

# School News

## Important Dates Coming Soon

### Thanksgiving closures

Schools and administrative offices will be closed Nov. 24-26 for the Thanksgiving holiday break

### Communications awards

Charles County Public Schools communications' staff received six awards through the Chesapeake Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association's 2010 Communications' Contest.

Four entries received an Award of Excellence, the highest accolade an entry can receive. Entries include "School News," a print/web-based newsletter for school system staff; and two podcasts featuring episodes of NewsBreak 96 and On Air, two television shows produced by department staff.

Also receiving an Award of Excellence is a budget-focused speech presented to the Charles County Commissioners by Board Chairman Roberta S. Wise.

"CCPS Gets Civil," a video production highlighting civil rights education in Charles County Public Schools, received an Award of Merit, the second highest accolade an entry can receive. Another speech, summer school graduation, also received Honorable Mention. Department staff includes Katie O'Malley-Simpson, director of communications; Shelley Mackey, communications specialist; Kyle Graves, video production specialist; Sabrina Weitkamp, web developer; and Kara Gross, multimedia assistant.

### Music to my ears

Student musicians in the all-county band, chorus and orchestra groups are presenting their winter concerts on Saturday, Dec. 4, at La Plata High School. The chorus concerts start at 2 p.m., followed by the band concerts at 4 p.m., and the orchestra concerts at 7 p.m. Admission is free.

## Charles County staff, students lend a helping hand

Charles County Public Schools students and staff are giving back to the local community in big, exciting and charitable ways.

Charles County Public Schools staff models giving through two programs where they are community leaders. School employees participate in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life and the United Way. Both agencies have recently honored the school system and its employees for their high level of giving. The American Cancer Society recently recognized Superintendent James E. Richmond with the Superintendent of Year award for the South Atlantic Division, which covers most of the East Coast, and gave the school system a 100 percent participation

award for having all schools and centers contributing for Relay for Life. During the 2009-10 Relay for Life campaign, the school system raised more than \$137,500 in donations and had 100 percent participation from staff in all schools, centers and buildings.

Along with Relay for the Life, students and staff do a lot of holiday giving. Here are a few examples:

- J.P. Ryon Elementary School has been

working to provide food baskets to families. The Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) at Ryon is organizing baskets that include a turkey with stuffing, corn bread, canned vegetables and pies. The Ryon team is also collecting coats, shoes, and other extras.

- The Mattawoman Middle School Builders Club, which includes sixth, seventh and eighth graders, is making a difference

by collecting enough food to feed 20 families this Thanksgiving. The Greater Waldorf Jaycees provided Mattawoman with a \$500 grant to help purchase a turkey and ham for each basket. The students have collected about 1,800 items, and students arrive at 6:30 a.m. to carry donations from

one part of the school to another in preparation for making the Thanksgiving baskets.

Other schools are taking donations from grocery stores to be added to existing collections for food drives and local food banks.

- La Plata High School recently worked with Best Buddies, a non-profit organization that gives opportunities to individuals with disabilities, to put together a Tri-County Harvest Dance at the school. Students in Charles,

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**Mattawoman Middle School Builders Club members Alex Hodge, left, Angelica Romero, center, and Cheyanne Hayes, right, work together to prepare Thanksgiving baskets for donation.**

## Wesolowski in first national certification class

Stephanie Wesolowski, principal at Milton M. Somers Middle School, has been selected as a member of the first class of principals to participate in a National Board Certification for Principals.

Similar to the 20-year-old national teacher certification program, the principal certification is designed to recognize and retain accomplished school leaders who improve student learning, retain talented teachers and

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## On the cover

Pictured on the cover are employees recently recognized as exemplary by the Board of Education. Pictured, from left, are: Megan Maletto, second-grade teacher, Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School; Linda Badgley, media instructional assistant, La Plata High School; and Michelle Simone, first-grade teacher, Dr. James Craik Elementary School.

## Direct payment extended

Beginning in January, the accounts payable department will set up direct deposit for employees who are listed as vendors for expense reimbursements and travel. This service is only available for employees who have payroll direct deposit. The initial payment will be made with a paper check in order for bank account verification, and check statements will be sent by mail or through the pony. All other payments will be made by direct deposit and statements will be sent by e-mail.

Employees who want to receive travel and expense reimbursement payments by direct deposit must initially sign up for payroll direct deposit. To sign up for payroll direct deposit, fill out the authorization agreement for automatic deposits, which is available on the school system Web site under the staff services page. Attach a voided check to the form and forward it to the payroll department. Allow one payroll cycle for information verification.

Accounts payable will still process payments weekly. Employees that provide completed documentation (invoices and proper authorization) for payment on a Friday should expect to see the payment in their bank accounts by the following Friday.

## Airing this week ...

Airing this week is a new episode of NewsBreak 96, a monthly show produced by communications staff that highlights Charles County Public Schools students and staff. This episode features Destination College, events schools held to celebrate American Freedom Week and highlights from the Board of Education's November meeting. The show airs throughout the week on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12.

## Wesolowski

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foster school involvement among parents and the community, according to National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NNPTS) information. The principals in the first class are participating in a field test that began in August and continues until June 2012. Wesolowski is required to complete a series of assignments that assess accomplished principal school practices, including those that most impact student learning, achievement and school effectiveness.

"I am thrilled to be selected as one of the 660 participants in the first class. I applied two years ago to be a member of the standards development committee; however, I was not selected. To now be a part of the initial class that will validate the standards is the next best alternative and perhaps an even better opportunity for me to enhance my professional practice," Wesolowski said about her selection.

Wesolowski will also be required to complete data analysis, written reflections,

video analysis and interviews. There are nine National Board core standards that principals must meet in order to obtain national certification. Standards include skills, applications and dispositions that relate to leadership, vision, management, school and learning culture, learners and learning, instruction, ethics, equity and advocacy. She will complete a comprehensive working portfolio, and be evaluated in terms of her ability as a school leader to enhance teacher practice and the improvement of student learning. "Ultimately, I hope to use the feedback to reflect on ways to improve my leadership potential," Wesolowski said.



**Stephanie  
Wesolowski**

## Giving

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St. Mary's and Calvert counties were invited and admission was one canned item.

- Students at Westlake High School collected more than 1,845 pounds of food, with 100 pounds being brought in by teachers, as an incentive to wear jeans to school.

Other schools coordinated their own giving events. Some of these events include:

- Mary B. Neal Elementary School hosted a 5k race for hunger last month that raised about \$2,755. Neal students and staff are also donating 3,000 pounds of food to the Southern Maryland Food Bank, which will feed more than 140 families. Neal is also doing a "super bowl", where the students bring in canned soup in support of the team they think will win the Super Bowl.

- Students and staff at Maurice J. McDonough High School collected canned food for the local food bank. They also put together Thanksgiving baskets for families and care packages for soldiers overseas. The Drama Club has collected four shopping carts of non-perishable food items, and the Key Club raised \$135 for the Unit-

ed Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and \$250 as a sponsor for the Walk to End Homelessness.

- Arthur Middleton Elementary School students and staff organized a food drive to donate items to a local food bank or charity in need.

- T.C. Martin Elementary School is decorating a Hospice Tree purchased for the family of Landon Morrill, a student who recently passed away from complications with Leukemia. The school is holding a Caps for Cancer day, where students must pay \$1 to wear a hat, which will be donated to Relay for Life. The school also works with St. Mary's Bryantown School to collect canned goods and items for baskets for local families.

- More than 15 schools, as well as the F.B. Gwynn and Robert D. Stethem educational centers, partnered with the Charles County Sheriff's Office to hold a county-wide food drive on Nov. 19. Donations were delivered to local food banks in the Charles County community.



# Fifth-grade students consider making their destination college

Every child in Lyndsay Kelly's fifth-grade class has already been accepted into college.

Each of the J.P. Ryon Elementary School students recently received an acceptance letter from College of Southern Maryland (CSM) President Brad Gottfried after completing three abbreviated college classes. The students received the letters, along with other fifth graders from Ryon, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, Eva Turner and Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy elementary schools, as part of the first series of Destination College at CSM.

Destination College is a sample college day that introduces students to a smattering of classes, including how to create a video game, health services and theatre arts. A joint CSM and Charles County Public Schools program, the day opened with a short welcome from Gottfried, where he encouraged the children to consider post secondary education, and ended with the conferment of a college acceptance letter that's good in 2018 as long as students graduate from high school.

"We believe that we need to work together to encourage all children to graduate from high school as a minimum, and to consider some form of post-secondary education, whether it be at a tech school or a college. The children are so receptive to the message. They all share the same dreams of a happy and successful life, and need to understand that it is more achievable with a good education," Gottfried said.

Students gathered in college classrooms among computers, health equipment and theatrical props. College professors and staff led students through exercises using hands-on activities to make it memorable as well as fun. The fifth graders worked individually and in pairs as they shared secrets to creating replicas of the first Pong video game

or how to compute the average body temperature of the group. They strained to hear and count their heartbeats through stethoscopes and transformed whitewashed wood into a brown ship for the college's production of "The Pirates of Penzance."

The initiative is part of a "Better Education Together" partnership between Charles County Public Schools and CSM and focuses on exposing children to higher education opportunities. It shows students what it might be like in the future if they work hard and graduate from high school.

"The program is intended to put students in real-college classroom situations," said Superintendent James E. Richmond. "Students are more likely to pursue something like college if they have early exposure to the possibilities and opportunities it offers."

"It is a wonderful way for our students to experience a college setting early on. I appreciate Dr. Gottfried's message to the students to finish high school and to pursue education beyond high school," Richmond said.

"The College of Southern Maryland has always had a close working relationship with Charles County Public Schools. With the 'Better Education Together' program, this relationship has become even stronger. One outcome of the relationship has been the 'Destination College' program. The college will be launching other programs with the school district in the future.

When the two educational entities work together, the community is the beneficiary," Gottfried said.

According to Rhayda Barnes-Thomas, Title I coordinator, Destination College is a Title I program and the school system hopes to extend the opportunity to fifth-grade students at C. Paul Barnhart and Indian Head elementary schools sometime in the spring.



**J.P. Ryon Elementary students practice theatrics during Destination College at the College of Southern Maryland. Students helped prepare props for an upcoming play at the college, took a tour backstage and worked with actors. Pictured, from left, are fifth-grade students Paris Bowen, Jasmine Nelson, Phoenix Harper, Brighton Huels and Amyah Swann.**



**Fifth-grade Ryon students learned about heart rates and other health related issues during one of their "college" classes. Health careers were among the three areas students explored during their college day. Pictured in the left photo, from left, are Jade Harrison, Hazel Ware and Jemia Butler. Pictured in the photo on the right are Brianne Blount and Christopher Anderson.**

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# Staff Notes

## Payroll is going green

Payroll is eliminating pay stub vouchers for all employees who have direct deposit next month. The last paper pay stub will be administered with the Dec. 23 paycheck. The information is available on the employee portal, and employees can also print copies of their pay stubs from the portal. Staff members may opt out of this service.

To access pay stub vouchers on the portal, users can select the payroll tab and look for the specific pay date to print a voucher. Staff members who do not want to use the portal to access pay stub vouchers can request a paper copy through human resources; however, employees need to access the request form which is located on the portal under the employer forms section. Requests to obtain paper copy for the Jan. 7 paycheck must be submitted by Dec. 31. Call 301-934-7347 with questions.

## Employee web portal

Charles County Public Schools launched a new employee web portal this school year. The portal allows employees to create an account to access payroll and benefits information. Payroll information and leave balances are available for view a week prior to the actual pay date. Through the portal, employees can also access employer forms, education and teaching certificates, and benefits details. Employees are encouraged to sign-up for an account.

All employees will need to set up an account in

order to access the new portal. First-time users can follow these steps to create an account: access the portal on the staff services page of the CCPS Web site; select create an account; enter the required information, including your full first and last name used for payroll purposes, your employee identification number and last four digits of your social security number; and create an account password and include a valid e-mail address.

The portal is set up to include navigation tabs for employees to access different sections. Under the home tab, employees can find employer forms, federal, state, direct deposit authorization and direct deposit forms. Employees can view detailed paycheck information under the payroll tab. W-2 information will also be available after Jan. 31.

Under the leave tab, employees can view beginning, earned, taken and ending leave balances. Users can also select the leave detail option, and then click on the "from" heading to view detailed history. Leave information is listed by pay date.

Additional employee portal tabs include education, certificates, and benefits and deductions, and employees should check the information for accuracy. Contact human resources with changes to the education/certificate information, the benefits office for changes to benefits, and payroll for payroll information.

Call 301-934-7488 or e-mail EP@ccboe.com for more information or with questions.

# Personnel

Apply for positions online at [www.ccboe.com/hur](http://www.ccboe.com/hur). Positions are open until filled unless otherwise noted. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

## Job openings

**Building Service Workers** – Openings at Mary B. Neal and William A. Diggs elementary schools, and Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 12-month positions. Apply by Nov. 29.

**Human Resources Receptionist** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Apply by Nov. 29.

**Operations Foreman** – Maintenance shop, 12-month position. Apply by Nov. 30

**Vice Principals** – For future openings at all levels, 11- or 12-month positions. Master's degree, three years of teaching experience required. Candidates must also be eligible for the MSDE Administrator I certificate, which requires a Master's degree with 18 credits

of specific coursework and an approved and completed practicum or internship. Apply by Nov. 30.

**Secretary** – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 10-month position. Apply by Nov. 30.

**Adult Education Program Facilitator** – Lifelong Learning Center, 12-month position. Bachelor's degree required, Master's degree preferred. Apply by Dec. 1.

**Kindergarten Instructional Assistant** – Mary B. Neal Elementary School, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 3.

**Media Instructional Assistant** – Matthew Henson Middle School, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 3.

**English Teacher** – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 10-month position.

**Instructional Resource Teacher** – John Hanson Middle School, 11-month position.

**Hiatus Teacher** – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 10-month position.

**Science Teacher** – Mattawoman Middle School, 10-month position.

## Extra pay positions

**Thomas Stone High School** has the following openings:

- Head volleyball coach
- Junior varsity volleyball coach

Contact Steven Lee, 301-645-2601, to apply.

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

- Varsity basketball coach
- Junior varsity softball coach

Contact Principal Kim Hill, 301-753-1759, to apply.

**La Plata High School** has the following opening:

- Softball coach

Contact Principal Evelyn Arnold, 301-934-1100, to apply.