

# School News

## Important Dates Coming Soon

### *Welcome back!*

Welcome back to teachers and 10-month employees. Veteran teachers return to the classroom on Tuesday, Aug. 23. Students begin school on Monday, Aug. 29.

### *NewsBreak 96*

Airing now is a new episode of *NewsBreak 96*, a monthly show produced by the communications department that highlights school system staff and events. This episode features information from the Board of Education's August meeting, highlights from the Space Foundation's Space Discovery Institute courses offered to teachers this summer and the student team from Henry E. Lackey High School that created an experiment that flew on the last space shuttle launch. The show airs on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12, and is also available on the school system Web site.

### *2011-12 Calendar*

An electronic copy of the *2011-12 Parent Handbook/Calendar* is available on the school system Web site, under the calendars tab located on the home page. Printed copies have been delivered to all schools and centers. Requests for additional copies will not be honored until after the school year begins to ensure all students and staff receive a copy. The direct link to the calendar is <http://www2.ccboe.com/PDF/parent-handbook-calendar.pdf>.

### *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.



Nearly 130 teachers participated in New Teacher Orientation held this week at North Point High School. Teachers learned about the school system, technology, and curriculum, and heard from guest speakers during the opening ceremony. Piccowaxen Middle School's Rianna Stokes, left, inquired about benefits and housing opportunities with Sean McDonald, personnel specialist for Charles County Public Schools, right. See page 3 for a complete story.

## A message from the Superintendent

To all employees:

The most recent Gallop Poll shows that Americans think hiring and retaining great teachers are the keys to ensure a good education for all children.

I couldn't agree more.

That's why I was so impressed this summer when I visited the Space Institute, especially the early childhood space exploration class. It was hard not to get caught up in the enthusiasm of the teachers who had given up a week of their summer to become better teachers.

The teachers were laughing, playing around and making strange things like ice cream comets, Oreo moons, and paper and string robotic arms that actually worked. They were having way too much fun learning about science, space and robots. I enjoyed watching them learn to engage their students in hands-on, nonthreatening ways that are sure to foster love for math and science instead of fear. I am eager to visit

their classrooms this fall to see how they use what they learned.

I saw more great teaching potential at the new teacher orientation. I felt the same energy and commitment from these new young professionals as I did from the veterans at the summer institute. I love the youth and ideas of new teachers; I love knowing that we are hiring caring, highly qualified teachers who will continue to move Charles County Public Schools forward. My message for new teachers is simple. If you don't know how to do something, just ask. Use the experience and resources that surround you at your school.

Education is the best profession. Who else gets to start over new each year with the opportunity to make it the best year ever? Who else gets to work with so many people with a passion for learning, teaching and children? After 45 years with Charles County Public Schools, I still begin each school year with high expectations and confidence.

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## Space Institute offers a new twist on learning

Teachers laughed, talked and created aliens. They put together Mars Rovers out of Graham Crackers, pretzels and Skittles, glued together with vanilla icing. They made robotic fingers from paper and string that, if constructed properly, could pick up items from a table. The more than 30 Charles County Public Schools teachers participating in the Early Childhood Space Exploration class were having fun as they learned to weave science lessons through their curriculum and tricks to make science fun for their students. As part of the class, offered free by Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) and taught by instructors from the National Space Foundation, teachers are taking more than 60 hands-on activities back to their classrooms for their students.

The Space Institute, held July 18 through Aug. 5, included seven, weeklong sessions for teachers. In addition to the early childhood class, courses included rocketry, the biology of living in space, astronomy principles, space technologies and robots, the history and geology of Earth and long-term space travel. The sessions are designed to give teachers across all content areas new tools to keep science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education interesting for students. Each project also models how teachers can incorporate different learning aspects such

as audio and visual into lessons.

"I cannot wait to get back and do everything in the classroom. I think the kids will learn a lot from these activities," said

Fanescia Thompson, kindergarten instructional assistant at J.C. Parks Elementary School.

The early childhood class is centered on space and science education for early learners and provides early childhood educators tools to inspire young students through inquiry-based learning. Hands-on activities are specifically designed to instill the excitement of exploring the child's world and the wonderment of space, and can be immediately used in the classroom, accord-

ing to the Space Foundation's teachers.

Superintendent James E. Richmond visited the early childhood class and said he was pleased with the enthusiasm of the teachers and their commitment to learning how to involve children in math and science through practical applications. "Getting children acclimated to space, science and the future is what these classes are designed to teach. If we get students involved in math and science at an early age, it enhances their successes in these areas," Richmond said.

CCPS continues its partnership with the Space Foundation to further develop STEM programs.



**Fanescia Thompson, a kindergarten instructional assistant at J.C. Parks Elementary School, presents her self-made alien during the Space Discovery Institute's Early Childhood Space Exploration session held last month.**

## Superintendent approves winter break change

Superintendent of Schools James E. Richmond announced a change to the winter break schedule, which affects 12-month employees. In order to provide energy savings to the school system, Richmond has granted all 12-month employees with administrative leave on Wednesday, Dec. 28, and Thursday, Dec. 29. These were regularly scheduled work days for offices and are

listed as dates offices are open in printed copies of the *2011-12 Parent Handbook/Calendar*.

Winter break for students and teachers begins on Thursday, Dec. 22. Winter break begins for 12-month employees on Friday, Dec. 23. The school system will be closed Dec. 23 through Dec. 30, and all employees and students return on Jan. 2.

## Notebook

### On the cover

Pictured on the cover are Charles County Public Schools staff members who participated in the Space Discovery Institute offered by the school system in conjunction with the Space Foundation. Pictured, from left, are: Cynthia Pryor, first-grade teacher, William A. Diggs Elementary School; David Stouffer, second-grade teacher, Indian Head Elementary School; and Kimberly Bean, first-grade teacher, William A. Diggs Elementary School.

### Bus hotline

The school system has a bus hotline for parents to call with questions about bus routes. Call 301-932-6655 to access the hotline, which is available Aug. 25-26, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Aug. 29-30, from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Board work session

The Board of Education of Charles County is holding a work session at 6 p.m., Monday, Aug. 22, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. The meeting will be aired live on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12, and streamed live on the school system Web site at <http://www2.ccboe.com/boe/live/>. The agenda is as follows:

#### Executive session

##### Call to order – 6 p.m.

- Pledge of Allegiance

#### Public Forum

##### Work session

- Funding formula
- Redistricting
- Meeting with delegation
- Superintendent search
- Maryland Association of Boards of Education committees
- Retreat with Commissioners
- Discussion of goals

#### New business

- Construction manager at-risk contract

#### Adjournment

### Labor Day closure

Schools and offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 5, in observance of the Labor Day holiday.



# School system welcomes new teachers for the 2011-12 school year

"Make the difference, connect with your students" was the common theme during the opening ceremony of New Teacher Orientation held this week at North Point High School. Nearly 130 new teachers listened to messages of inspiration and excitement on Monday from speakers including Superintendent James E. Richmond and Board of Education Chairman Roberta Wise.



New teachers walked the halls of North Point High School on Aug. 15-17 for New Teacher Orientation. Pictured are William Wiesmore, left, media specialist from Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School, and Daniel Gattuso, right, media specialist at Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary School as they headed to a technology session.

Laughter erupted among the crowd as Richmond shared stories from when he served as principal at Thomas Stone High School, and urged the new teachers to make learning engaging. "Kids want to be successful, and as teachers

you have to find what turns them on to learning. Get to know them and cause them to want to come to your class. It is human interaction and excitement that creates the desire to learn," Richmond said.

Charles County Public Schools Teacher of the Year, Stephanie Fara Harris-Walent, shared her classroom experiences with the group and emphasized four key principles she uses to influence her teaching style: be flexible; be consistent; ask for help; and establish positive relationships with your students. "Flexible needs to be part of your vocabulary and follow through with what you say. Students need to see you as the leader, so follow up with what you say... they need routine. When you get to know your kids, learning increases, respect increases and they see you invest your time in them. Learn what their strengths and weaknesses are, which in turn will help you

learn to create the best lesson plans for your learners," she added.

The group of new teachers joins the more than 1,900 veterans in the classroom when school officially begins for returning teachers on Tuesday, Aug. 23. The school year starts for an anticipated 26,976 students on Monday, Aug. 29, when students again fill the classrooms. As a new year begins, and new teachers start their career with Charles County Public Schools, Board Chairman Wise cautioned teachers at the opening ceremony to remember their roles in the classroom. "As a new teacher, we have a tendency to forget our role. We are the adult and not the best friend. If you establish respect among your students, your role as the leader will be clear. Respect is very important," she said. Wise also urged teachers to reach out for help and reminded them that school system staff are available for support.

At Monday's orientation, there were 41 elementary, 33 middle school, 51 high school, and three resource teachers as well as one school counselor. The school system also hired two school psychologists, for a total of 131 new hires. As of Aug. 18, there were still three vacancies - one elementary and one high school teaching vacancy, and one special education opening. The majority of new hires came to Charles County from Pennsylvania, Michigan, New York, Ohio and Maryland.

As part of orientation, new teachers also participated in break-out sessions on benefits and technology, as well as equity training and segments targeting their specialized content and teaching areas. New to orientation this year was a bus tour, in which more than 36 new teachers joined staff on a guided school bus tour Tuesday evening to local spots in Charles County.



Members of the Air Force Junior ROTC Color Guard from North Point High School helped present the colors during the opening ceremony of New Teacher Orientation.

## Welcome

I am proud to be part of Charles County Public Schools. I believe we are meeting the demands of the parents who say they want great teachers for their children. Each year, the percentage of highly qualified teachers in our classrooms increases, and we are doing all we can to retain teachers.

I offer my sincere thanks to returning staff for your support last school year and the work you continue to do for children. We have

weathered some tough economic times, and our continued success has been possible because we work as a team. I believe we have maintained our commitment to quality, and I vow to continue our support to the classroom and our employees. Our primary objective is, and will remain, quality education and teaching for all children.

Welcome to a new school year. Have a great year, and let's work to make it the best year ever. - Sincerely, James E. Richmond

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The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, 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 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.

# Sexual harassment training course available online

Charles County Public Schools recently implemented a sexual harassment training course for all staff. All employees, including temporary staff members, are required to complete the course. The course is online and linked to the school system Web site on the staff services page: <http://www2.ccboe.com/staffservices/sexualharassment.cfm>. Results are reported electronically to human resources, and employees must complete the course by Oct. 31. The course takes approximately 20 minutes to complete and principals and supervisors should allow employees time during the regular work day to complete the course.

Staff needs to follow the steps outlined below to complete the course:

- Go to the Web page, <http://ccboe.md.safeschools.com/login>. (No www is necessary).
- Enter your five-digit employee identification number in the user name area located on the right-hand side of the page. Click on the sign-in tab.
- Select the Sexual Harassment: Staff-to-Staff (full course) by clicking on the title.
- Enable the speakers on the computer to complete the course, as the course includes audio clips.
- Complete all training scenarios and the accompanying assessments.
- Print out a copy of the certification of completion for your records.

The Board of Education of Charles County prohibits any and all forms of sexual harassment in the school and workplace settings. Additionally, both federal and state laws prohibit sexual harassment. Sexual harassers may face discipline up to and including termination from employment or expulsion from school.

School system employees and students may not commit acts of sexual harassment against any individual, including other employees and students. It is the obligation and responsibility of every employee to recognize sexual harassment and to take the appropriate action to ensure that such acts are addressed promptly, fairly, and effectively. Any incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately to a school system administrator.

All complaints of sexual harassment shall be investigated in a fair, appropriate, and timely manner. Retaliation for appropriately reporting sexual harassment is prohibited. Complaints may be filed with any school system administrator or with Keith Hettel, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources (employees), or Patricia Vaira, Director of Student Services (students), at 301-932-6610.

For more information on the training course or to report issues with the site, contact Glenn Belmore, 301-934-7275 or [gbelmore@ccboe.com](mailto:gbelmore@ccboe.com).



## Staff notes

### Job openings

**Kindergarten Instructional Assistant** – Gale-Bailey Elementary School, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 25.

**Special Education Instructional Assistant** – General Smallwood Middle School, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 25.

**Title 1 Instructional Assistant Three-Year-Old Program** – Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 25.

**Computer Analyst** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Apply by Aug. 25.

**Special Education Autism Teacher** – Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 31.

**Inclusion Support Resource Teacher** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 31.

**Mathematics Teacher** – North Point High School, 10-month position.

**HVAC Teacher** – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, 10-month position.

**Pharmacy Technician Instructor for the Academy of Health Professions** – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, 10-month position. Position is part-time and paid at an hourly rate.

**New Teacher Mentors** – Openings at the elementary, middle and high school levels, 10-month positions.

**Reading Resource Teacher** – Elementary school level, 11-month position.

**Special Education Inclusion Resource Teacher** – Maurice J. McDonough High School, 10-month position.

**Special Education Teacher** – Dr. James Craik Elementary School, 10-month position.

**Instructional Resource Teachers** – Openings at elementary schools, 11-month positions. Master's degree and five years of experience are required.

**Teacher for the Emotionally Impaired** – Elementary/middle school level, F.B. Gwynn Educational Center, 10-month position.

**Supervising School Counselor** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree and a minimum of five years of experience are required.

### Extra pay positions

**Westlake High School** has the following openings:

- Assistant football coach for receivers
- Assistant cheerleading coach
- Assistant field hockey coach
- Assistant boys basketball coaches

Contact Dominic Zaccarelli, athletic director, at 301-645-8857 to apply.

**North Point High School** has the following opening:

- Junior varsity boys' basketball coach

Contact A. K. Johnson, athletic director, at 301-753-1759 to apply.