



# School News

## Important Dates Coming Soon

### *Two-hour early dismissal*

The next two-hour early dismissal for students is Wednesday, Jan. 12.

### *Schools/offices closed*

Schools and offices will be closed on Monday, Jan. 17, in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

### *SECAC meeting*

The next meeting of the Special Education Citizens Advisory Group (SECAC) is 6:30 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 19, in the Board Room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. Call the Parent Center at 301-934-7456 for more information.

### *NewsBreak96*

Airing now on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12 is a new episode of NewsBreak 96, an original show produced by communications staff that highlights Charles County Public Schools students and staff. Featured in this episode is footage from the Board of Education's recent swearing-in ceremony, the December Board meeting, and New Year's resolutions from students and staff. Episodes of NewsBreak 96 are also available on the school system Web site through the video on demand feature. Visit [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) for more information.

### *Staff assistance program*

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 301-932-9656 for additional information.



Tammy Barnes



Gary Lesko



Heather Neely



Jessica Pratta



JoAnne Shelak

## Five teachers earn National Board Certification

Five Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) teachers joined the ranks of accomplished teachers nationwide who achieved national certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

The teachers, Tammy Barnes, JoAnne Shelak, Gary Lesko, Heather Neely and Jessica Pratta, completed a yearlong performance-based assessment series to become National Board Certified Teachers, according to a December release by the NBPTS. National Board Certified Teachers represent approximately 3 percent of the nation's teaching force.

- Barnes is a Reading Resource Teacher at Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary

School and earned a reading-language arts/early and middle childhood certificate.

- Lesko is a social studies teacher at North Point High School and earned his certificate in social studies-history/adolescence and young adulthood.

- Neely is a Life Skills resource teacher based at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building and earned an exceptional needs specialist/early childhood through young adulthood certificate.

- Pratta is a social studies teacher at North Point and earned a social studies-history/adolescence and young adulthood certificate.

- Shelak is a science teacher at William A. Diggs Elementary School and earned a

See National Certification, page 2

## Board of Education members take oath of office



Board members take the oath of office. Pictured, from left, are: Jennifer S. Abell, Patricia Bowie, Maura H. Cook, Michael K. Lukas, Pamela A. Pedersen, Donald M. Wade and Roberta S. Wise. See the Notebook on page 2 for more information.



### On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees honored by the Board of Education at the December meeting. Pictured, from left, are: Judith Chandler, school counselor, Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School; Garnet Anderson, school counselor, John Hanson Middle School; and Sandra Dippold, music teacher, C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School.

### Board swearing-in

Members of the Board of Education took the oath of office Monday, Dec. 20 in a formal ceremony at North Point High School.

Sworn into office were: Jennifer Abell, Patricia Bowie, Maura Cook, Michael Lukas, Pamela Pedersen, Donald Wade and Roberta Wise. Two new members, Bowie and Lukas, join five veteran Board members to compose Board XV.

Superintendent James E. Richmond outlined for Board members what skills great board members possess, including a clear vision, communication skills, teamwork, a knowledge of budget issues, a focus on students and a passion for public education.

Student Board Member Emmanuel Bakare and Henry E. Lackey High School liaison Deborah Cline were the masters of ceremony and presented pens to each Board member on behalf of the system's 26,858 students. The new Board holds its first meeting Jan. 11, and will elect its chairman and vice chairman at the beginning of the meeting.

### New CCASC advisor

Gary Winsett, a social studies teacher and student government advisor at Thomas Stone High School, was recently named as the county advisor to the Charles County Association of Student Councils (CCASC). As the advisor, he will oversee countywide student government activities, and work with student government advisors and student officers at all middle and high schools. Winsett will also oversee the selection of student CCASC officers and the student member to the Board of Education. He is the liaison to the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MASC) and works with student leaders to coordinate schedules and plan all meetings and community activities.

## Smallwood counselor honored as national finalist

Michelle James, a school counselor at General Smallwood Middle School, was recently selected by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) as one of 10 finalists for the national 2011 School Counselor of the Year award. The program honors counselors who serve as student advocates, are innovative, and coordinate effective programs.

She was nominated by Smallwood Principal Cynthia Baker for her dedication to children. "Ms. James is one of a kind. Her commitment and dedication are evident," Baker wrote in a nomination letter.

James has been a counselor at Smallwood since 2008, and is the department chair, the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program counselor/coordinator, and coordinates the Saturday School program.

James said the overall goal of her efforts as a school counselor aid in providing students with a comprehensive program that addresses academic, personal, social and career development. "Though I believe each student is responsible for achieving, some students need more support in ar-

reas than others. We have to meet students where they are in order to help them grow," she said.

She began her career with Charles County Public Schools in 2004 at Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School, where she worked as a counselor for four years. During her time there, she co-chaired the annual community Thanksgiving feast, coordinated the Toys for Tots program and began a schoolwide monthly student recognition program.

In 2008, James was asked to transfer to Smallwood in order to continue working with the fifth-grade class. Jeanette Kaufmann, supervising school counselor, said James' willingness to follow her elementary students to a new school is just one example of her can-do attitude.

She will be recognized by the ASCA next month. She will also be honored by the Board of Education Jan. 11. James has a bachelor's degree in human development and family science in 2002, and a master's in counselor education from The Ohio State University. She also holds national certification in school counseling.



Michelle James

## National Certification

Continued from page 1

generalist/middle childhood certificate.

National Board Certified Teachers must complete a rigorous review of their skills and work, which includes teacher portfolios, student work samples, videotapes, and thorough analysis of the candidates' classroom teaching and student learning. Teachers also complete a series of written exercises that probe the depth of their subject-matter knowledge and their understanding of how to teach that material to students.

The five CCPS teachers join 8,639 teachers nationwide who were certified in 2010. Certification is valid for 10 years, after which a teacher may seek renewal. Charles County Public Schools has 31 nationally certified teachers.

By achieving National Board Certification, the Charles County teachers are eligible for a \$2,500 stipend added to

their annual salary as well as an annual \$1,000 incentive from the Maryland State Department of Education as long as they remain in the classroom and maintain their National Board Certification.

"National Board Certification improves teaching and learning. It is proven to have a positive impact on student achievement, and I commend each of these teachers for successfully completing the intense process to earn national certification," said Superintendent James E. Richmond.

Only teachers with a standard or advanced professional certificate who have a minimum of three years successful teaching experience are eligible to apply for National Board Certification.

Information about NBPTS can be found at the NBPTS Web site at [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org).



## Three-year-old program shows early childhood intervention works

Rachael Ashby was worn out after her first week of teaching a class of three year olds.

"I thought, how in the world am I going to teach 15 three year olds to walk in a line, stay on the carpet, sit criss-cross applesauce, and raise a quiet hand on top of teaching them their colors, numbers, shapes and letters?" Three months later, and with what Ashby describes as patience and time, her students walk in a line down the Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School hallways, raise "quiet" hands, sit on the carpet and are discovering a love for learning.

Everything about the three-year-old program at Dr. Mudd is new. The students are enjoying their first school experience. The program was added to Dr. Mudd this year and Ashby is a first-year teacher.

As the children filter into Ashby's class, they place their photograph in the "in" box indicating they are present. They eat breakfast and then huddle on the rug



**Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School teacher, Rachael Ashby, left, guides Israel Gardner, right, through a calendar counting exercise.**



**Diego Garcia-Diaz eats breakfast before starting class at Dr. Mudd.**

Gooding Even Start Program grant, the three's program was established for low-income families to better prepare children for academic achievement and school success.

Testing data from the students who attended the first CCPS three-year-old program shows early childhood intervention works. The first members of the three-year-old class are now in fourth grade and last year scored equal to or better than their third-grade classmates on the Maryland School Assessments (MSA). Superintendent James E. Richmond is convinced that the program not only works, but that early intervention is the key to closing the academic achievement gap. "The only way to close the achievement gap is to reach those children who traditionally start behind their peers in kindergarten and provide them with the opportunity to enter kindergarten reading ready and on the same level as their classmates," Richmond said.

Since starting the program at Mt. Hope, the school system has gradually added classes to four more schools, C. Paul Barnhart, Indian Head, J.P. Ryon and Dr. Mudd. Funding is now provided through Title I school allotments, which restricts enrollment to children meeting federal income guidelines. There are 75 children attending full-day three-year-old programs at the five schools.

"The best thing about teaching three year olds is being able to see the change and growth in each student on a daily basis and know that you were part of that. Seeing their faces light up as they learn to open their own milk, put on their own jacket and zip it up, identify letters around the room and raise a quiet hand, is truly amazing," Ashby said.

In Ashby's class, the children are eager to participate in the morning activities. That's the premise behind starting school at such an early age. "The earlier that we get to foster their love for learning, the better children do in school," Richmond said.

The three's program fosters language and learning through exploratory play, learning and circle time. Children in Ashby's class rotate through centers that expose them to early childhood concepts through reading, math and science, and they gain experience through community field trips to places like the library, supermarkets and fire departments.

Ashby agrees the program is important. "It exposes children to a classroom setting at an early age giving them an extra year to learn both academic and social skills that are crucial to their success. My students think they are playing most of the day, but really they are learning and exploring so many new concepts.



**Superintendent James E. Richmond, right, talks with three-year-old students, from left, Devontae Russell, Kalia Woods and Jakei Cobb.**

"My goal is to inspire each child to want to come to school every day and learn as much as they can. My mission is to provide these children with structure in the school system and teach them the rules and expectations within the classroom so when they leave my room they will be prepared for the journey that lies ahead," Ashby said.

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## Board of Education Members

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

## Superintendent of Schools

James E. Richmond

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## Board of Education announces January 11 agenda

The Board of Education's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, Jan. 11, 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 Channel 12 and is rebroadcast throughout the week.

### Executive session – 12 p.m.

### Call to order – 1 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance, Thomas Stone High School's JROTC unit

### Election of Chairman/Vice Chairman

### Reports of officers/boards/committees

- Superintendent's update
- Correspondence/Board Member updates
- Education Association of Charles County update
- Student Board Member update
- CIP update
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathemat-

ics (STEM) initiatives; Career Technology Education

- Budget update
- Legislative update

### Unfinished business

### New business and future agenda items

- New business
- Future agenda items

### Recognition – 4:30 p.m.

- Students
- Employees
- Resolutions: *African-American History Month; Career and Technical Education Month; and National School Counseling Week.*

### Public Forum – 6 p.m.

### Action items

- Minutes
- Personnel
- Board policy 4610 amendment

### Adjournment



## New weather code created for those really snowy days

An additional code has been added to the Charles County Public Schools staff inclement weather policy on the school system Web site. A code blue was added this school year to address the need to close the system down completely. When a code blue is

announced, no employees (including emergency personnel and building service staff) report to work. To review inclement weather guidelines, visit the staff services page here: <http://www2.ccboe.com/staffservices/inclementweather.cfm>.

## 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

**Special Education Teacher** – Matthew Henson Middle School, 10-month position.

**Life Skills Teacher** – Piccowaxen Middle School, 10-month position.

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

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

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

**Mathematics Teacher** – Thomas Stone High School, 10-month position.

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

**Family and Consumer Science Teacher** – Westlake High School, 10-month position.

**Special Education Math for Self Contained and Inclusion** – Thomas Stone High School, 10-month position.

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

**Speech Language Therapist** – Elementary school level, 10-month position.

**Coordinator of Middle School Instruction** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree, a minimum of five years successful teaching experience, and experience in leadership roles are required.

### Extra pay

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

- Dance/Pom coach

Contact Jason Bursick, athletic director, at 301-934-2944 to apply.

### Staff Notes

As of today's paycheck, payroll has eliminated pay stub vouchers for all employees who have direct deposit. Employees can access this on the employee portal. 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. Payroll information and leave balances are available for view a week prior to the actual pay date.

All employees will need to set up an account in order to access the portal. 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 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. Call 301-934-7488 with questions about the portal.