

School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Redistricting public hearing

The Board of Education of Charles County is holding a public hearing at 7 p.m., Monday, March 26, in the North Point High School auditorium to address the Superintendent's recommendation to the Board on redistricting proposals for Theodore G. Davis Middle School, William A. Diggs Elementary School and Mary B. Neal Elementary School.

The redistricting also rezones some students at Matthew Henson Middle School, Milton M. Somers Middle School, J.C. Parks Elementary School and Berry Elementary School. Complete descriptions of the proposals can be found at <http://www2.ccboe.com/parentscomm/transportation/redistricting.cfm>.

Two-hour early dismissal

The next two-hour early dismissal for students is Wednesday, March 28.

Finishing up the third quarter

The third marking period ends on Wednesday, March 28. The fourth marking period begins on Thursday, March 29.

Students show off 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 Thursday, March 29, and the secondary event is Friday, March 30. Both competitions are scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at North Point High School in the gymnasium.

Spring break

Spring break for students and teachers is April 2-9. Administrative offices are closed Friday, April 6, and Monday, April 9.

Board sends transfer rule back to committee

In a 5-2 vote, the Board of Education on Tuesday dismissed the Superintendent's recommendation to approve a revised version of the student transfer rule 5126 and sent it back to a Board committee for more work.

At issue are guidelines that govern when and how students are allowed to attend a school other than the one to which he or she is assigned. Some Board members took issue with the broader transfer rights provided for children of employees in the Superintendent's proposal.

This is the second time the rule has been sent for revision since the Board committee, composed of Jennifer Abell, Pamela Pedersen and Maura Cook, submitted a proposal in December. Employees, both teachers and classified, protested to the Board in December that the Board's revision was taking away employee benefits and was unfair to classified employees who were excluded from the transfer rule. Superintendent James E. Richmond asked the Board in December to allow staff to take another look at the rule and develop a compromise, which was completed and first presented as a report to the Board in February.

The staff proposal, some Board members said, still allowed for too many student

transfers. Board Member Jennifer Abell said available space should be used as the criteria, making all student transfer requests, including those made by employees, treated equally. She referred to the Board committee's recommendation that a request for a transfer by a parent or guardian – including employees – shall be considered by the Superintendent or designee only if there is space available in the receiving school, including in the specific grade or program of studies.

The Board committee's recommendation also limits student transfer requests by employees to certificated employees and to the building where the employee works. The committee's recommendation stated, "A student who resides in the county and whose parent or guardian is a certificated full-time, school-based employee may request a transfer to the school in which the parent/guardian is employed on a full-time basis...." There was also a similar clause for certificated employees who live outside of the county with an added reference to applicable tuition payments.

Staff had proposed a revision to the committee's suggestion that opened student transfer requests for children of all Charles

See Transfers, page 2

Superintendent proposes 16.9 million dollar budget

Superintendent James E. Richmond presented his proposed fiscal year 2013 operating budget, which includes a request for two step/level increases for eligible employees, to the Board Education on Tuesday.

The Superintendent's operating budget request of \$316.2 million reflects a funding increase of \$16.9 million, or 5.7 percent more than fiscal year 2012.

Paul Balides, assistant superintendent of finance, business administration and technology, told the Board that the request includes a reserve for negotiations with the Education Association of Charles County (EACC) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Employees, he said, are one step/level payment

behind and the school system is requesting from the Charles County Commissioners an additional \$8.8 million, the estimated cost of two step/level increases.

Of great concern, said Balides, is the continued use of fund balance and one-time money to pay for ongoing fixed expenditures. These steps are risky but avoid layoffs, furloughs and program reductions for FY2013. Mandatory cost increases include \$8.1 million in health care costs increases. Funding the increase will require eliminating contributions to the retiree health insurance trust fund and significant increases to employee insurance premiums.

The Superintendent's proposed budget, is at www2.ccboe.com/boe/budget.cfm.



On the cover

Pictured on the cover are employees recognized at the February Board of Education meeting. Pictured, from left, are: Erica Strass, science teacher, Berry Elementary School; Pamela Shorter, food service worker, Eva Turner Elementary School; and Jillian Genua, physical education teacher, J.P. Ryon Elementary School.

Plays feature zombies, blondes

Thomas Stone High School is presenting their annual spring play, "Zombie Prom," on March 22-24, at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$8 for adults, and \$5 for students and senior citizens. School system employees receive two complementary tickets by showing their identification badges.

North Point High School is also presenting their spring play, "Legally Blonde: The Musical," that weekend from March 22-24, and again on March 29-30. Showtime for all performances is 7 p.m. Tickets are \$8 for general admission, and \$5 for students and senior citizens. System employees can also receive one free ticket by showing their identification badge.

Educational Showcase

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is hosting its second annual Educational Showcase on Saturday, April 21, at North Point High School. The event begins at 9 a.m. and will feature more than 30 educational presentations on popular topics for elementary, middle and high school students, as well as general sessions targeted for students of all ages. Entertainment will also be provided by student performers, such as school bands and choirs, and children in attendance can participate in story time with guest readers from the local libraries or have their faces painted by honor society students.

Each school will maintain a booth to provide attendees with specific school-related information from parental involvement opportunities to extra-curricular activities for students.

The event will showcase all of the opportunities that Charles County Public Schools offers students, parents, staff and the Charles County community. There will be something of interest for all ages.

Visit http://www2.ccboe.com/educational_showcase.cfm for more information.

Palko recognized for career and technology efforts

Barbara Palko, career and technology education coordinator for Charles County Public Schools, was recently named the 2012 Career and Technology Education (CTE) Outstanding Secondary Change Agent Award of Excellence recipient by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

The award recognizes individuals that provide leadership in innovative change that positively affects career and technology education programs. Palko was nominated for the award by Thomas Weirich, principal at the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, for her efforts in expanding CTE opportunities to students in all six Charles County public high schools. She was also nominated for her dedication to providing students with strong educational foundations before they enter the job market or pursue higher education.

According to her nomination, Palko is responsible for overseeing the expansion of CTE programs as well as the implementation of new course offerings. She has assisted in providing teacher training and updating curriculum and materials to reflect rigorous standards set by industry in career fields of study and helped bring 11 new CTE programs of study to Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) students.

Palko was surprised by her nomination and said she is humbled to be honored for doing something she loves. "This Award of Excellence was a complete surprise. I

am honored to have someone even think to nominate me," she said. Under Palko's leadership, courses have also been added to the interactive media production, graphic communication, career research and development (CRD), and automotive technology programs.

Additionally, last school year, the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) pre-engineering program was expanded to three additional schools, manufacturing was launched as a new CTE program and a third course in the PLTW biomedical sciences program was introduced. CTE programs provide high school students with opportunities to pursue a

technical and academic program of study to earn skills that lead to either immediate employment upon graduation or post-secondary education.

Palko said students that complete CTE courses access additional career exploration opportunities upon graduation. "If students choose, they can enter the workforce with the technical skills and experiences to give them an advantage when interviewing for a position. They can also use the knowledge and credentials earned in high school to financially help with post-secondary expenses. CTE students are truly career and college ready," she said.

The awards program is sponsored by MSDE's Division of Career and College Readiness. Visit http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/careertech/career_technology for more information.



Barbara Palko

Transfers

continued from page 1

County Public Schools employees and also allowed employees to request a transfer for their child to the elementary, middle or high school zoned for the employee's primary work location. This, according to staff, limited the schools where employees could transfer their children and addressed concerns of some Board members that employees were school shopping.

Voting to accept the Superintendent's recommendation were Board Chairman

Roberta Wise and Donald Wade. Voting against were Jennifer Abell, Patricia Bowie, Maura Cook, Michael Lukas and Pamela Pedersen. Rule 5126, as currently written, remains in effect until the Board takes action to change it.

To view a complete copy of Rule 5126, the Board committee's recommendation and the Superintendent's recommendation, visit <http://www2.ccboe.com/staffservices.cfm>.



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, March 2. 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: J.C. Parks Elementary School Prekindergarten teacher Derval Jezek and student Aniyah Proctor; F.B. Gwynn Educational Center Coordinator Todd Wonderling dressed as the Cat in the Hat, with teacher Brenda Wagner's first-graders Conner Milam, Samia Johnson, Keaja Blakes and Branden Henry; William B. Wade Elementary School fifth-grader Abigail Semarge; Dr. Samuel A. Mudd kindergartner Mahnoor Raja; Mudd kindergartner Ja'Von Rush; Parks prekindergarten Intidy Johnson; Dr. Mudd kindergartners Xavier Buchanan and Jeremiah Williams; Parks prekindergartners Jalyn Matthews and Jhaika Rabaya; Dr. Mudd kindergartner Elijah Gray, with kindergarten teacher Molly Simpson; Parks kindergartner Keira McCaughtry; and Parks kindergartner Demara Holton.

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
Taylor Brooks, Student Member

Superintendent of Schools

James E. Richmond

Editor/Writers

Katie O'Malley-Simpson
Shelley Mackey
Kara Gross
Laura Hupp

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 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.

Smallwood adds a little bit of testing spirit, MSA style

Students and staff at General Smallwood Middle School added a little bit of pep to their steps on Thursday, March 8, during a schoolwide pep rally held to encourage students to perform their best on the upcoming Maryland School Assessment (MSA) math and reading tests. The rally featured events such as a jingle competition in which students created songs about the tests and competed in a hula-hoop challenge and basketball shooting contest. Also featured was a performance by the JROTC team and the "Ladies of Destruction" team from Henry E. Lackey High School.

Smallwood staff also participated in the events to encourage students to enjoy the pep rally and to demonstrate school unity. During the Lackey student performances, Col. Charles Gilbert, Lackey JROTC instructor, told the Smallwood students success on the MSA tests, and in the classroom, provides them with opportunities to be a part of a group such as the JROTC.

Smallwood Principal Kathy Perriello said the pep rally serves as a motivator to students, as well

as staff, to perform their best not only on the MSA tests, but in the classroom. As part of the rally, students were divided up into three teams – sixth grade, seventh grade and eighth grade – and earned

points based on how well their selected students did in the hula-hoop, basketball and jump-rope challenges.

Students also voted on which jingle they thought was the best during home base. The rally ended with a performance of a popular dance called the "Cha-Cha slide," in which teachers and staff members joined along with students in the dance to celebrate the upcoming MSAs.

The overall goal of the pep rally, according to Tameka Gaddy, an intervention resource facilitator and rally organizer, is to promote a sense of community among students and staff.

This is the seventh year that Smallwood has held an MSA pep rally, which has become a school tradition for students and staff. The school hosts the event the week before MSA tests to help their students relax and become excited about studying and performing their best.



General Smallwood Middle School language arts teacher Jeffrey Sokoloski performed a hula-hoop routine during an MSA pep rally held on March 8.



Personnel

Job Openings

Content Specialist for School Health and Physical Education – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree and five years experience required. Apply by March 16.

Food Service Assistant Manager – Location to be determined, 10-month position. A minimum of three years experience required. Apply by March 16.

Coordinator of Student Activities – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Advanced Professional Certificate in a related field, five years teaching experience and three years athletic director experience required. Apply by March 19.

Human Resource Personnel Specialist – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree, experience in special education and three years of administrative experience required. Apply by March 26.

Director for Special Education Compliance, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Facilitation and Related Services – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree in special education, and five years experience with the IEP process and compliance is required.

Media Specialist – J.P. Ryon Elementary School, 10-month position. Master's degree in library science required.

Mathematics Teachers – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 10-month positions.

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

Instructional Resource Teacher – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 11-month position. Master's degree and five years experience required.

Food Service Program Support Manager – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Bachelor's degree and a minimum of three years experience required.

Extra pay positions

Westlake High School has the following opening:

- Head boys' varsity basketball coach

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

Henry E. Lackey High School has the following openings:

- Varsity girls' basketball coach
- Field hockey coach
- Cheerleading coach
- Assistant soccer coach
- Assistant wrestling coach

Contact David Anderson, athletic director, 301-743-5431, to apply.

Three pay dates this month

There are three pay dates this month. The only deductions taken from the third paycheck are taxes and retirement. Other deductions, such as health insurance, are not deducted from the third paycheck in months with three pay dates.