



School News

Notebook

Paycheck information

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) employees who receive a printed paycheck delivered to their buildings will receive them today, Nov. 22, due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Paychecks that are mailed to employees will be mailed today, Nov. 22.

Mark your calendars

CCPS schools and offices are closed Wednesday, Nov. 23, through Friday, Nov. 25, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Next month, a two-hour early dismissal for students is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 7.

Work session Nov. 28

The Board of Education is holding a 6 p.m. work session on Monday, Nov. 28, in the boardroom of the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata.

The meeting will focus on an update about i-Ready and Board policy 3910. The meeting will be livestreamed on ccboe.com and on the CCPS [YouTube channel](#).

PISOTA info meeting

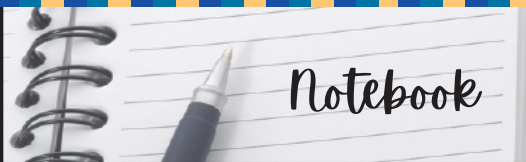
The Phoenix International School of the Arts, also known as PISOTA, is hosting a virtual information session Nov. 29 for community members interested in learning more about the new public charter middle school.

The Tuesday, Nov. 29, 6 p.m., information session can be accessed at <https://ccboe.zoom.us/j/89565519839?pwd=VHNaVzIOcFRiTW14N3QxZ0tJTFdDZz09>. The session passcode is 818543. For more information about the meeting or PISOTA, [click here](#).



Food drive donations benefit LifeStyles of MD

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) staff at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building have an annual Thanksgiving tradition of holding a [food drive competition](#) between offices. For every food item or \$1 collected, the team gets one point. The top five teams include the OSAL Dream Team in School Administration with 1,160 points, the Office of Accountability with 1,224 points, Secondary All Stars collected 3,606 points, the Gobble Wobble Team in Teaching and Learning gathered 3,711 points and the Helping Hands in Human Resources came in first place with 4,616 points. The total for donations reached 15,091 points this year. The donations were given to LifeStyles of Maryland. From top, Kelli Whalen navigates a cart of canned goods to the LifeStyles bus; left, Starkey staff gather for a group picture; right, Mona DiBenedetto, left, and Alisha Sweatt carry donations.



On the cover

[CCPS employees](#) were honored by the [Board](#) at its Nov. 15 meeting. Pictured on the front cover from left are Kevin Gibson, social studies teacher, Henry E. Lackey High School; Tina Thomas, secretary, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School; and Letia Ballard, social studies teacher, John Hanson Middle School.

In Memoriam

Crystal Davis, an instructional resource teacher at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, passed away on Nov. 17, 2022. A celebration of life service will be held at Real Life Church in Mechanicsville. A date for the event was not available at press time. A complete In Memoriam will appear in an upcoming edition of *School News*.



Crystal Davis

It's Academic to air

Watch La Plata High School's *It's Academic* match against Bowie High School and Fauquier High School on Dec. 3. The Oct. 9 match will air 10 a.m. on [WETA](#). La Plata came in second in the 2021-22 countywide *It's Academic* tournament. The first-place team's televised match was aired earlier this year. La Plata team members include William Alcorn, Anne Vazhappilly, Isaiah DeLeonard and Christopher Burtch, who is the alternate. Alcorn, DeLeonard and Burtch make up the team that will appear on the Dec. 3 broadcast.

Managing holiday stress

The next virtual EAP session is 2:30 p.m., Dec. 7, and will touch on managing holiday stress. Maintaining balance and keeping stress from becoming overwhelming are the keys to an enjoyable holiday season. The Dec. 7 workshop provides an overview of common stressors people encounter during the holidays and offers tips to get the most enjoyment out of the season. To register for the session, [click here](#).



Marty Margolis, right, physical education teacher at Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School, talks to students in Maureen Dinneen's third-grade class. Margolis was recently named the Elementary School Physical Education Teacher of the Year by SHAPE MD.

SHAPE MD names Margolis Elementary PE Teacher of the Year

A recent afternoon at Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School found third graders in an intense game of battleship as their physical education teacher, Marty Margolis, observed — and at times joined in. Rather than focusing on the game board, two teams set up on either side of a barrier made of mats.

Then they let loose a barrage of dodge balls in hopes of toppling the five oversized bowling pins (still draped in ghost costumes from Halloween) strategically placed on the other side.

When a student needed to catch a glimpse of the other side's ship placement, they ran to a safe zone where they had a second or two to gauge coordinates by peering through an oversized pair of binoculars made up of two hula hoops.

Laughter, cheers and groans of defeat pinged off the gym's walls — it was chaotic in the most fun way. And keeping with the third-grade physical education curriculum it was designed to improve the overhand throwing abilities of the students.

Margolis has spent his entire 26-year teaching career at Mitchell, all as the PE teacher. He was recently honored by the

Society of Health and Physical Educators of Maryland (SHAPE MD) as its Elementary School Physical Education Teacher of the Year. SHAPE MD is an organization that provides advocacy, resources and professional learning opportunities for current and future health and physical educators who teach students in prekindergarten through 12th grade.

"Elementary age kids are so motivated to give it their all," Margolis said. "They love being active and it doesn't take much to get them interested in something. It's my job to help them to be able to get better at what they're learning. I meet them at their confidence level and skill level, and we build on those."

"Mr. Margolis is beloved at Mitchell Elementary," Matt Golonka, content specialist for health and physical education for Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), said. "He has proven that he is the best at what he does. He has impacted the lives of his students for over 25 years in his own hometown."

To read the complete release on the accomplishment achieved by Margolis, [click here](#).

In Memoriam Maureen "Deen" Stewart

Maureen "Deen" Stewart, a Spanish teacher at North Point High School, passed away Nov. 10, 2022.

With more than 30 years of experience as a teacher, she taught thousands of Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) graduates. As a sponsor for North Point's *It's Academic* and SkillsUSA Quiz Bowl teams, she has influenced many more. Among them is Moriah Rochlinski-Evans, a former student who became Stewart's colleague when Rochlinski-Evans began teaching Spanish at North Point six years ago. They also cosponsored the *It's Academic* and Quiz Bowl teams.

"She was a truly involved member of our school community, cared deeply for our students and staff, and was the type of person who would check on you anytime she heard someone needed help," Rochlinski-Evans said. "She was dedicated to Spanish teaching, and would speak Spanglish to any person she met, even if they spoke no Spanish at all."

Students in Stewart's classes not only learned Spanish, but about life, Robin Burns, cyber security and computer science teacher, said.

Stewart was one of the first friends Burns made at North Point



**Maureen
"Deen" Stewart**

and they hit up Taco Tuesdays at Mexico Restaurant in La Plata, watched football on Sundays and recently became roommates. "She was a master of sarcasm and wit, and would crush anyone in a game of Scrabble," Burns said.

Maria Vargas-Garcia, the world language chair at North Point, remembered Stewart for her sense of humor and kindness. "Her sense of humor was so sharp," Vargas-Garcia said. "Her kindness was so big. She helped so many people from our community that we don't even know. She was always doing something — something good, something amazing."

In 2021, Stewart was one of five CCPS teachers to earn the Global Seal of Biliteracy, a recognition given to students and educators who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages. In college Stewart took part in a student trip to Mexico, launching a love for the Spanish language. "It was the beginning of a beautiful thing," she said in a 2021 interview.

Stewart is survived by her daughter, Lauren Duque and her partner, Dom Samoraj; her son, Stewart Duque and his wife, Janice; four grandchildren; nine siblings; nieces and nephews; and family and friends.

In Memoriam Brian Wells

Brian Wells, a computer science and Project Lead the Way (PLTW) engineering teacher at Westlake High School, passed away Nov. 12, 2022, following a battle with sudden acute pancreatitis.

At Westlake, Wells was well-known beyond the classroom with many calling him "Coach."

Wells coached the golf teams and track and field.

He was involved in activities like robotics, the Mathematics, Engineering and Science, Achievement (MESA) team, was coach of the chess team, sponsored the National Technical Honor Society and was a mentor for the Elite Black Men.

Wells was among other male Westlake staff members personally selected by students to sponsor the Elite Black Men group. Students chose sponsors they admire and who possess the character traits they wish to emulate.

"This is a devastating loss for our school community," Westlake Principal Diane Roberts said. "His presence brought love and light to Westlake. Mr. Wells's superpower was the ability to provide a safe space for students where they could feel a sense of belonging."

Wells was Westlake's nominee for Charles County Public



Brian Wells

Schools (CCPS) Teacher of the Year Award in 2020.

He was named a SMECO Outstanding Teacher in STEM in 2022.

Outside of school, Wells enjoyed spending time with his sons, traveling, camping, playing sports and building Legos. Wells also loved the family dogs.

"Brian Wells was the fixer of all things broken, morning DJ for the Tech Ed hall and a gentle giant, a teddy bear," Beth Shook, instruction specialist for special education, said. "He never said 'No' to anything he was asked to do and was always the first one to lend a hand. Wells had a way of making everyone — staff, students and parents feel welcomed and part of the family. He was one of a kind."

Wells is survived by his wife, Joana; sons, Bryan and Zachary; parents, Ronnie and Kathy Wells; brothers, Phillip and Paul; and nieces and nephews.

Memorial donations may be made to Cooking Autism of Fredericksburg at www.cookingautism.org/donate or Cooking Autism Inc., 2 Otto Way, Fredericksburg, VA 22406.

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
Amira Abujuma, *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).

Jenifer ES is ready for the World Cup

Students and staff at Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary School celebrate the start of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Pictured in the back row from left are Franco Foraci, physical education teacher; Matt Golonka, CCPS content specialist for health and physical education; Sylvie Acevedo, parent liaison; and Jenifer Principal Kevin Jackson. In front are Cassandra Vaughn, school counselor; and Alexandra Washington, fourth-grade teacher.



North Point teacher's survivor story featured on NBC4



North Point High School welding teacher Frank Holiday, left, will spend Thanksgiving and many more with his family thanks to the actions of his colleagues and students. Holiday, who suffered a near fatal heart attack during a break in class, is alive due to quick-thinking students and colleagues who wouldn't give up on him. The day after North Point staff and students were honored by the Board of Education at its Nov. 15 meeting, NBC4 reporter Tracee Wilkins, right, stopped by the school to get the story. To view the NBC4 interview, [click here](#).

How to help United Way of SoMD

CCPS employees who want to support the United Way of Southern Maryland through a payroll deduction should have pledge forms in by Dec. 9. Completed pledge forms should be sent to Kelli Whalen at kwhalen@ccboe.com through the pony by Dec. 9. Employees should write their school's ID number or name on the form, keep the pink copy of the form and send Whalen the yellow and white copies. Mark your envelope to the attention of Kelli Whalen, Office of Accountability, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

Personnel

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

Job openings

Administrative Instructional Assistant — Dr. James Craik Elementary School, 10-month position. High school diploma required. Experience working with children preferred. Apply by Dec. 1.

Building Service Assistant Manager — St. Charles High School, 12-month position. A high school diploma is required along with one or more years of experience in the field. Apply by Dec. 7.

Building Service Worker — Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED is required. Apply by Dec. 8.

Analyst/Programmer — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Bachelor's degree in computer or data science or related field

preferred. An industry recognized certification may be substituted for a degree. Apply by Dec. 9.

Athletic Director — Westlake High School, 12-month position. A bachelor's degree is required with a minimum of five years teaching experience and three years of coaching experience. Apply by Dec. 9.

Family and Consumer Science Teacher — All high schools, 10-month position. A bachelor's degree or higher is required and must meet certification requirements as established by the Maryland State Department of Education. Apply by Dec. 22.

Title I Nonpublic Tutor — Location to be determined, temporary position. Bachelor's degree and professional certificate in early childhood or elementary education required. Ability and willingness to work evenings. Position open until filled.