



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Semester break

Schools are closed for students only on Friday, Jan. 18, for a semester break. Teachers will participate in in-service activities and report card preparation.

Schools/offices closed

Schools and offices will be closed on Monday, Jan. 21, in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

MAC meeting

The next minority achievement committee (MAC) meeting is Wednesday, Jan. 16, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. in the Board room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

Winter chess tournament

The Charles County Public Schools annual winter chess tournament is Saturday, Jan. 26, at Westlake High School. The tournament is from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call the gifted education department at 301-934-7457 for registration details or more information.

W-2 statements

The school system plans to release W-2 statements to employees by Thursday, Jan. 31. Copies of 2012 W-2 statements will be available for view on the employee web portal after Jan. 31.

Employee assistance

Charles County Public Schools offers employees the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The program provides confidential, professional counseling services for employees with personal problems that are affecting their abilities to function effectively at work or at home. The program is available to staff members who work 20 or more hours per week and to their immediate family members. Call 866-443-3277 to make an appointment or for more information. A link about EAP can be found on the staff services page of the school system website.



North Point students know their stuff

North Point High School's It's Academic team placed first at the annual Charles County Public Schools competition held Dec. 5 at Henry E. Lackey High School. Pictured from left are North Point seniors Marie Sterba, Alphonso "Gaston" Lopez, who is the team captain, and Alex Corbin. The team scored 380 points in the championship round against teams from La Plata and Thomas Stone high schools to earn the top spot. The Greater Waldorf Jaycees presented North Point with a \$500 scholarship, and the team will compete in a regional televised competition later this fall.

New Social Security, Medicare taxes affect staff

Employees' paychecks are a little smaller today due to the end of a 2 percent Social Security tax holiday, which is commonly referred to as a payroll tax cut. Social Security taxes returned to 6.2 percent of gross pay, a level set in 1990 and temporarily reduced to 4.2 in 2011 by Congress and President Obama as part of an economic stimulus package. No provisions to extend the tax holiday were made in the "Fiscal cliff" compromise passed by the Senate and House of Representatives over winter break. This tax rate applies to any wages paid after Dec. 31, 2012.

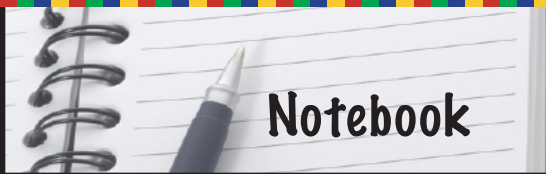
The tax holiday ended as part of the compromise deal that passed Congress on Jan. 1, and Social Security rates are back at 6.2 percent. As a result, employees will see an immediate drop in net pay. For example, according to the Charles County Public Schools budget and finance office, an employee earning \$65,000 per year may see a

decrease of approximately \$50 per biweekly paycheck.

Additionally, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act established a new "additional Medicare tax" of 0.9 percent, which goes into effect in 2013. The new additional Medicare tax applies to married couples earning more than \$250,000 and file jointly, or for single individuals earning more than \$200,000.

The approved fiscal-cliff bill does not address across-the-board cuts called "sequestration" for another two months. Under sequestration, the school system could receive cuts in federal funding. According to Paul Balides, assistant superintendent for finance, business administration and technology, spending cuts, if enacted, will not occur until October.

Paycheck information is available in the employee portal at <https://info1.ccboe.com/employeeportal/employee/login.php>.



On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees honored at the Board of Education's November and December meetings. Pictured, from left, are Mary "Mollie" McCauley, kindergarten teacher, T.C. Martin Elementary School; Kathleen Reamy, school counselor, Dr. James Craik Elementary School; and Valarie Austin, Reading Recovery teacher, C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School.

Parent involvement matters

Comcast and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) are sponsoring the sixth annual Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award (PIMA) program. The annual award recognizes parents and guardians whose contributions have led to improvements in Maryland public schools. Nominees must be a parent/legal guardian of a child in a Maryland public school, and a consistent advocate of public education.

Nominees must have also demonstrated involvement in one of the five following areas within the last 24 months: communicating; volunteering; learning; decision making; and/or community collaboration. Nominations must include three letters of recommendation, a two-page narrative essay describing the nominee's contribution to public education and completed nomination forms. Five finalists will be selected and the winner will be announced at a celebration later this spring.

Nominations are due Jan. 31 and forms are available on MSDE's website at <http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/audiences/parents/pima.htm>. Incomplete applications will not be considered and submissions will not be accepted online or by e-mail.

For more information, visit MSDE's website at www.marylandpublicschools.org.

Pay dates for the year

The following is a list of Friday pay dates for the remainder of the 2012-13 school year: Jan. 4; Jan. 18; Feb. 1; Feb. 15; Mar. 1; Mar. 15; Mar. 29 (Third pay check of the month - no voluntary deductions are made); Apr. 12; Apr. 26; May 10; May 24; June 7 and June 21. Call the payroll department at 301-934-7564 with questions or concerns.

New accountability system focuses on progress

Charles County Public Schools recently released its School Progress Index (SPI), a new state accountability system that measures how schools are progressing toward specific goals.

The School Progress Index measures each of Charles County Public Schools 35 schools on individual goals. SPI measures progress by overall student performance, student growth, closing of achievement gaps between the highest and lowest subgroups and preparation for college and careers. The SPI replaces the accountability system known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which measured all students and each subgroup by a single indicator. Instead, SPI has additional dimensions and uses multiple indicators including: achievement, student growth, achievement gap reduction and college and career readiness.

"This is a school competing against itself," said Superintendent of Schools James E. Richmond. "This system is more specific; SPI looks at more areas and sets a baseline for progress," he said.

Using 2011 scores on the reading, math and science Maryland School Assessments (MSA) as a baseline, each school has an individual performance target. Schools must cut in half the percentage of non-proficient students by school and subgroups by 2017. Under SPI, the annual measurable objectives are differentiated by school and by subgroup; under AYP schools had common yearly targets and were required to reach 100 percent proficiency for all students and subgroups by 2014.

"Now, a school is competing against itself and the results measure progress across a number of areas. It gathers all the

key ingredients rather than basing success on one test. This measures all three MSA tests – reading, math and science – with equal weight. It also looks at closing the gap by reducing the difference in scores between the highest and lowest performing subgroups," Richmond said.

The SPI for elementary and middle schools is calculated through three indicators: achievement (MSA scores in mathematics, reading, and science), growth (student improvement on math and reading MSAs), and gap reduction (cutting the achievement gap between the low and high performing student subgroups at the school level in state assessments).

High school SPI is calculated through three indicators: achievement (High School Assessment (HSA) scores in algebra/data analysis, English, and biology); gap reduction (cutting the achievement gap between the low and high performing subgroups at the school level on the state assessments, as well as cohort graduation and dropout rates), and college- and career-readiness (cohort graduation rate and college and career preparation). College- and career-readiness is a measure of a students' success in one of the following areas: Advanced Placement (AP); career and technology education (CTE) concentrators; or enrollment in college (two-year, four-year, or technical education program.)

"We should be rewarding those underperforming schools that have started to make real progress, just as we should be taking a closer look at top schools whose progress may have stalled in some areas," State Superintendent Lillian Lowery said in an announcement about the data release.

Post award nominations due next week

Nomination packets for both the *Washington Post's* Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher and Distinguished Educational Leadership awards are due next Friday, Jan. 11, to Jeanette Sudik in Human Resources. Nominations must include all supporting documents and materials, and should be submitted by 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 11.

Application information is posted on the Charles County Public Schools web-

site, under the employee recognition section linked here http://www2.ccboe.com/employment/emp_rec.cfm. For questions about either award, or the nomination process, contact Jeanette Sudik at 301-934-7356 or jsudik@ccboe.com.

The selected winners for both awards will be announced later this school year and featured in an issue of *School News*.

Students learn lessons about teaching through hands-on workshops

Charles County Public Schools held its fifth annual Future Educators Association (FEA) local conference on Friday, Dec. 14, at the College of Southern Maryland's La Plata campus. More than 200 students participated in the event, which consisted of guest motivational speakers and informative workshops hosted by school system teachers and administrators.

As part of the conference, students participate in two 30-minute workshops designed to educate them on how to write an outstanding college application essay, how to dress appropriately for a job interview, the role of the teacher in the classroom, an overview of the Teacher Academy of Maryland program at North Point High School and how to learn about math through fun and exciting games and lessons. The conference is also designed to offer FEA members with opportunities to hear from school leaders about their educational experiences.

Jeff Yalden, a youth motivational speaker, served as the keynote speaker, and shared personal experiences and life lessons with attendees. He also hosted a workshop to talk with students about the benefits of making positive choices.

The conference also features several challenging competitions for students, ranging from a lesson planning and delivery event to a job application competition. North Point High School senior Kimberly McCloskey received an award in the lesson planning and delivery competition, which requires students to create and present a lesson to students. Selaina Hopkins, also a senior at North Point, received an

award in the job application event, in which students are judged on a resume, cover letter and participate in an interview to develop their writing and personal skills.

As winners in the lesson planning and job application competitions, McCloskey and Hopkins are eligible to compete at the national level and will travel to Orlando in April to participate in the National Future Educators Association conference.

Additionally, General Smallwood Middle School's FEA chapter

received an award in the centerpiece competition, in which student members were tasked with creating an arrangement that best portrayed ideals embodied in FEA. The FEA chapter from Westlake High School received an award for their centerpiece among the high school chapters.

Each Charles County Public middle and high school has an FEA chapter for students in grades 6 – 12 who are interested in becoming educators. 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.

The FEA aims to motivate middle and high school stu-

dents from diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in education while studying teaching, working to improve the image of teaching, boosting faculty morale and linking students, parents and the community together. Through hands-on opportunities, FEA members assume leadership roles and develop professional skill sets that will serve them in their careers.



Charles County Public Schools held a Future Educators Association conference Dec. 14 that included several workshops for students. Pictured above are Jane Thoman, elementary math specialist for CCPS, left, as she works with John Hanson Middle School students Anthony Williams II, center, and Jakarra Johnson, right, during a math workshop. Students participated in two workshops to learn about teaching.

Nominate an outstanding teacher for systemwide award

Charles County Public Schools is seeking nominations for the school system's Maryland Teacher of the Year candidate. The nominated teacher must be a classroom, resource or media teacher who spends the majority of his or her time teaching and has a minimum of five years teaching experience. The selected candidate will also be named the 2013 Charles County Teacher of the Year.

There can only be one nominee per school. Nominations are due by March 1 to the office of human resources. Application information is located on the Charles County Public Schools website at <http://www2.ccboe.com/TOY.cfm>. Applications should include the candidate's educational and professional development history; professional biography; examples of community involvement; a statement on the candidate's philosophy/style of teaching; three letters of support from

a principal, administrator, colleague, student or former student, parent or civic leader; and statements on education issues and trends, as well as the teaching profession.

There is a two-tiered process for the selection of the candidate for the Maryland Teacher of the Year. The first step is at the county level where applications are received, semi-finalists are selected and interviewed by a panel of school system staff, and one candidate is selected to represent Charles County as its Teacher of the Year.

Each Maryland county and Baltimore City forwards one recommendation to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), which selects the Maryland Teacher of the Year.

For additional information, contact Jeanette Sudik, 301-934-7356 or jsudik@ccboe.com.

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Board of Education announces January 8 agenda

The Board of Education's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, Jan. 8, 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 12 and is rebroadcast throughout the week.

All televised Board meetings are also streamed live on the school system website at <http://www2.ccboe.com/boe/live/>.

Executive session - 12 p.m.

Call to order - 1 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance, Thomas Stone High School JROTC

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Reports of officers/board/committees

- Correspondence/Board member updates
- Education Association of Charles County update
- Student Board member update
- Fall athletics
- CIP update
- Special education: Unified Sports program
- FY 2014 proposed operating budget

•Teacher and principal evaluations

• Policy #3514 – Green product cleaning supplies

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

• Waldorf Fire Department land transfer

Adjournment

Public hearing on proposed FY 2014 operating budget



Personnel



Job Openings

Principals – Possible future openings, 12-month positions. A master's degree, eligibility for an administrative certificate, five years of teaching experience and two years in a leadership role are required. Apply by Jan. 17.

Vice Principals – Possible future openings, 12-month positions. A master's degree, an advanced professional certificate and three years of teaching experience are required. Apply by Jan. 17.

Library Media Specialist – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree and a minimum of five years of experience in a teaching or library media center position are required. Three years of leadership experience is preferred.

Contract Administrator – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Five years of experience as a contract administrator or senior buyer and a CPPO, CPPB,

CPM or CACM certification required.

Fourth grade teacher – Location to be determined, 10-month position.

Vocal Music Teacher – Theodore G. Davis Middle School, 10-month position.

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

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

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

Earth/Space Science Teacher – North Point High School, 10-month position.

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

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

Special Education Teachers – Openings at C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School and Maurice J. McDonough High School, 10-month positions.

Extra pay positions

Henry E. Lackey High School has the following openings:

• Head boys' and girls' outdoor track and field coaches

Contact Doug Lamb, interim athletic director, 301-743-5431, to apply.

La Plata High School has the following opening:

• Head varsity football coach

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

Staff Notes

Employee Portal

The Charles County Public Schools employee web portal features payroll information a week prior to the actual pay date. Through the portal, employees can also access employer forms, education and teaching certificates, and benefits details. E-mail EP@ccboe.com with questions.