



School News

Notebook

It's almost a wrap on plays

The last two shows of the spring play season are this weekend. **La Plata High School** will stage "Singing in the Rain" 6:30 p.m. April 29 and 30 at the school, 6035 Radio Station Road, La Plata. A matinee is 2:30 p.m. April 30. Tickets available for purchase at the door.

Thomas Stone High School will perform "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" 7 p.m. April 29 and 30 at the school, 3785 Leonardtown Road, Waldorf. Purchase tickets at the door.

Board updates

The Board of Education of Charles County met April 12, 2022, for its regular meeting. A meeting agenda is posted on [Board Docs here](#). Board meetings are streamed live at www.ccboe.com and archived on the Charles County Public Schools [\(CCPS\) YouTube page here](#). To read the updates, [click here](#).

SMOB elections

CCPS students in Grades 6-12 recently participated in the Student Member of the Board of Education (SMOB) primary elections. Students could choose to vote for one of 10 candidates in the running for the position during the primary elections held March 28 to April 1. The two students who earned the most votes advanced to the general election are Amira Abujuma, a junior at North Point High School, and David Yum, a sophomore at Westlake High School. Abujuma and Yum participated in a debate April 27. The general election will be held May 9 to 20. Students will have the opportunity to vote during the school day in English and language arts classes. As with the primary election, students will receive election updates, as well as voting details, by Synergy Mail. To see a breakdown of the votes among the 10 candidates, [click here](#).



MESA Showcase

Malcolm Elementary School students **Jamis Macaulay**, left, a fourth grader, and **Arooj Nazir**, a fifth grader, go over their wearable technology project at the Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) Showcase held April 1 at North Point High School. To read more about the event, visit [Page 2](#).

Johnson in running for presidential honor

When his principal asked if he was interested in moving from teaching fifth grade to taking over as the school's science teacher, Michael Johnson experienced a brief moment of doubt. Science wasn't his favorite subject when he was in high school, but he was excited for the challenge. And he quickly developed an appreciation for science. "I jumped right into it and started loving it," Johnson said.

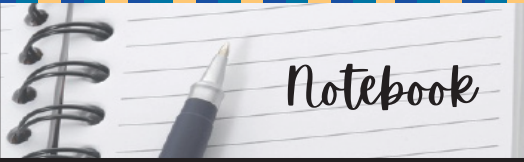
The eagerness to try something new, to experiment and learn how and why things work the way they work — while taking elementary school students with him along the way — has earned Johnson a spot among a select few in the state as a finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) are the highest honors given by the U.S. government for teaching science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teaching to students in prekindergarten to 12th grade. The awards were established by Congress in 1983, and the president can recognize up to 108 teachers each year. The award recognizes teachers who have both deep content knowledge of the subject they teach and the ability to motivate and en-



Michael Johnson

See **JOHNSON**, Page 3



On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are CCPS employees who were recently honored by the Board of Education at its April meeting. From left are Michelle Foxx, instructional specialist, Gale-Bailey Elementary School; John Hairston, pupil personnel worker, Maurice J. McDonough High School; and Jennifer Toone, learning resource teacher, Arthur Middleton Elementary School. To read more about the employees, [click here](#).

HR information sessions

The CCPS Office of Human Resources will hold virtual information sessions in May. During the sessions, human resources staff will share information about employment with CCPS. The sessions are set for 4 to 4:30 p.m. on May 4, 11, 18 and 25. To register by date, go to <https://forms.office.com/r/mltJW-MddQn>. A link to join the virtual meeting will be sent to the email address used to sign up.

Little Eagles Child Care

Little Eagles Child Care is open from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day that CCPS teachers are scheduled to work. The child must be at least 2 years old on date of enrollment, and not enrolled in a grade beyond kindergarten. Transportation to and from the center must be provided for or arranged by the parent. The cost is \$175 a week for 2-year-old children and \$165 a week for 3- and 4-year-old children. To learn more, [click here](#).

No trolls allowed

Do you find social media a little less than uplifting these days? Consider giving CCPS a follow. Find out, like and share the good, cool, kind, interesting and inspiring things our students and staff do every day. Each CCPS school has at least one Twitter account and some maintain a presence on Facebook and/or Instagram. Some staff members and specific departments also share information on social media highlighting the school system and its students. CCPS can be found on Twitter [@ccps](#), find [Charles County Public Schools](#) on Facebook and follow us on Instagram on [@focusonccps](#). Keep up with Superintendent Navarro on Twitter [@NavarroSupt](#).



Mary B. Neal Elementary School fifth grader, Kaiden Joseph, left, shows Kie Myers, a Billingsley Elementary School fourth grader, the app he and his team developed during the MESA Showcase. Myers took part in the Storybook Theme Ride challenge.

Schools participate in MESA Showcase

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) teams recently competed in the regional Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) Showcase held April 1 at North Point High School. Overall winners were selected at the elementary-, middle- and high-school levels.

Projects challenge participants' knowledge and imagination. "We get to do things that we haven't done before," Grace Colbert, a Billingsley Elementary School fourth grader, said. "You can make friends and make creations," Colbert's teammate, Billingsley fourth grader Nashaun Jones, added. "And maybe we can make something that will make us famous." Jones and Colbert were on a team that designed a mobile app to help hearing people better communicate with people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Teams that earned a first-place award at the Charles County regional event advance to the state-level competition. The advancing teams are from J.P. Ryon, Walter J. Mitchell and William A. Diggs elementary schools; Matthew Henson and Piccowaxen middle schools; and La Plata and North Point high schools. They advance to the virtual state showcase set for May 7 hosted by the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Labora-



North Point High School students Nathan Hill, left, Amira Abujuma and Timothy Martinez, break down their expandable structure project. All three are interested in studying engineering in college.

tory.

First-, second- and third-place teams in each challenge receive awards and one overall winner is chosen at each level. The teams that earn the most points throughout the competition are chosen as the overall winners. Elementary-school teams compete in four challenges: Mobile App, Storybook Theme Park Ride, Wearable Technology and Expanding Structure. For full results, [click here](#).

able students to be successful in those areas.

“He motivates his students by making the learning process exciting and relevant while maintaining a high level of rigor,” Leigh Ann Anderson, CCPS science resource teacher for kindergarten through eighth grade, said. “He is a leader, fosters cooperative relationships with the community, has a broad depth of science knowledge, creates lessons that promote student learning, and sparks excitement in all of his students.”

In science class, elementary school students are introduced to chemistry, environmental science, biology, Earth science, engineering and bit of biology. “Students want hands-on, interactive labs,” Johnson said. “That’s where they get the most out of it.”

“Students are always excited to go to Mr. Johnson’s science class,” Diggs’ Principal Debra Calvert said. “He makes learning fun by engaging students in the learning process. Whether he is capturing their attention by conducting an experiment, having students build models to test scientific principles or planning ways to capture students’ attention, there is always something new and amazing happening in the science lab.”

There are a few experiments that students mark as a sort of rite of passage in elementary school. The egg drop is a highlight of fourth grade, an experiment that combines physics, material science and fluid dynamics. There’s excitement surrounding the day students test out Pop Rockets which are paper rockets they built, watching them whiz down a hallway and — if they’re lucky — knock against the ceiling. That experiment has students collecting and studying data about the energy needed for the launch as well as comparing the height of the launch when compared to the size and weight of the rocket.

Coupled with any lab or experiment over-



Kennedie Foote, left, a fifth grader in Toni Taylor’s class at William A. Diggs Elementary School, acts as the sun while science teacher, Michael Johnson, right, demonstrates how the Earth travels around it.

seen by Johnson is how it ties to the real world. “When we look at science, we are looking through a real-world lens,” Johnson said of teaching young students. “This is how this applies to you and your life. It’s getting kids to see this is why this works the way it works,” he said. “It helps them see the connections and tie everything in.”

Students enter the lab eager to talk about what is going on in the world. “They bring up things that are happening. They want to talk about things that are happening in the world,” Johnson said. “If there’s a tsunami the night before, we talk about it. ‘OK, this is what happened and why it happened.’ They can take that and now they are having conversations with their parents.”

At Diggs, Johnson is a co-coordinator of the MESA and SeaPerch teams. He is the co-ordinator for the Science Center and social committee at the school and runs its STEM

Nights.

“Our community — if you say the word ‘STEM,’ they’re in,” Johnson said, adding that Diggs is now incorporating the arts into STEM, making it STEAM. With the support of staff and parents, Diggs’ students have flourished in SeaPerch, a program in which students build an underwater vehicle controlled by remote. “We’re one of three elementary teams in the county and were the first elementary school teams in the county. We’ve qualified for the international SeaPerch competition against middle schools for the last four years,” he said.

Recently the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) announced Johnson as one of six state finalists for the 2022 PAEMST recognition. There are three mathematics teachers and three science teachers. Winners will be announced early next year.

CCPS readies for Graduation 2022 — 2,100 seniors prepare for commencement

CCPS will celebrate the Class of 2022 during in-person graduation ceremonies at Regency Furniture Stadium this spring.

Set for May 31 through June 3, CCPS has partnered once again with Regency Furniture Stadium and the Charles County Government to provide nearly 2,100 graduating seniors with graduation ceremonies.

Graduation schedule is as follows:

- Tuesday, May 31 — **St. Charles High School**, 9 a.m.
- Tuesday, May 31 — **Maurice J. McDonough High School**,

1 p.m.

- Wednesday, June 1 — **Henry E. Lackey High School**, 9 a.m.
- Wednesday, June 1 — **Westlake High School**, 1 p.m.
- Thursday, June 2 — **La Plata High School**, 9 a.m.
- Thursday, June 2 — **Thomas Stone High School**, 1 p.m.
- Friday, June 3 — **North Point High School**, 9 a.m.

Learn more about Graduation 2022 [here](#).

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CCPS provides nondiscriminatory equal access to school facilities in accordance with its Use of Facilities rules to designated youth groups (including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts).

Two teams advance to DI Global competition

Nearly 145 teams — including 43 from Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) — competed in the Maryland Destination Imagination (DI) Tournament held April 2 at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Two CCPS teams were recognized for placing first in their challenge and level, and will advance to the Global Finals Tournament set for May 21 to 24 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Gale-Bailey Elementary School's Ghost Girls took first place in the Festival Frenzy challenge and T.C. Martin Elementary School's Top, the Terrific Turtles team placed first in the Roll With It challenge. The T.C. Martin Elementary School Terrific Turtles team advance to the Destination Imagination Global Finals Tournament. Team members are Avery Robinson, left, Autumn Portillo, Raegan Haiss, Jamahl Harper Jr., Max Shlagel, Isaiah Milo and Sophia McDonald. Below, the Gale-Bailey Ghost Girls advance to the Destination



Imagination Global Finals Tournament. Team members are Hunter Buchanan, left, Maggie Donahue and Sophia Irvine. To read more and view the results from the state DI competition, [click here](#).

Ethics panel openings

The Board of Education of Charles County is looking for applications from county residents interested in serving on the Charles County Board of Education Ethics Panel.

The Board will appoint new members in June to the all-volunteer, five-member panel, which interprets ethics regulations and provides advisory opinions to Board members and employees subject to regulations.

Panel members may not be current members of the Board of Education; candidates for the Board; officials, employees, contractors or students of Charles County Public Schools (CCPS); owners of or persons employed by a business entity doing business with the Board; any person registered with the Board as a lobbyist; or spouses of such persons.

To learn more and find out how to submit a resume, [click here](#).

Personnel

Apply for positions online at www.ccboc.com/jobs/currentopenings.php. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job openings

Food Service Manager — Billingsley Elementary School, 10-month position. High school diploma or equivalent required. A minimum of three years of experience in food service management. Apply by April 29.

JROTC Instructor — La Plata High School, 11-month position. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university is required. Applicants must have served a minimum of 20 years of active duty or have retired under the Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA). Apply by May 1.

Educational Interpreter (World Language) — Location to be determined, hourly position. No experience required. • Must be fluent in English and have strong verbal/written communication skills in second language of need to CCPS. Apply by June 30.

Water Safety Instructional and Summer Camp Assistant — Henry E. Lackey High School, hourly position. Must be 16 and older to apply to work at the summer camp, and 17 and older to be a water safety assistant. Applicants must have American Red Cross lifeguard certification and instructional experience as a lifeguard or in water safety. Apply by June 30.