

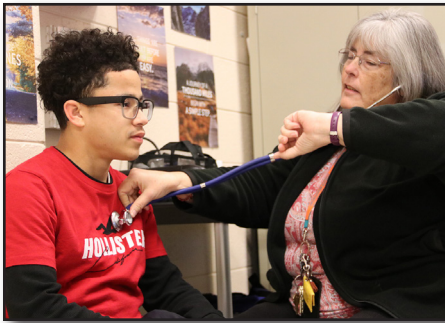
School News



Notebook

Teachers of the Year

Each year, two Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) teachers are chosen to represent the school system in Teacher of the Year awards programs. *The Washington Post* finalist from CCPS represents the school system in the paper's overall awards program in which one teacher from the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area is named *The Washington Post* Teacher of the Year. The Charles County Teacher of the Year honoree represents CCPS in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Maryland Teacher of the Year program in which one teacher receives the overall state honor. Each school is asked to submit the name and accomplishments of a teacher for consideration. To read more about each teacher nominated for the Teacher of the Year awards, [click here.](#)



Westlake High School senior Tyler Whiting, left, stops by to visit Rebecca Proctor, the school nurse.

School Nurse Day

National School Nurse Day was May 11. Overseeing the medical needs of a building filled with staff and students will bring surprises. It can be as simple as handing out an ice pack to calling 911 for medical assistance. "You never know what's going to come through that door," Rebecca Proctor, school nurse at Westlake High School, said. To read more, [click here.](#)



Schools hold senior picnics

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) high schools recently held senior picnics to celebrate the members of the Class of 2022. Clockwise from top, St. Charles High School special education instructional assistant Dyone Woodson, left, compliance facilitator Shannon Chisholm and Dana Clark, special education IA, prepare lunch for students and staff; Westlake High School seniors Timeyah McNeil, left, and Dejah Grayson take a break from games and amusements at their picnic; and Bruce Michael Reyes, a North Point High School senior, enjoys the slip n' slide at the school's event May 20.

D'Ambrosio is CCPS Principal of the Year



Louis D'Ambrosio

Every time he uses chopsticks, Louis D'Ambrosio silently thanks his first-grade teacher, Rose Eckmann. During a weeklong unit studying Japan, Eckmann tasked her students with practicing using chop-

sticks to pick up pink erasers from their desks. At the end of the week, Eckmann brought in a hot plate and made the class a meal of ramen which the students used chopsticks to eat. "Every time my wife and I go out to eat and use chopsticks — she's probably so sick of me telling that story — but Mrs. Eckmann, I have to thank her."

It's those lifelong lessons and connec-

See D'AMBROSIO, Page 3

McDonough's Simpson is finalist for WaPo award

Not many people are lucky enough to figure out what they want to do with their life when they are about 7 years old. Annemarie Simpson, Ph.D., a mathematics teacher at Maurice J. McDonough High School, is one of the lucky few. "I fell in love with teaching in second grade," she said. "My second-grade teacher was able to instill into everybody this love of learning that was just amazing. I've wanted to be a teacher since second grade, and I never wavered."

Simpson was named a finalist in the 2022 Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Teacher of the Year program and is Charles County's representative in *The Washington Post's* Teacher of the Year program. At McDonough, she teaches precalculus, Algebra II and Advanced Placement (AP) statistics.

Four years after being inspired to become a teacher, Simpson was in middle school when another teacher entered her life and gave her further direction. "In sixth grade I had an amazing math teacher that just made learning math so much fun," she said. "I decided in sixth grade to be a math teacher."

Simpson always had a head for numbers. "I'm totally a math kid. It makes sense to me," she said. "What I liked about it is there was always an answer and if the answer was wrong the teacher could say, 'Here's why your answer is wrong,'" and explain those mistakes."

Simpson strives to be the type of teacher like those who inspired her. Jake Burgess, a 2020 graduate, credited Simpson as one of the teachers who made his "tumultuous" transition to high school easier. After joining the math team — of which Simpson is the sponsor — Burgess found a family of sorts at the team's lunch meetings.

"Mrs. Simpson created such a welcoming and friendly environment in those short, half-hour lunches," he said. Simpson's skills as a teacher were only amplified in the classroom. "The lessons were constantly innovative and interactive, transforming math into a tangible, comprehensible form," Burgess said.

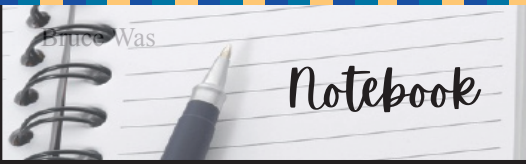
Simpson is a leader in the McDonough community and one of the "go to" people at the school for Principal Darnell Russell. "She is a master of the art and science of the profession, adapting to change at a moment's notice and willing to pivot with grace and integrity," Russell said.

She is known for her ability to connect with and inspire students even during virtual instruction in the 2020-21 school year, Maureen Mears, the parent of McDonough senior Danny Mears, said. "My son said that learning precalculus remotely [during the 2020-21 school year] was one of the hardest things he has done, but he excelled because of Ms. Simpson's patience and grace," Mears said.

To read more about Simpson, [click here](#).



Annemarie Simpson, Ph.D., left, goes over a pre-calculus problem with Yoselin Reyes-Flores, a junior at Maurice J. McDonough High School.



On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are CCPS employees who were recently honored by the Board of Education at its May meeting. From left are Michelle Murray, special education teacher, Benjamin Stoddert Middle School; Bruce Washington, building service manager, St. Charles High School; and Marissa Ellis, fifth-grade teacher, Dr. James Craik Elementary School. To read more about the staff members honored at the May meeting, [click here](#).

Board updates

The Board of Education of Charles County met May 10, 2022, for its regular meeting. A meeting agenda is posted on [BoardDocs here](#). Board meetings are streamed live at [www.ccboe.com](#) and archived on the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) YouTube page. To read the updates, [click here](#).

Last day information

[The last day of school](#) for Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) students for the 2021-2022 school year is Wednesday, June 15. The last day of school for teachers is Thursday, June 16. The following end-of-year dates apply to other CCPS staff.

- 12-month teachers' last day is June 28.
- 11-month certificated staff last day is June 30.
- 10.5-month certificated staff last day is June 24.
- 11-month support staff last day is June 30.
- 10.5-month support staff last day is June 29.
- 10-month support staff (10-month secretaries and IEP clerks) last day is June 17.
- 10-month instructional assistants' last day is June 16.
- 10-month food service manager/assistant manager last day is June 21.
- 10-month food service worker last day is June 16.

For more information about the last day dates and for a chart detailing the schedule, [click here](#).

tions — Eckmann and D'Ambrosio still exchange Christmas cards — that have helped D'Ambrosio build a strong foundation for students and staff he sees every day at Berry Elementary School. D'Ambrosio, Berry's principal, was recently named the 2022 Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Principal of the Year. He went into the field of education to give back. His father passed away when he was young, and he looked to male influences as role models. "I had a lot of positive influences," he said. "Coaches, my principal in elementary school."

It wasn't until he was in high school that his math teacher, Tom Starmack, inspired him to look into teaching as a profession. "I started thinking about it when I was in high school," D'Ambrosio said. "I had a fantastic math teacher. I wasn't a strong math guy, but he made me love math."

Enrolling in Mercyhurst University where he would play on the Lakers football team, D'Ambrosio started studying to become a math teacher. However, after teaching a math class in a special education classroom he began to shift his plans. He counted his great aunt who had special needs as an influence for his interest in special education. Teaching students with special needs amplified his interest. On the advice of an advisor, Phil Belfiore, now the department chair of the graduate program in special education and applied disability studies at Mercyhurst, D'Ambrosio received his bachelor's degree in elementary education with his master's in special education.

While studying for his master's and assistant coaching the Mercyhurst football team, D'Ambrosio worked for a year at Sarah A. Reed Children's Center in Pennsylvania before attending a job fair. The event boosted representatives from far-flung school systems including those in London and Hawaii.



Louis D'Ambrosio, principal at Berry Elementary School, left, talks with first grader Logan Ewell Credle. Ewell Credle stopped his principal in the hallway to ask if his teacher, Jacquelyn Burch, could be mentioned in the morning announcements because "She's the best," he said.

What caught D'Ambrosio's eye was a banner reading "Hiring Teachers and Coaches." It piqued his interest — D'Ambrosio was looking for teaching and coaching opportunities. He walked over and introduced himself to the late Keith Hettel, who was then the executive director of CCPS human resources.

D'Ambrosio had never heard of Charles County and had no intention of moving to Maryland, but he took a job at Milton M. Somers Middle School as a special education teacher in the emotional adjustment (EA) program. Class sizes for students in the EA program are designed to be especially small, and D'Ambrosio realized he liked interacting with bigger groups of students. "I wanted a leadership role in reaching more kids," he said. "I wanted to impact more kids." He began taking on more responsibilities including a five-year stint as the Summer Academy Coordinator

at Somers. He also was an assistant football coach for Henry E. Lackey, Maurice J. McDonough and La Plata high schools over the years.

Following his time at Somers, D'Ambrosio moved to Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School where he split his day — spending half of it as a special education facilitator for IEP meetings and half the day as a vice principal. He was vice principal at Indian Head Elementary School, before moving to William A. Diggs Elementary School where he was acting principal for three months in 2014. While at Diggs, D'Ambrosio was named the CCPS Vice Principal of the Year in 2015. He served as principal of Arthur Middleton Elementary School from 2015 to 2018 before moving to Berry Elementary School as principal in 2018.

To read more about D'Ambrosio, [click here](#).

CCPS Class of 2022 to graduate May 31-June 3 at Regency Furniture Stadium

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.

To learn more about graduation ceremonies, [click here](#).

School News is published by
Charles County Public Schools
301-932-6610
301-934-7220
Fax: 301-932-6651

Board of Education Members

Michael Lukas, *Chairperson*
Latina L. Wilson, *Vice Chairperson*
Jennifer S. Abell
Tajala Battle-Lockhart
Elizabeth C. Brown
David Hancock
Virginia McGraw
Ian Herd, *Student Member*

Superintendent of Schools

Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D.

Editor/Writers

Shelley Mackey
Sara K. Taylor
Jordan Wilson

The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Kathy Kiessling, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Nikial M. Majors, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (employees/ adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.

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).

CCPS to pilot compressed workweek schedule this summer

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is piloting a compressed workweek schedule, effective this July. The pilot is for CCPS 12-month employees over a period of four weeks this summer.

Participation in the pilot schedule requires employee supervisor approval but is also optional. The schedule will begin Monday, July 11, and end Friday, Aug. 5.

A compressed workweek is when an employee works their contracted hours that normally span five days, in fewer than five days.

For example, an employee who is contracted to work 40 hours per week who normally works 8 hours, five days per week can opt to work four, 10-hour days with one day off during the week.

CCPS has a policy in place to guide the schedule. The following information is outlined in the policy. Employees considering the compressed workweek schedule should first review the policy before requesting supervisor approval. Supervisors provide final approval.

A compressed workweek schedule may be one of the following:

- Four, 10-hour days per week with one day off per week.
- Four, 9-hour days and one 4-hour day per week (employee can take off the morning or afternoon of the fifth day).
- Four, 8.5-hour days and one 3.75-hour day per week (employee can take off the morn-

ing or afternoon of the fifth day). *Note: This option is only available to 12-month employees who are contracted to work 37.5 hours a week.*

Compressed workweek schedules must fall between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Supervisors will assess department and/or office needs when approving employees for compressed work schedules, as operations must continue as normal during core business hours.

During the pilot, CCPS will continue to operate Monday through Friday.

The standard summer hours schedule of 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. starts July 5 and ends Aug. 5.

Employees not interested in working a compressed workweek can follow the standard summer hours schedule.

CCPS is piloting the program to provide staff with flexibility and another option for work-life balance.

The Education Association of Charles County (EACC) during the negotiation process requested CCPS establish a committee to explore ways in which compressed work schedules could be implemented to benefit staff.

The policy, along with an FAQ document, is posted on the school system website at <https://www.cbcoe.com/staff/myccps/benefits-pay/compressed-workweek-pilot>.

Personnel

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

Job openings

Coordinator of the ASPIRE and Behavior Support Program — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Open only to internal applicants who are currently employed with CCPS as a school psychologist. Minimum of three years of experience as a school psychologist. Apply by June 3.

Foreman for the Electrical/Mechanical Group — CCPS Maintenance Shop, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED required; associate degree preferred with a minimum of 10 years related experience. Apply by June 3.

Secretary to the Principal — Billingsley Elementary School, 12-month position. A high school diploma is required with experience working with Quicken or QuickBooks preferred. Apply by June 6.

Technology Facilitator — Eva Turner Elementary School, 10-month position. A high school diploma, associate of arts degree or a pass on the ParaPro Assessment are required. Apply by June 6.

AVID Tutor — Location to be determined, hourly position. High school diploma or GED required. CCPS students in the work-based learning program will be considered with a recommendation from their principal and advisor. Apply by June 17.

Home and Hospital Instructor — Location to be determined, hourly position. A bache-

lor's degree is required along with experience working with students. Apply by June 17.

Temporary Computer Analyst — Location to be determined, hourly position. A high school diploma is required. One year of current work experience in information network and user support desired. Apply by June 17.

Educational Interpreter — Location to be determined, hourly position. Applicants must be fluent in English and have strong verbal/written communication skills in a second language of need to CCPS. Apply by June 30.

Building Service Floater — All schools, hourly position A high school diploma or GED is required. Apply by June 30.

Elementary Science Teacher — All elementary schools, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree or higher, certification requirements as established by the MSDE. Apply by July 30.