

# School News

## Important Dates Coming Soon

### *Two-hour early dismissal*

The next two-hour early dismissal for students is Tuesday, Oct. 16.

### *MSEA Convention*

Schools will be closed for students and teachers on Friday, Oct. 19, for the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) Convention.

### *Graduation time*

Graduation for students in the Adult Education Program is 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 25, at Westlake High School.

### *It's Academic honors*

North Point High School's *It's Academic* team placed second at a regional competition held last month against Thomas S. Wootton and George Mason high schools. The event aired on WRC TV (NBC 4) Saturday, Oct. 6. The three-member team consists of Captain Alphonso "Gaston" Lopez, Marie Sterba and Ashlynn Stanley.

### *Apply to become Green*

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is seeking schools to participate in the National Green Ribbon Schools Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The program encourages schools to: implement energy conservation measures; undertake environmental and behavioral changes in schools; and promote environmental education that supports students' strong civic skills, environmental stewardship, and workforce preparedness. Public and private schools are eligible to apply and MSDE will nominate up to four schools to the U.S. Department of Education for the Green Ribbon designation. The application is available at <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/environment/grs>. Applications must be completed online by Dec. 21. Honorees will be announced on Earth Day, April 22, 2013.



### **Seberg honored as Teacher of the Year finalist**

William A. Diggs Elementary School teacher Kerrie Seberg, right, was honored Oct. 5 by the Maryland State Department of Education as one of seven Maryland Teacher of the Year finalists. She was interviewed by Elena Russo, left, for a special segment to air on Comcast later this year. The state winner was from Cecil County.

## Open enrollment available for health insurance plan

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is holding an open enrollment for health insurance benefits Oct. 29 through Nov. 16. CCPS is moving the health care plan from a fiscal year schedule to a calendar year schedule, meaning all health care claims will run from January 1 to December 31 instead of July 1 through June 30. Due to the change, federal law requires that open enrollment be offered to all employees. The enrollment will be paper based and forms will be available on the staff services page of the system website by Oct. 29. The change is effective Jan. 1, 2013.

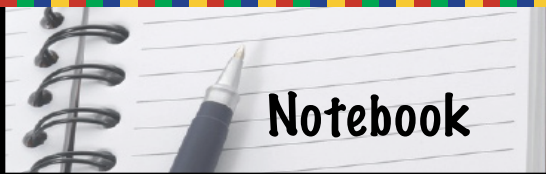
The school system offers eligible employees a self-insured group health plan through CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield and Caremark. Self-insured means the plan is funded by employees and the Board of Education. Employees with health coverage through CCPS pay 25 percent of their total monthly premium through payroll deduction, and the

Board of Education covers the remaining 75 percent. Employee contributions are deposited into a health care premium account. Premium amounts for employees and the Board of Education are determined by the total cost of health care services used and then paid by the Board of Education from the health care premium account.

Human resources encourages employees to take advantage of the following cost saving tips to help keep premiums low.

- Use wellness benefits by receiving annual medical, vision and dental exams. Wellness claims average to about 3 percent of total claims paid by the Board.
- Use generic drugs, when available.
- Use network providers that accept the CCPS plan. Visit [www.carefirst.com](http://www.carefirst.com) to view a list of network providers.
- For after-hours care, visit a walk-in clinic or urgent care facility rather than the emergency room. Wait times are shorter and

**See Insurance, page 2**



### On the cover

Pictured on the cover are employees honored by the Board of Education at their October meeting. Pictured, from left, are Tracy Bell, third-grade teacher, Mary H. Matula Elementary School; Jason Bursick, athletic director, Maurice J. McDonough High School; and Crystal Holm, mathematics teacher, Milton M. Somers Middle School.

### Recognizing FEA students

Several Charles County Public Schools students will be recognized for their participation in the Future Educators Association (FEA) at an induction ceremony on Wednesday, Oct. 24, at Maurice J. McDonough High School. Student members are asked to pledge to serve as role models for their participation in FEA by promoting a positive attitude toward education to enhance the quality of educational programs.

### American Freedom Week

Charles County Public Schools celebrates American Freedom Week Nov. 5-9. Schools will recognize special days that commemorate American freedoms as well as those who have lost their lives and those who serve to preserve freedom. Schools will also hold special activities to honor veterans and celebrate patriotism.

### Airing this week...

Airing this week on Comcast 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12 is a new episode of Newsbreak 96, produced by the school system's communications department. This episode highlights an orchard planting at Thomas Stone High School, a visit from the Washington Capitals hockey team at Matthew Henson Middle School and an Advanced Placement (AP) teacher retreat. Visit the school system website at <http://www2.ccboc.com/publicinfo/channel96/> for programming schedules and show times.

### Information, 24 hours a day

Charles County Public Schools has a 24-hour information line that features school and staff accomplishments, calendar information and more. The line is also used to announce any change to the school system schedule. Call 301-934-7410 or 301-932-6656 for a recorded message.

## Teachers honored as masters in art education

Two Charles County Public Schools art teachers, Gayle Kraus and Jennifer Reid, have been named 2012 Outstanding Art Educators by the Maryland Arts Education Association (MAEA). Both teachers were nominated for recognition by school administrators and will be honored by the MAEA during an awards ceremony Oct. 19. The awards recognize teachers for their contributions in art education, and to their communities.

Kraus is an art teacher at Piccowaxen Middle School and is being honored by the



Gayle Kraus

MAEA as a master teacher at the middle school level. Master teachers are those who have been teaching for more than five years. She was nominated for her passion for teaching, working with children, and for developing lessons to reach all levels of learners. "Ms. Kraus offers strong instruction that is differentiated to reach students at various grade levels. She plans lessons that engage students and challenges them to think in diverse ways," Piccowaxen Principal Ken Schroeck wrote in a nomination letter.

In addition to teaching art, Kraus is the art club and yearbook sponsor at Piccowax-

en and is a member of the instructional leadership team.

Reid is an art teacher at Thomas Stone High School and the MAEA is honoring her as a master teacher at the high school level. She was nominated



Jennifer Reid

for her friendly and positive demeanor in the classroom and among staff, and for being a constant source of support, praise and motivation for her students. "Because of her experience and dedication to the subject area, her students are successful, prepared and in many cases, interested in the pursuit of a career in art," Stone Vice Principal Carl Pascarella wrote in a nomination letter.

Reid works with students at all grade levels and teaches a variety of courses including art I, photography I, II and III, and Advanced Placement (AP) art history.

The MAEA will recognize award recipients at their fall conference Oct. 19. Each year, the MAEA recognizes teachers for their efforts in art education in the classroom and within their communities. Awards are distributed at the district and state levels annually, and recognize new, career and retired teachers.

## Insurance

continued from page 1

claim amounts are less. For example, the average visit to the emergency room is \$550 per claim and the average visit to an urgent care facility is \$61 per claim.

- Receive maintenance prescriptions through Caremark's mail order option. For more information, call Caremark at 1-877-411-8168.

As employees use health care services, such as doctor and hospital visits, prescriptions, vision and dental services, these providers bill CareFirst for payment of services received. CareFirst then bills the Board of Education for the amount paid for all covered health care services. This bill includes claims and administrative fees attached to services used by plan participants. Funds from the health care premium account are

used to pay the CareFirst bill. On average, the Board of Education pays nearly \$4 million per month to CareFirst and Caremark for medical, dental, vision and pharmacy claims filed in previous months.

The Board of Education, the Education Association of Charles County (EACC) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) meet periodically to review the health care plan and explore options to lower costs. The Board is currently looking at possible cost savings for prescriptions and monitoring medical costs on a quarterly basis.

For more information, visit the benefits page at <http://www2.ccboc.com/staffservices/benefits.cfm> or call Christeda Warner, benefits analyst, at 301-934-7459.



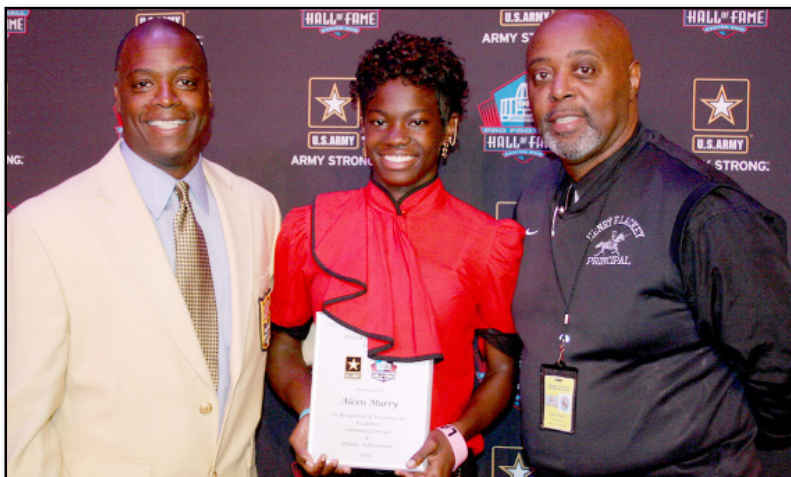
## Lackey senior is national finalist in U.S. Army - Hall of Fame program

Alexis Murry, a senior at Henry E. Lackey High School, was honored on Thursday, Oct. 4, as one of 10 nationwide finalists in the U.S. Army - Pro Football Hall of Fame Award of Excellence program. The program, which was launched earlier this year, highlights the achievements of student athletes, and their excellence in academics and community engagement.

Murry has participated in indoor and outdoor track and field at Lackey since she was a freshman, and takes part in several events ranging from the 55- to 800-meter dashes and the high jump, to the 55-meter hurdles and team relay races. Throughout her career, she has earned several first-place regional titles, as well as several second-, third- and fourth-place rankings at the state level. Murry has also participated in cheerleading at Lackey and served as a statistician for the varsity football team.

Representatives from the U.S. Army and the Pro Football Hall of Fame, as well as Darrell Green, former cornerback for the Washington Redskins and 2008 inductee in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, visited Lackey to present Murry with her finalist award. George Veras, president and CEO of the Pro Football Hall of Fame Enterprises, said the program was developed to honor students that exemplify qualities of excellence and strength.

Also attending the ceremony was Mark Davis, the deputy assistant secretary of the Army for marketing. He said the 10 finalists



**Henry E. Lackey High School senior Alexis Murry, center, was honored Oct. 4 as a nationwide U.S. Army - Pro Football Hall of Fame Excellence Award program finalist. Darrell Green, left, of the Washington Redskins presented Murry with a plaque at a ceremony held at the school. Also pictured is Lackey Principal James Short.**

embody the same skill sets as soldiers. "Army soldiers and athletes possess the same skill sets and characteristics, such as integrity, mental, physical and emotional strength, dedication and excellence," Davis said. Green, who then introduced Murry as a finalist, said the awards program is also about being a role model for the community. "It is about those who can rise above to say 'I can; I will. For myself, for my family and for my classmates'," Green added.

In addition to her athletic commitments, Murry is also dedicated to excellence in the classroom and community. She is currently enrolled in

four Advanced Placement (AP) courses, is a member of the National Honor Society (NHS) and the Lackey Key Club, as well as the JROTC. She has also maintained a grade point average at or above the standard 4.0 grading scale throughout high school. Murry has applied to several colleges and universities and plans to study sports medicine.

She credits her family and the Lackey community for her award. "This award is a great honor. I am the only student selected from Charles County, and from Maryland. It is a great step for me in my life and is important to me and my Lackey family," Murry said.

Murry and her family will travel to San Antonio in January to the U.S. Army All-American Bowl, where the winner will be announced at a Jan. 4 awards banquet.

## High school redistricting begins with random selection of committee members

Members of the Charles County Public Schools high school redistricting committee were selected Oct. 9 by the Charles County Board of Education. Seven committee members were chosen in a random drawing that included names from each middle and elementary school, as well as community members who applied to serve. The drawing selected two representatives at the elementary school level, two representatives at the middle school level and three representatives from the Charles County community.

The following members were selected: Betty Tayman, Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School; LaCharles Earle, Eva Turner Elementary School; Karen Haskins, Mattawoman Middle School; Kristopher Foote, Milton M. Somers Middle School; Joanna Wilson, community member; David Cooksey, community member; and James Hooper, community member.

These committee members will work with representatives from each county high school, as well as school system and county staff.

Each high school advertised the opportunity to represent the school and held public drawings to randomly select their representative. The following members were selected at the high school level: Tawanda Rooney, Henry E. Lackey High School; Cindy Arnone, La Plata High School; Charlotte Shirriel, Maurice J. McDonough High School; Suzanne McCarthy, North Point High School; Suzann Martin, Thomas Stone High School; and Christina Adeboyejo, Westlake High School.

Three principals will also serve on the committee. They are Sandra Taylor of William A. Diggs Elementary School; Virginia McGraw, William B. Wade Elementary School; and Kenneth Schroeck, Piccowaxen Middle School. The redistricting will be comprehensive, establish alternatives for an attendance zone for St. Charles High School, and review and change attendance zones for all high schools. The Board of Education last month approved opening St. Charles High School as a partial high school with grades 9, 10 and 11 when it opens in August 2014. Visit [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) for more details.

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

## Board of Education Members

Roberta S. Wise, Chairman  
Maura H. Cook, Vice Chairman  
Jennifer S. Abell  
Patricia Bowie  
Michael K. Lukas  
Pamela A. Pedersen  
Donald M. Wade  
Azeezat Adeleke, Student Member

## Superintendent of Schools

James E. Richmond

## Editor/Writers

Katie O'Malley-Simpson  
Shelley Mackey  
Kara Gross  
Amanda Burgess

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 Dr. Patricia Vaira, Title IX Coordinator and Section 504 Coordinator (students), or Keith Hettel, Section 504 Coordinator (employees/adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, Maryland 20646; (301) 932-6610/870-3814. For special accommodations call (301) 934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.

## Teacher makes math fun, earns state recognition

Shawn Kostoff, a special education and mathematics teacher at Piccowaxen Middle School, was recently named a 2012 Maryland Outstanding Mathematics Educator by the Maryland Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM). He is being honored in the beginning mathematics teacher category at the MCTM annual awards banquet Oct. 19. Honorees can either apply or are nominated for the award and are selected for their application of national mathematics teaching standards in the classroom, professional growth in mathematics and knowledge of student learning.

Kostoff started his teaching career with Charles County Public Schools in 2010 at Piccowaxen, where he teaches self-contained math and co-teaches inclusion math. He sets high standards for all students and works tirelessly until all of his students are successful. Piccowaxen Principal Ken Schroeck said Kostoff has a special ability to make learning about math fun and exciting for his students. "He is a master at motivating his students. His students love the way he makes math fun to learn. But, most of all, they adore him because he accepts them for who they are and challenges them to reach academic heights they hadn't yet imagined," Schroeck wrote in a nomination letter.

Kostoff also dedicates his spare time to extra-curricular activities, including teaching in the after-school academy, coaching the girls' intermural

basketball team, organizing the student faculty basketball night and co-sponsoring the Teens Influencing Every Student (TIES) boys' group. Through his participation with the TIES group, Kostoff works with at-risk learners, coordinates service learning projects and serves as a role model for group participants. Schroeck also credits Kostoff with increasing student performance on state assessments. "He was instrumental with our school being recognized by the state for overall academic achievement and sub-group achievement for the last two years," Schroeck wrote in a nomination letter.

Applicants and nominees were required to supply evidence of professional growth and teaching experience, as well as letters of recommendation and an essay based on how the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards are reflected in their classrooms. Additionally, teachers were required to submit a videotaped DVD lesson to demonstrate their work with students. Kostoff is one of six Maryland teachers that will be honored next week by the MCTM.

For more information on the program, visit the MCTM website at [www.marylandmath.org](http://www.marylandmath.org).



**Shawn Kostoff**



## Personnel

### Job Openings

**Building Service Assistant Manager** – F.B. Gwynn Educational Center, 12-month position. Apply by Oct. 12.

**English Teacher** – Thomas Stone High School, 10-month position. Apply by Oct. 17.

**Attendance Instructional Assistant** – Maurice J. McDonough High School, 10-month position. Apply by Oct. 18.

**Food Service Worker** – William B. Wade Elementary School, 10-month position. Apply by Oct. 18.

**Building Service Manager** – Indian Head Elementary School, 12-month position. Apply by Oct. 23.

**Accounting Assistant** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. A minimum of three years experience required. Apply by Oct. 23.

**Supervising Specialist in Transportation** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Apply by Oct. 24.

**Early Childhood Teacher** – Location to be determined, 10-month position.

**Media Specialist** – J.P. Ryon Elementary School, 10-month position.

**Computer Applications Teacher** – General Smallwood Middle School, 10-month position.

**Coordinator of Career Technology Education** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree and certification as an Administrator I in Maryland are required. A minimum of five years teaching experience and three years of administrative/supervisory leadership is required.

**Physics Teacher** – Westlake High School, 10-month position.

**Technology Education Teacher** – Maurice J. McDonough High School, 10-month position.

**Math Teacher** – Location to be determined, 10-month position.

**Instructional Resource Teacher** – Jesse L.

Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree and a minimum of five years teaching experience required.

**Part-time School Counselor** – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, part-time position.

**School Counselor** – Location to be determined, 11-month position. Master's degree in school counseling required.

### Extra pay positions

**Maurice J. McDonough High School** has the following opening:

- Junior varsity cheerleading head coach

Contact Jason Bursick, athletic director, 301-753-1755, to apply.

### Staff Notes

#### Celebrate Staff

National School Lunch Week is Oct. 15-19, and National School Bus Safety Week is Oct. 22-26. Be sure to thank the food service staff at your school and bus drivers for their hard work.