

School News



Celebrating La Plata's history

The La Plata High School community gathered Nov. 30 to celebrate its history during an 80th anniversary program that highlighted the accomplishments of the high school and the people who help make it successful. The program, "Excellence in Education," included presentations on the school's history, a video prepared by the school's multi-media class and a display coordinated by the school's 80th Anniversary Committee. La Plata principals, past and present, were honored at the ceremony. Pictured, from left, are: Cecil Short, past principal; Garth Bowling, current principal; Thomas Weirich, past principal; and Donald Cooke, past principal.

Superintendent to speak at Public Services Summit

Charles County Public Schools Superintendent James E. Richmond has been invited by Cisco Systems, Inc. to attend the 2007 Public Services Summit held Dec. 8-11 in Stockholm, Sweden.

The summit will host guest speakers and special sessions and is being held for participants to discuss central government, regional and local government, healthcare and educational issues.

Richmond was invited by Cisco as a keynote speaker to discuss the educational partnership between Charles County Public Schools and Cisco and the enhancement of technology and education within the school system. The summit will also give Richmond the opportunity to collaborate, share ideas

and establish relationships with other school systems.

Summit participants will also attend the festivities planned for the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize recipients in Oslo, Norway. Cisco is funding Richmond's trip to the summit.

The summit is a Cisco invitation-only event and offers professionals affiliated with public organizations an opportunity to network with other national and international organizations.

Richmond said he was honored to be invited to the summit and was pleased to represent and speak about Charles County Public Schools and its efforts to use technology in classrooms throughout the school system.

Have a bad hair day

The Matthew Henson Middle School drama club will present its fall play, "Bad Hair Day," Dec. 7-8 at the school. The play is about high school students who test a new hair-style product, only to have the product cause them to lose their hair. The play was written by R. Eugene Jackson. Show time is 8 p.m. Tickets are \$4 for adults, \$3 for students and children ages 5 and under are free.

MAC meeting rescheduled

The Dec. 5 Minority Achievement Committee meeting has been rescheduled for Jan. 3, 2008, 4:30 p.m., at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

Parent resource online

The CCPS website features articles from the Parent Institute's *Parents Make the Difference* newsletter series. Four categories of articles are linked to the Parents & Community section of the website and include early childhood, elementary, middle and high school related articles. The articles focus on parent involvement in their child's education and are updated monthly. The link is www2.ccboe.com/parentscomm/pmttd/.

Board meeting

The next Board of Education meeting is Dec. 11. Students and employees from C. Paul Barnhart and Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary, John Hanson Middle and Henry E. Lackey High schools will be recognized for their achievements.



Notebook

JROTC Military Ball

The first annual Joint JROTC Military Ball is Dec. 14 from 6-11 p.m. at the Waldorf Jaycees Community Center. The ball is for high school JROTC seniors and will include military ceremonial traditions, such as toasting, presentation of colors, receiving lines, and certificate presentations to JROTC cadets.

Stone teachers present

Four Thomas Stone High School teachers participated in the National Council of Teachers of English convention held Nov. 16. Kathleen Jenkins, Patrick Swan, Anne Ward and Josephine White, all members of Stone's English department, presented "When Kids Can't Read: How Kylee Beers' Strategies Helped Us Compete with the X Box." Retired Stone teacher Patricia Grove also participated in the presentation, which covered ways to engage students in literacy, such as online discussions and journaling. The presentation was based on a book study conducted last year by the teachers on Kylee Beers' book, "When Kids Can't Read; What Teachers Can Do."

It's Academic

It's Academic is Dec. 12, 7 p.m. at the College of Southern Maryland.

On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees from the F. B. Gwynn Educational Center. Pictured, from left, are: Jonathan Pankhurst, teacher, STAY Program; Norma Auth, instructional assistant, STAY Program; Inmaculada Dove, instructional assistant, infants and toddlers program; and John Farmer, building service manager.

Sheriff, schools crack down on driving violations

The Charles County Sheriff's Office is working with the school system in an effort to help curb accidents among students.

Automobile crashes have killed six teenagers in Charles County since October and seriously injured several others. Five of the teen fatalities were students in Charles County high schools. The Sheriff's Office is increasing enforcement efforts and plans to work with students to increase driver safety.

Resource officers assigned to each school and principals will meet with Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) and Student Government Association Groups (SGA) to gather their input about how to get students to drive safely.

"We need to make a concerted effort to reach these kids and it is not something law enforcement can do alone," said Sheriff Rex Coffey. "We are working with Superintendent James Richmond and school officials to combat this problem and get kids to realize they are not invincible and driving is an enormous responsibility."

The Sheriff's Office is working with Charles County Public School officials to monitor and enforce seatbelt use and vehicle occupancy restrictions at local high schools. Students who are found not wearing seatbelts to or from school will be issued citations. Student drivers will also be cited if they are transporting passengers they are not permitted to carry and those

passengers will be required to call a parent or ride a school bus for transportation. The Sheriff's Office is also increasing its speed limit enforcement efforts and will strictly enforce the provisional license occupancy requirements when they conduct traffic stops on teen drivers outside of the school. No warnings will be issued. Parents and school officials will be notified of any citations issued.

If students are stopped by Sheriff's officers while commuting to or from school or a school-related event, the officer will notify the student's school resource officer and as a result students may have their school driving privileges suspended or revoked.

The Sheriff's Office plans to add a safe driving lesson to its Truth and Consequences program, which is presented to freshmen and juniors by the school resource officers and was created to encourage students to make safe decisions about drugs, alcohol, gangs and other issues teens may be confronted with.

"We are working with the Sheriff's Office, parents and students to find solutions so that tragic accidents can be prevented," said Richmond. He also reminds staff members to model good driving habits by obeying speed limits and buckling seatbelts. The school system is also meeting with elected officials as well as the College of Southern Maryland to discuss laws and and education programs.

Four students selected to serve as student pages

Four Charles County Public high school seniors were recently selected to participate in the Maryland General Assembly Legislative Program Page program.

The students who will serve as student pages for the 2008 legislative session are: Bryant Jackson-Green of Thomas Stone High School; Ian Ray of Westlake High School; and Anika Stewart of Henry E. Lackey High School. Caitlin Floyd of Thomas Stone High School holds the position of Student Page Alternate.

This opportunity is offered annually to seniors in Charles County who are interested in participating in the program. Students who apply are selected through a series of interviews. Applicants must also write an essay describing their interests to partici-

pate in the program.

These students will have the opportunity to work with the General Assembly as Student Pages for two weeks during the spring 2008 legislative session. During the two-week period, these students will be assigned to work with either the state Senate or House of Delegates in Annapolis. Duties include delivering messages to staff, distributing legislative materials and working with staff committees and other legislative offices.

The program is designed to interest youth in state government and the proceedings of the legislature, increase participation in government, foster leadership skills and provide students with worthwhile experiences in state government.

County updating gifted education program, ways to identify students

School system initiates two-part plan in order to enhance services to the classroom

The Charles County Public Schools gifted education department is developing plans to better identify and serve the needs of gifted and talented students. A committee of principals, gifted staff, and other administrators met with parents and teachers during the 2006-07 school year to review gifted education practices and to receive input on new strategies to identify and serve gifted students.

The school system began the process of updating gifted services by proposing plans to initiate a two-part plan – better identification of gifted students and the development of appropriate gifted services.

This two-part plan includes a screening process, which includes the administration of the Cognitive Abilities Test, or CogAT. This test was administered in November for the first time to second- and fifth-grade students. The CogAT is designed to examine reasoning and problem-solving skills. CogAT scores will be used as part of a multi-criteria review of student needs.

Maryland School Assessment (MSA) and quarterly assessment test scores will be monitored by gifted staff. Class performance, academic achievement and teacher checklists will also be considered and parents and teachers can nominate students to be screened for gifted services.

Information on the nomination process will be shared at school meetings and will be posted in school newsletters. The information will also be posted on the school system website in January or February.

The plan was presented to the Board of Education Nov. 13 and will be phased-in next school year.

There are also plans to phase-in additional academic areas to serve gifted students over the next three years. Language arts/reading and mathematics will be focused on during the 2008-09 school year. Other areas of focus include science and social studies for the 2009-10 school year and arts and leadership during the 2010-11 school year.

Additionally, plans have been proposed for CCPS to provide a full-time gifted education resource teacher at every elementary and middle school.

Gifted and talented students are defined by state law as students who perform, or show potential to perform, at a higher level of accomplishment than other students their age. Gifted students can also exhibit high performance in an academic, creative or artistic area, and can possess an unusual leadership capacity. A majority of gifted students are identified as such for excelling in



Gifted Resource teacher Dana Moyer works with gifted education students from Indian Head Elementary School on a reading and writing assignment.

specific academic areas.

CCPS gifted education resource teachers coordinate enrichment opportunities, collaborate with classroom teachers to provide ongoing curriculum enhancement and conduct staff development. Progressive teaching strategies include differentiated instruction, use of advanced resources, model lessons and collaborative teaching to emphasize the unique social, emotional and academic needs of gifted/highly able students.

Gifted education services at elementary and middle schools provide instructional and enrichment opportunities for students. High schools have an accelerated and enrichment facilitator who serves as a resource for disseminating information to gifted students.

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) requires the school system's master plan to include strategies and objectives to serve gifted students.

The master plan sets forth objectives to guide the school system as it implements and maintains state requirements and regulations of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

La Plata students offer holiday party and 'Drop and Shop' day care for children ages 3-10

The La Plata High School Student Government Association will hold its 25th annual Children's Holiday Party and "Drop and Shop" Day Care on Saturday, Dec. 15, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The party will be held at La Plata High School in the Commons Area. This activi-

ty is free and is open to any child ages 3-10. The party will include games, arts and crafts, music, refreshments, and a visit from Santa. The first 50 children to arrive will receive a free gift.

Also, high school students will be available to provide free "Drop and Shop"

day care from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., so parents can leave the kids with the students, and do some holiday shopping.

For more information, please contact Pete Mahon, Student Government Association Advisor, 301-934-1100, or email pmahon@ccboe.com.

Personnel

Apply for positions at www.ccboe.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

Instructional Assistant, Adult Education – Lifelong Learning Center; position is part time.

Human Resources Assistant – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; full-time position. Bachelor's degree in human resources or related field required. Apply by Dec. 11.

Instructional Assistant, Special Education – Matthew Henson Middle School; 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 11.

Financial Secretary – Maurice J. McDonough High School; full-time position. Apply by Dec. 14.

Secretary to the Supervising School Psychologist – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; full-time position. Apply by Dec. 14.

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
- Gifted education

Extra pay positions

Maurice J. McDonough High School has the following openings:

- Junior varsity assistant softball coach
- Pom pons dance team coach
- Junior varsity baseball coach
- Junior varsity assistant baseball coach
- Junior varsity assistant softball coach

Call 301-753-1175 to apply.

North Point High School has the following opening:

- Head varsity tennis coach

Call 301-753-1759 to apply.

Thomas Stone High School has the following opening:

• Head varsity softball coach

Call 301-645-2601 to apply.

Westlake High School has the following opening:

- Head tennis coach

Call 301-645-8857 to apply.

Staff notes

Job shadow opportunities needed

Charles County Public Schools is looking for volunteers to participate in National Groundhog Job Shadow Day on Feb. 1. Students participate in career exploration on this day as part of the school system's focus on career readiness for students.

Although the national observance day is Feb. 1, the school district offers a window for job shadowing from Feb. 1 through March 14. CCPS had a total of 11,599 students involved in job shadowing activities in 2007. Contact Elsie Kirton, coordinator of minority achievement, 301-934-7245, for more information.

Winter break

Winter break for students and teachers is Dec. 24 through Jan. 1. School system offices are closed Dec. 24 and 25 for the Christmas holiday, and Dec. 31 and Jan. 1 in observance of New Year's Day. Schools and offices reopen for students and teachers at the regular times on Wednesday, Jan. 2.

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The mission of Charles County Public Schools is to provide an opportunity for all school-aged children to receive an academically challenging, quality education that builds character, equips for leadership, and prepares for life, in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.