



Pictured above, from left, are La Plata High School senior Jennifer Long, La Plata ceramics teacher Alice Yutzy, the LPHS scarecrow and La Plata art teacher Joseph Troy. The student-created scarecrow was one of 50 featured in the Town of La Plata's 2007 Fall Festival. It won one of five recognition prizes and is on display until Nov. 12 on La Grange Avenue.

State approves changes to High School Assessments

The Maryland State Board of Education voted last week to continue to require students, starting with the class of 2009, to pass High School Assessments (HSA) to earn a high school diploma. However, the State Board made two changes that may help some students struggling to pass the test.

One change is the introduction of an option for students who have passed the related course, but failed one or more of the tests two times despite remediation. Bridge Plan for Academic Validation, according to the state department of education, is a state-developed project that would address the tested content areas where a student has demonstrated a deficiency. For example, a student unable to pass the biology assessment might develop a project delving into the structure and function of molecules, or the inheritance of traits. Projects would be administered locally, but state managed and assessed to assure consistency and difficulty level.

State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick proposed the Bridge Plan in August, noting that test data had indicated some stu-

dents were having difficulty passing the exams despite an understanding of the material.

The other change will allow students who achieve a combined score of 1,602 on the four tests to pass. This option allows a student's strength in one academic area to balance out a weakness in another when added together.

Nearly 77 percent of the class of 2009 had met the HSA requirement before the state made changes. Director of Research and Assessment Cliff Eichel said the combined score change could affect up to 100 students in Charles County Public Schools who have a combined score of 1,602, but previously would have been required to retake an assessment because they did not have a minimum score on the test.

Students take assessments, which include Biology, government, English II and algebra, as they complete the related course. Passing the tests is one of several high school graduation requirements, which also include passing each course, earning state-specific credits, completing service-learning requirements and fulfilling attendance requirements.

La Plata plans vigil

La Plata High School plans to hold a candlelight vigil Friday, Nov. 9, in honor and in memory of four students who died Tuesday evening in an automobile accident on Oliver Shop Road in Dentsville.

A student memorial committee is planning the vigil, which will be held between 5-5:30 p.m. in front of the school at the memorial garden. Following the vigil, La Plata will host its last football game of the season. Players plan to wear black arm-bands and a moment of silence will be held in remembrance of the four young men.

The four students, Jonathan Chapman, 16, Tavonne Alston, 16, Dionnte Swinson, 15, and Donte Segar, 15, died from injuries they sustained in the accident. A fifth teen, Markus Allen, 17, of La Plata, was injured in the accident and remains in the hospital, where he is expected to recover.

An emergency crisis team, composed of psychologists, counselors and pupil personnel workers, were at La Plata on Thursday when students returned to school. The media center was available for students to meet with professionals and members of the team went to each of the young men's classes to speak with students.

After-school activities, with the exception of sports, were cancelled Thursday afternoon.

Student recognition

There is a student recognition ceremony Monday, Nov. 19, at North Point High School. The ceremony begins at 6 p.m. and involves students from all 34 schools.



Notebook

Board meeting

The next Board of Education meeting is Nov. 13. Students and employees from Benjamin Stoddert Middle, Malcolm, Dr. Thomas L. Higdon and Dr. James Craik Elementary schools will be recognized, starting at 4:30 p.m.

American Education Week

American Education Week is November 11-17. This year's theme is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." The week highlights the importance of providing each child in America with a quality public education.

It's Academic

The annual *It's Academic* competition is set for Dec. 12, 7 p.m., at the College of Southern Maryland. *It's Academic* is an academic competition that tests students' knowledge through rounds of questions. The team with the most points at the end of the competition is the winner. The Greater Waldorf Jaycees sponsors the scholarships for the competition. All six high schools are participating in the competition.

Festival of Music

The annual All-County concert will be held Dec. 1 at Thomas Stone High School.

On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees from Benjamin Stoddert Middle School. Pictured, from left, are: Karen Dennis, instructional assistant; Sean Anderson, mathematics teacher; Brandi Cuffee, language arts teacher; Kevin Wenger, mathematics teacher; Thomas Petre, physical education teacher; and Sheila Herbert, instructional assistant.



Pictured above are Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) students from Westlake High School. JROTC students from all six county high schools will participate in a Veterans' Day parade held in La Plata on Sunday, Nov. 11, at 1 p.m.

Schools plan activities for American Freedom Week

JROTC students participate in annual Veterans' Day parade

Charles County Public Schools is celebrating American Freedom Day Nov. 15. The Board of Education passed a resolution declaring the week of Nov. 11-17 as American Freedom Week in Charles County Public Schools and called for schools to continue to honor the flag, the United States, and patriotism. American Freedom Day celebrates America, freedom, other patriotic days and military veterans.

Schools will hold individual American Freedom Day celebration activities, such as choral performances, veteran recognition, JROTC color guard presentations and performances. Some schools, such as Westlake High School, General Smallwood Middle School and Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School, will host American Freedom Day essay contests for students, in which students will be asked to write about topics such as freedom and what it means.

Schools have also invited veterans to participate in American Freedom Day activities as guest speakers and students are encouraged to dress in red, white and blue clothing. Additionally, JROTC units from all six high schools will participate in the "Salute to Veterans" parade, held annually in La Plata.

CCPS has more than 900 students

JROTC facts

Henry E. Lackey and North Point high schools each have an Air Force JROTC program. La Plata and Westlake high schools each have Navy JROTC programs. Thomas Stone and Maurice J. McDonough high schools each have an Army JROTC program. These units participate in the annual Charles County Classic Drill Meet to exhibit skills learned through the program. These cadets also participate in Color Guard, Armed and Unarmed drill teams, Armed and Unarmed exhibition drill teams and field event competitions. CCPS also hosts an annual Joint Military Ball for all senior JROTC cadets each December.

enrolled in school JROTC programs for the 2007-08 school year. These students learn the values of citizenship, serve the community and are provided with leadership opportunities. JROTC students also can enter the military at an advanced rank for participation in the programs.



Winter weather can affect school schedule

Who reports and when if schools are closed?

If weather conditions pose a potential hazard, school officials may dismiss early, delay opening schools or close schools for the day. If no announcements are made, schools open at regularly scheduled hours and all employees are expected to arrive at work on time.

If schools are closed for students and no other code announcement is made, the school system offices are open for a full day of business for employees. The chart below explains the entire code system for employees.

Delayed openings and early dismissals

A delayed opening applies only to schools. All administrative office personnel report at their normal starting time unless a code accompanies the delay notification (see chart). All non-teaching personnel are expected to work for the full business day unless an announcement is made. If an employee is unable to arrive on time or needs to leave early, he or she must contact his or her immediate supervisor and submit a leave slip.

If conditions require the closing or delayed opening of schools, decisions are usually made by 5 a.m. If possible, decisions are made the preceding evening. If it is necessary to close schools during the day, local radio and television stations are notified and asked to make announcements, usually by 10:30 a.m.

How to stay updated

Employees should call the 24-hour information line at 301-934-7410 or 301-932-6656, or their voicemail to determine whether they must report to work. Employee information is also

provided to radio and television stations listed on page 10 of the Parent Handbook/Calendar; however the stations determine when and if the information is posted. Inclement weather information will also be broadcast on Comcast Channel 96, the school system's educational television station, and on the school system website at www.ccboe.com

Employees and parents of Charles County Public Schools students can also be notified by e-mail of early dismissals, delays or closings. Those interested can log on to www.schoolsout.com and register to receive automatic e-mails at any web address whenever a change to the regular school schedule occurs.

Emergency closings affect the school calendar

Four emergency closing days are built into the calendar. If not used, the days will be deducted from the June closing date.

The deletion of school days if there is a mild winter will occur in the following order: June 13, 12, 11, and 10. In the event that harsh weather conditions or other events require the use of more than four days, the addition of school days will occur in the following order: March 28, 27, 26, and 25.

How decisions are made

The school system transportation department monitors road conditions and weather reports; school employees regularly contact the state and county roads departments, Charles County Sheriff's Office, Maryland State Police and the National Weather Service for assessments of roads and weather.

Codes	Who reports to work	When	Exceptions
No code given/ Schools closed	10.5-, 11- and 12-month personnel	On time	
Code 1	10.5-, 11- and 12-month personnel	1 hour late	Emergency personnel report on time*
Code 2	10.5-, 11- and 12-month personnel	2 hours late	Emergency personnel report on time*
Code Red	Emergency personnel	On time	
Note: Teachers and instructional assistants follow the student schedule.			

*If emergency personnel are unable to report to work on time, they must submit a leave slip. Emergency personnel include assistant building service managers, all maintenance staff, building service managers, building service workers, security personnel, coordinating supervisor of maintenance and operations, supervisor of operations, transportation supervisory personnel and the supervisor of maintenance.

**10.5-, 11- and 12-month employees are expected to fulfill their contract days at the discretion of their supervisor. If they do not report to work, they must submit a leave slip.

Personnel

Apply for positions at www.cboe.com/hur, or in writing to the personnel office. Positions are open until filled unless otherwise noted. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job Openings

Building Service Manager – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, full-time position. Apply by Nov. 14.

Building Service Worker – Openings at Thomas Stone and Henry E. Lackey high schools; positions are full time. Apply by Nov. 13 for Stone; Nov. 19 for Lackey.

Instructional Assistant, Adult Education – Lifelong Learning Center.

Food Service Workers – Openings at North Point High School and Indian Head Elementary School; three-hour positions available. Apply by Nov. 19 for Indian Head; Nov. 26 for North Point.

Staff Recruiter – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; full-time position. Bachelor's degree required. Apply by Nov. 15.

Compliance Specialist – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, full-time position. Master's degree in special education or related field required. Apply by Nov. 15.

RPG/JAVA Programmer Analyst – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; full-time position. Bachelor's degree required.

Title I Instructional Specialist for Early Childhood Education – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; Bachelor's degree and five years experience required.

Speech Language Pathologists – Openings at all age levels.

NJROTC Instructor – Westlake and North Point high schools.

Charles County Public Schools is currently seeking teacher candidates who meet the certification requirements established by the MSDE for the following subject areas:

- Spanish
- Mathematics
- Science
- Computer Science/CISCO teacher
- Special Education
- Language Arts
- English
- French
- Elementary level

Staff Notes

Haney receives training

Jennifer Haney, a physics teacher at Westlake High School, was invited to attend the 2007 Summer Teacher Training Institute held this summer at Garrett College. She was one of more than 100 science, technology, engineer-

ing and math teachers who participated in the institute, which explored ways for teachers to incorporate technology into classroom lesson plans.

Scruggs given scholarship

Leslie Scruggs, a special education teacher at Thomas Stone High School, recently received an \$800 Minority and Diversity Teacher Scholarship award to attend the Mid-Atlantic Bio conference held Oct. 25-26. Scruggs is one of five regional teachers awarded the scholarship. More than 400 educators in Maryland were invited to apply for the scholarship. The conference covers the bioscience industry and focuses on innovations in science.

Somers hosts Harlem Wizards players

Two members of the Harlem Wizards basketball team were invited by Milton M. Somers Middle School Principal Stephanie Wesolowski to perform for staff and to speak to students about respect and responsibility. The visit was part of the school's Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program.

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