



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Destination Imagination

The annual Charles County Public Schools Destination Imagination tournament is Saturday, March 15, at North Point High School. The event starts at 7:30 a.m., and the awards ceremony is at 5:30 p.m.

SECAC

The Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) will meet on Tuesday, March 18, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

Spring has sprung

The first day of spring is Thursday, March 20.

Calling all history buffs

The annual Charles County Public Schools History Day event is Saturday, March 22 at Westlake High School. Judging begins at 9 a.m., and the awards ceremony is at 6 p.m.

Students show MESA skills

Student engineers, scientists and mathematicians will put their skills on display as part of the upcoming regional Maryland Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) competitions. The elementary-level regional MESA tournament is Wednesday, March 26, and the secondary event is Thursday, March 27. Both competitions are scheduled from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at North Point High School in the gymnasium. A recognition ceremony will be held at 1 p.m. both days.

Airing now ...

Airing now is a new episode of News-Break 96. The episode features a tour of St. Charles High School with Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot and introduces the 2014 Charles County Spelling Bee winner. Visit www.ccboe.com to view the episode.



Ryon staff, students jump to become super heroes

J.P. Ryon Elementary School hosted the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser earlier this month. The event teaches students the importance of a healthy heart and funds raised go toward research. This year, Ryon set a fundraising goal of \$5,000. Students and staff raised more than \$6,000, and participated in a Super Hero Day for meeting their goal. Pictured above are Ryon fourth-grade teacher Rashad DeMesme, right, and fourth-grade student Diamonte Carey, left.

Superintendent files waiver, schools open spring break

Pending a decision by the state for a four-day waiver, Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is opening schools for students and teachers during the week of spring break, which is April 14-21, in order to make up for lost time from inclement weather. Schools will now open for regular days of instruction on April 14, 15, 16, and 17. Superintendent of Schools Kimberly Hill on March 10 requested a four-day waiver from the Maryland State Board of Education. If the waiver is approved, spring break days will be restored.

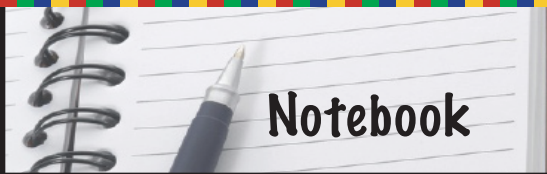
Additionally, four two-hour early dismissal days have been changed to full days of school for students. They are Wednesday, March 19; Friday, April 25; Wednesday, May 7; and Wednesday, May 21. Students in the Three's program will attend school for a full day on March 19 and April 25. Three's program students will not attend school on May 7 and May 21.

The approval of a waiver does not affect these changes. There will still be a two-hour early dismissal on Tuesday, April 1 for report card preparation.

The school system has used nine inclement weather days this school year, of which only four are built into the calendar. Maryland law requires schools to operate 180 days for students. The Board of Education adopts the school calendar in advance, and approved using spring break dates as inclement weather make-up days for the 2013-14 school year, if needed. The school system has already used Presidents Day to make up for one lost instructional day, leaving four days of time to make up.

In the CCPS 2013-14 Parent Handbook/Calendar, schools were originally scheduled to be closed April 14-21 for spring break. Schools and offices will still be closed on Friday, April 18 and Monday, April 21. Waivers are generally granted in extreme cases and when school systems have made efforts to make up missed days.

Please make a note of the changes on your copy of the calendar. An updated copy is also available on the Charles County Public Schools website at www.ccboe.com.



On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees from General Smallwood Middle School. Pictured, from left, are Christopher Cox, art teacher; Tracy Newbold, food service manager; and Frederick Sanford, in-school retention program instructional assistant.

Local robotics challenge

Teams from Indian Head and Dr. Thomas L. Higdon elementary schools, as well as Theodore G. Davis, Matthew Henson, Mattawoman and Piccowaxen middle schools, competed in the 2014 Save the Bay/Chemical Engineering Robotics Challenge held last month at North Point High School. The event was sponsored by the National Defense Education Program (NDEP) and is part of the 2013-14 Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Explosive Ordnance Technology Division (NSWCIEOTD) In-School Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) program. Visit <http://www.ccboe.com/pr/county-students-compete-in-local-robotics-challenge/> for more information.

24-hour information line

Charles County Public Schools posts school news, employee and student accomplishments, inclement weather closures and delays, and calendar information on a 24-hour information line. Call 301-932-6656 or 301-934-7410. The line is updated twice a week and immediately when inclement weather decisions are made.

Follow us on Twitter

Did you know that Charles County Public Schools maintains a Twitter page? Follow us on www.twitter.com/CCPS for system updates, news, facts and more. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kimberly Hill also maintains a Twitter page. Follow her @ccpsupt.

Employees can buy, rent or sell

Check out InsideCCPS, the school system web page for employees. Staff can post classified ads for free, and ads run for 20 days. Employees are responsible for deleting their ad if they would like it removed before the 20-day period has expired. Directions for posting are listed on the page. Visit www.ccboe.com and select the InsideCCPS link on the bottom of the page.

Ethics policy applies to all CCPS employees

Charles County Public Schools employees have a standard of ethics that include limitations on gifts, financial disclosures and involvement with companies that do business with the school system. All employees are responsible for complying with ethics regulations.

The ethics policy outlines conflicts of interest concerning business entities in which an employee has any interests. The policy does not allow participation by an employee with a business in which the employee or an immediate family member has a financial interest. For example, if an employee's spouse works for a company doing business with the school system, the employee should not be involved in any school system transactions with that company.

In addition to financial matters, conflicts of interest also include post-employment restrictions, using prestige of office, use of confidential information, procurement restrictions, and acceptance of gifts. Employees can accept certain gifts up to \$20, but a series of gifts may be accepted up to \$100 in value on a yearly basis.

The ethics policy also states that employees may not use confidential information that they acquire through their employment for their economic benefit or the economic benefit of another person. For example, an employee may not access confidential home addresses to contact students or other employees about non-school system business, or provide those addresses to anyone outside the school system for commercial or other unauthorized purposes.

Certain employees, including the superintendent, executive staff, principals and some administrative employees, must

file an annual statement with the Charles County Board of Education Ethics Panel that discloses gifts received from any person that contracts with or is under the authority of the school system and any potential conflicts of interest. Employees required to file financial disclosure statements are listed in the policy.

Board of Education policy 8160 outlines the ethics rules and establishes the Charles County Board of Education Ethics Panel, which consists of five members appointed by the Board of Education. Panel members serve four-year terms and their terms begin on July 1 prior to the regular election of Charles County Board of Education members. Panel members are William F. Olmstead, Jessie Morris, Anthony Rainey, Ray Johnson and Lorence Kessler. Olmstead, a local attorney, is the chairman.

The panel reviews complaints and issues recommendations concerning violations to the Board of Education. Anyone who knows of an ethics violation may file a complaint directly with the Charles County Board of Education Ethics Panel, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646. For questions about the policy, contact Eric Schwartz, staff attorney, at eschwartz@ccboe.com.

A complete copy of the ethics policy is located on BoardDocs, under the policy section, and is posted on the school system website. Visit www.ccboe.com and click on the InsideCCPS area located on the bottom, right-hand side of the home page. A log-in screen will appear. Employees with CCPS e-mail accounts use their user name and password associated with their @ccboe.com e-mail account. The ethics policy is located under the Staff Services section.

Did you know?

- Employees can only accept individual gifts up to \$20, but no more than \$100 from a series of gifts from any vendor, potential vendor, student, parent or fellow employee.
- Employees should not be involved in any school system transaction with businesses in which they or a family member has a financial interest.
- Employees can file questions or complaints with the Charles County Board of Education Ethics Panel.



Read Across Charles County

Theodor Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, said it best: "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." Charles County Public Schools celebrated Read Across Charles County on Friday, Feb. 28. Guest readers, green eggs and ham, and plenty of costumes and special events highlighted the annual celebration. The yearly event is a reading motivation and awareness program that invites children in the community to celebrate literacy and reading, and the birthday of Dr. Seuss. Each year, the school system coordinates the event in conjunction with the National Education Association's Read Across America Day.

Pictured, clockwise from top left, are: Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School fourth-grade student Natalie Shirley dressed up as one of her favorite book characters; Higdon kindergarten students Kinsey Mudd and Tyasia Wells dress up for a school fashion show; Gale-Bailey Elementary School first grader Eric Gutrick reads his favorite book in the classroom; Mary H. Matula Elementary School first-grade teacher Kaitlin Rockey and first grader Autumn Oestringer dress to impress to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Seuss; Charles County Public Schools reading resource teacher Kim Hudler recites a book to Indian Head Elementary School kindergarteners Elijah Gallagher, Donovan Smith, Orianna Kelley, Da-Kari Williams, Stephen Callahan and Chayse Shawyer; and Tyshawn Gray and John "Brody" Errington, STAY program students from the F.B. Gwynn Educational Center, visit the Parent Center to select a donated book to take home.



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The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Patricia Vaira, Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator (students), or Pamela Murphy, Section 504 Coordinator (employees/adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, Maryland 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.

School system makes changes to three's application process

Charles County Public Schools is changing the application process for the three-year-old program. In addition to meeting guidelines established by the school system, parents will now need to schedule an appointment with school system staff to complete the application process for their child for the 2014-15 school year. Registration for the three-year-old program begins on Tuesday, April 22 and applications will be accepted by appointment only. Charles County Public Schools is no longer registering children in the three-year-old program on a first come, first serve basis.

Parents can schedule an appointment at their child's zoned elementary school on or after April 22 to start the application process. Children must attend the appointment with their parent, and will participate in an observation and skill assessment. Additionally, completing the application process does not guarantee enrollment in the program.

Children admitted to the three-year-old program must meet the following guidelines:

- Reside in a Title I school zone;
- Qualify for free- and reduced-price meals;
- Demonstrate an academic need; and
- Must be three-years-old on or before Sept. 1.

No appointments will be made before April 22. Contact the Charles County Public Schools Title I Office at 301-934-7408 with questions or for additional information.

Registration for prekindergarten and kindergarten students also begins April 22 at all Charles County public elementary schools. To enter prekindergarten for the 2014-15 school year, students must be four years old by Sept. 1. To enter kindergarten for the 2014-15 school year, students must be five years old by Sept. 1.

Registration for in-county students is conducted at the individual elementary schools. Parents can contact their child's elementary school prior to April 22 to schedule an appointment with the registrar. Parents can find out what school their address is zoned for by using the School Locator feature of the website at www.ccboe.com. Contact the department of student services at 301-934-7326 for more information about registering a child who is moving to the area.



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

Instructional Resource Teachers – James E. Richmond Science Center, 11-month positions. Master's degree, advanced professional certificate, a minimum of five years of teaching experience with a focus in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), math and/or science, and experience in configuring Novell Netware, Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Windows Workstation required. Apply by March 14.

Food Service Manager – St. Charles High School, 10-month position. Apply by March 20.

Building Service Manager – Westlake High School, 12-month position. Apply by March 20.

Building Service Assistant Manager – Indian Head Elementary School, 12-month position. Apply by March 20.

Building Service Worker – Thomas Stone High School, 12-month position. Apply by March 20.

Principals – System seeking applicants for future openings, 12-month positions. Master's degree, advanced professional certificate with administrator II endorsement, three years of teaching experience and three years of vice principal experience required. Apply by March 25.

Vice Principals – System seeking applicants for future openings, 12-month positions. Master's degree, advanced professional certificate with administrator I endorsement and three years of teaching experience required. Apply by March 25.

Extra pay positions

La Plata High School has the following openings:

- Head volleyball coach
- Junior varsity volleyball coach

Contact Cliff Nagle, athletic director, 301-753-1754, to apply.

Staff Notes

Learn about National Board Certification

CCPS is holding a National Board Certification (NBC) information session on Tuesday, April 8 at 4:30 p.m. The session is at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in conference room 122, and current NBC teachers will be available to speak about the application process. Teachers planning to attend should RSVP by e-mail to Barbara Simmons at bsimmons@ccboe.com by April 4. Teachers and specialists who hold a standard professional or advanced professional certificate and have a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience in Charles County are eligible to apply. Additional details are available on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website at www.nbpts.org.