in during their high school career. La Plata High School senior Anthony Erwin was this year's king, and North Point senior Adia Dobbs was named queen for 2013.

The JROTC program is available at all six county high schools, and teaches students skills, values and good citizenship to the community. Participation in JROTC also provides advanced rank opportunities for students who plan to enter the military after high school. JROTC programs were first introduced in Charles County Public Schools in 1998 at Henry E. Lackey High School. Board member Donald M. Wade is a former JROTC advisor in Prince George's County was instrumental in launching the program for Charles County students.

Both the programs at Lackey and North Point high schools represent the Air Force; the programs at McDonough and Stone represent the Army; and La Plata, as well as Westlake High School, features a JROTC program that represents the Navy. More than 964 students are enrolled in county JROTC programs this school year.

Charles County Public Schools give back to the community for the holidays

Tis the season for giving in Charles County Public Schools.

For Berry Elementary School, tis the season for "Five Days of Giving." Students and staff held a holiday drive by bringing different donated items for five days. The first day was designated to hats and gloves. The second day was earmuffs and scarves. Day three was donated toys. Pajamas were brought in for day four. The final day was designated to socks.

On Thursday, Dec. 12, five fifth graders from the Just Say No Club got together to begin wrapping goodies for families in need. Teamwork was apparent as the students passed the tape, folded the wrapping paper around the donated items and talked about making good choices. "I hope everyone enjoys what they get. Not everyone gets to experience this. I hope they have joy for the holiday season," said fifth-grade student Areini Partis. School Counselors from Berry, Olivia Coffey and Tiara King, helped the students wrap gifts and talked about making positive choices and being positive role models. "Be the difference and the students will be the difference," King said.

This fundraiser is part two of holiday giving for Berry. For Thanksgiving, Berry held a three-week food drive. Each week, staff and students donated a different meal. Berry had enough food to feed families in need and donate to a food bank. "We had three pick-up trucks full of food," Coffey said.

The spirit of giving is also evident in other Charles County public schools. Schools collected money, toys and other necessities and donated food to different organizations and food banks. Some of these schools include: General Smallwood, Piccowaxen and Theodore G. Davis middle schools and Indian Head, Walter J. Mitchell, J.C. Parks, William A. Diggs and Dr. Samuel A. Mudd elementary schools.

Other schools coordinated their own giving events. Some of these events included:

- Dr. James Craik Elementary School collected "Pennies for Puppies" and planned to take care of four-legged friends through the holiday season. The school raised more than \$942 to donate to the Charles County Humane Society.

- John Hanson Middle School collected items for the relief efforts associated with rebuilding the Philippines after Super Typhoon Haiyan hit in Nov.

- Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School created a giving tree to provide additional gifts for families in need and a hat and mitten tree sponsored by a local Girl Scout troop

- The Lifelong Learning Center provided for children whose parent(s) have been incarcerated. The children made a wish list and received clothes and a gift. The caregivers were also given assorted gifts. The Lifelong Learning Center has given to children and their caregivers for more than 10 years.

- Benjamin Stoddert Middle School's faculty and staff, along with Shop with Cops, Toys for Tots and church groups, helped assist families in need. Stoddert's goal is to help 20 to 30 families in need this holiday season.

- William B. Wade Elementary School staff volunteered at the Our Place Soup Kitchen. Wade staff cooked and served the food and staff donated enough money to serve steak dinners. Wade also collected canned food and had students place gloves and hats on a giving tree which was taken to The Center for Children for donation.

- Maurice J. McDonough High School collected money to help in the relief efforts of the typhoon victims in the Philippines. The Student Government Association (SGA) matched all donations.

- Henry E. Lackey High School's sophomore class partnered with the local animal shelter as part of their Student Service Learning project. Students collected items from the Humane Society's wish list. Items included: electric heating pads, kitten formula, hand sanitizer, trash bags, batteries, water hoses, dog crates, dog and cat food, toys, bath towels and blankets.

Throughout the year, Charles County Public Schools students and staff organize donation drives to benefit different communities and organizations. Schools often participate in several donation events annually, and the goal is always the same – to provide support and assistance to those in need.



Eva Turner Elementary School fifth graders Angela Chase, left, and Bria Hill, right, check donated items before sending them to Health Partners, Inc.



General Smallwood Middle School seventh grader Veronica LaBeau worked with the principals advisory committee to make baskets for need families.



Henry E. Lackey High School seniors Philynxia Benson, left, and Keith Brevard, right, pack canned goods as part of a food drive to benefit the community.

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Board of Education announces January 14 agenda

The Board of Education's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, Jan. 14, 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. and student and staff recognition starts at 4:30 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 school system website www.ccboe.com. Select CCPS TV and then choose the Live Broadcast tab. The following is a tentative meeting agenda.

Executive session - 12 p.m.

Call to order - 1 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance, Maurice J. McDonough High School JROTC

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Reports of officers/board/committees

- Correspondence/Board member updates
- Education Association of Charles County update
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees update

• Student Board member update

- CIP update
- FY 2015 proposed operating budget

• Legislative update

Unfinished business
New business and future agenda items

- New business
- Future agenda items

Recognition - 4:30 p.m.

- Students
- Staff
- Resolutions: *African-American History Month, Career and Technology Education Month; National School Counseling Week; and Gifted and Talented Education Month*

Public Forum - 6 p.m.

Action items

- Minutes
- Personnel
- Superintendent's transfer rule #5126

Adjournment



Personnel

Apply for positions online at www.ccboe.com/jobs/currentopenings.php. Positions are open until filled unless otherwise noted. All teaching positions require a Bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job Openings

Special Education Instructional Assistant

– **Life Skills** – Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 25.

Instructional Specialist for the Judy Center

– Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School, 12-month position. Master's degree, Advanced Professional Certificate and a minimum of five years of teaching experience required. Apply by Jan. 10.

Pupil Personnel Worker – Location to be determined, 11-month position. Master's degree in related field and three years of teaching experience is required. Apply by Jan. 10.

Executive Director of Human Resources

– Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. An advanced degree in

human resources, extensive background in managing a human resources department and a minimum of five years of senior level human resources management experience required. Experience in education is preferred.

Prekindergarten Teacher – C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School, 10-month position.

English Teachers – Openings at Maurice J. McDonough and Westlake high schools, 10-month positions.

Social Studies Teacher – Thomas Stone High School, 10-month position.

Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science/Earth Science – North Point High School, 10-month position.

Language Arts Teachers – Openings at the middle school level, 10-month positions.

Math Teachers – Openings at the middle school level, 10-month positions.

Science Teacher – Mattawoman Middle School, 10-month position.

Computer Teacher – Mattawoman Middle

School, 10-month position.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Teacher – Location to be determined, 10-month position.

Library Media Specialist – Openings at elementary school level, 10-month position.

Preschool Special Education Teachers – Locations to be determined, 10-month positions.

Prekindergarten special education teachers – Locations to be determined, 10-month positions.

Speech and Language Pathologist – Location to be determined, 10-month position.

Extra pay position

North Point High School has the following opening:

- Assistant lacrosse coach

Contact Andrew Shattuck, athletic director, 301-753-1759, to apply.