

School News



Notebook

Black History Expo

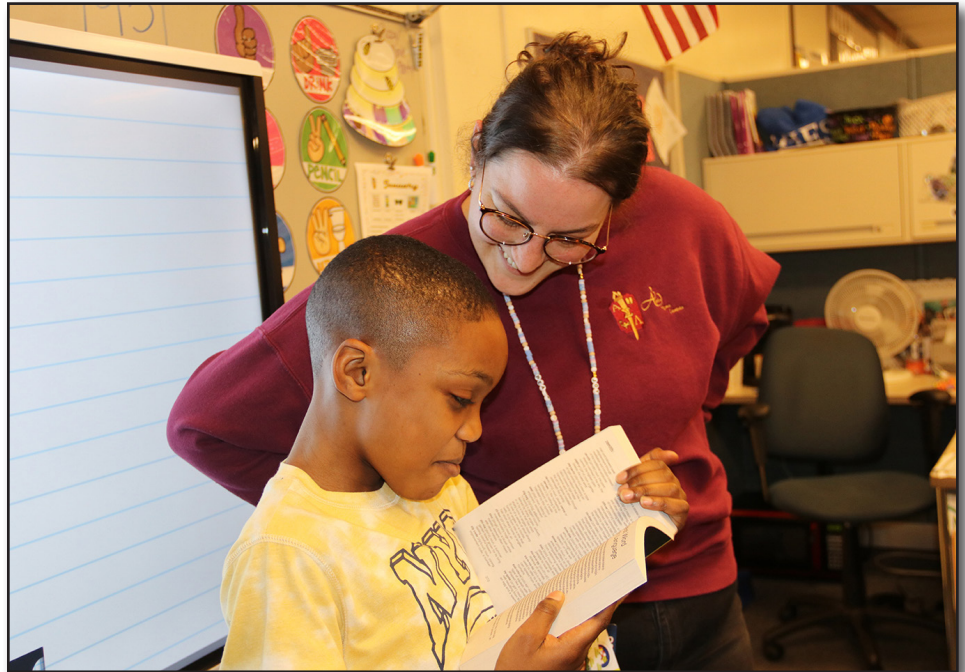
McDonough's Key Club is hosting a Black History Expo noon-2 p.m., Feb. 11, at McDonough. Performances by the school's drama, art and poetry clubs, and the dance and modeling teams are slated. Local vendors will set up for the expo and food will be available for purchase. Tickets are \$3 for students with a student ID, \$3 for children ages 5-12 and \$5 for adults. McDonough is at 7165 Marshall Corner Road in Pomfret.

Science Center events

The [James E. Richmond Science Center](#) at St. Charles High School is holding a couple of fun events this month. On Feb. 14, the center will hold a Valentine's Day Night Under the Stars starting at 6:30 p.m. Cheese, chocolates and nonalcoholic drinks will be available before a Valentine's-themed Planetarium Sky Show. Tickets are \$20 per couple, 16 and older. [Click here for tickets and more information.](#) On Saturday, Feb. 18, the center will hold Scout Saturday. It is an opportunity for local Scouts to participate in activities and learn information that will support the completion of the Space Science Scout badges. Registration is required. For more information, go to www.sciencecenter.cboe.com or [click here.](#)

Panel discussion Feb. 22

To celebrate Black History Month, the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Department of Community Engagement and Equity will hold Voices of Power, Resistance and Change: A panel discussion 5:30-7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 22 at Thomas Stone High School. Stone is at 3785 Leonardtown Road in Waldorf.



More than words

Mahmud Lawal, a third-grade student at Indian Head Elementary School, looks up a fact in his new dictionary with the help of his teacher, Jessica Garcia. Members of the Rotary Club of La Plata donated each third grader a dictionary as part of a service project. To read more, visit Page 3.

Instrumental music teachers host Instant Concert

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) fifth-grade musicians jammed Saturday during an Instant Concert at St. Charles High School. Before taking the stage, band and orchestra students in elementary school learned the music they would perform within hours from CCPS music teachers and high school students who served as mentors.

For some of the high school students, it was a return to a familiar sight. "I have been doing Instant Concerts for a while," Michaela Raqueno, a senior at North Point High School, said. "I was in one in elementary school, and in middle school I volunteered to be a mentor."

Raqueno has been playing the violin since fifth grade after her parents urged her to se-

lect an instrument to learn. She was adamant it wasn't going to be the violin. "My two older sisters were in orchestra, and they played the violin. At first, I was very determined not to be like them," she said. Over time her feelings changed. "I went to so many of their concerts and was like, yeah. The violin is the coolest instrument," she said.

Seeing younger students starting their instrument-playing journey brings back memories for the older students. "When I see these kids, I see myself," Christine Baker, a North Point senior and violin player, said.

The Instant Concert event has been held for at least a decade, estimated North Point's instrumental music teacher David Monk. At Satur-

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Coulby resigns, Board of Education to develop an application process for vacancy

The Board of Education of Charles County earlier this week announced the resignation of Board Member Cindy Coulby. In sharing her resignation with the Board, Coulby cited personal reasons behind her decision to vacate her seat on the Board representing Charles County District 1.



“While I am not able to continue serving on the Board, I wish my colleagues well in their endeavors. Together and collectively, I know they will keep the best interests of children in Charles County at the forefront of all decisions they will make over the next four years,” Coulby said.

According to Section 3-501 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, elected members of the Board must select a qualified individual to fill any vacancy for the remainder of the term. State law also requires the individual to be a resident from the same county commissioner district of the vacating member. A qualified individual for the vacancy is a person who is a resident of Charles County District 1, registered Charles County voter and someone who is not subject to the authority of the Board.

The term left vacant by Coulby extends

through November 2026.

According to State law, the Board must also complete the following:

- Conduct applicant interviews in a public meeting.
- Publish a list of applicant names for a vacancy at least two weeks before the interview of the first applicant occurs.
- Publish the date, location and time of all applicant interviews.

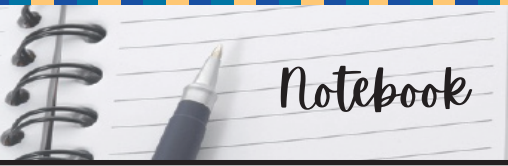
The law does not require the Board to hold public discussions of applicants or make the final selection of the member to fill the vacancy of the elected member at a public meeting.

Board Chairperson Michael Lukas said he looks forward to working with the Board to find a qualified and committed person to fill the vacancy.

“On behalf of the Board of Education and my colleagues, I wish Mrs. Coulby well and appreciate her support of the school system, the Board and the children of Charles County,” Lukas said.

The Board plans to discuss the application process for District 1 replacement candidates at its Feb. 14 executive session meeting. There is no timetable set in law, so the Board may develop its own for the interview and selection process.

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) will publish those details as the Board confirms its process and timeline.



On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are CCPS staff members honored at the January Board of Education meeting including Ellen Dunn, left, mathematics teacher, North Point High School; and Jamie Heath, school counselor, Mary B. Neal Elementary School. To read more about the staff’s accomplishments, [click here](#).

USMSM information session

As CCPS high school juniors and seniors think about the next steps after graduation, the University System of Maryland at Southern Maryland (USMSM) offers options to earn an associate’s or bachelor’s degree. Information sessions are set for noon to 4 p.m., Feb. 24, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Feb. 25, at USMSM at 44219 Airport Road in California. For more information and a presentation schedule, visit usmsm.umd.edu.



Chess tournament set

CCPS is hosting its annual winter chess tournament in person at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 25, at Henry E. Lackey High School. The tournament is open to chess players in Grades kindergarten-12 with spectators allowed to view the event. Players must register in advance to participate. To register, [click here](#). The deadline to register is Wednesday, Feb. 22. Walk-in registrations are not accepted. Questions can be directed to abriscoe@ccboe.com, kmodes@ccboe.com or ctrest@ccboe.com. Lackey is at 3000 Chicamuxen Road in Indian Head.

CCPS seeking feedback from parents, staff, students

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is seeking input from parents, staff members and students regarding progress on areas outlined in the school system’s strategic plan.

Staff developed three stakeholder surveys: one for parents, one for staff and one for students in Grades 4-12.

Links for each survey are below. All surveys are available for completion in English or Spanish.

[Parent Survey](#) (seven questions).

[Staff Survey](#) (five questions).

[Student Survey](#) (five questions).

Deadline for all three surveys is 11:59 p.m., Friday, Feb. 10.

Survey data will be used to evaluate areas included in the CCPS Strategic Plan. Parents, staff and students are encouraged to complete the survey.

Detailed information about the CCPS Strategic Plan is posted on the school system website at <https://www.ccboe.com/academics/strategic-plan-data-dashboard-2022>.

www.ccboe.com

Third graders receive dictionaries from Rotary Club members

It's been a while since Sanya Sitoula walked in the hallways of Indian Head Elementary School. Now an eighth grader at General Smallwood Middle School, Sanya recently returned to her former school to help her dad, Kiran, with a special project.

For nearly 20 years, Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) students in third grade have been given the gift of words when members of Rotary clubs give each their own dictionary. "You will appreciate this gift for the rest of your life," Kiran Sitoula, a member of the Rotary Club of La Plata, said to members of Jessica Garcia's class.

Rotary clubs around the country — as well as other service clubs and organizations — take part in a program that was started in 1992 by a Savannah, Ga., housewife. Soon the tradition of giving out dictionaries to third graders picked up steam when the Dictionary Project was formed three years later in 1995. Over the years, the program has been taken up by organizations around the country resulting in more than 28 million dictionaries given away. In Charles County, Rotarians have been handing out dictionaries to third graders since 2004. Third grade is the golden age for the giveaway. Second grade is too young, fourth graders is a bit too old. Third grade seems to be the right age. "The level of curiosity is there," Sitoula said.

"The more you read, the more your brain

grows bigger and bigger," he told students. "You can't see it, but it's growing, and you are making connections and getting smarter and smarter."

Though classroom configurations and hallway layouts of her former elementary school have faded from Sanya's memory, receiving a dictionary in third grade has not. She remembered receiving one when she was third grader. "Yeah, it's easy to go online, but with books ... it's your own book," she said. "It's yours to keep. And it's not just a dictionary. It has stats, information about states, countries and other facts." Sanya said she referred to the dictionary throughout elementary school.

During the presentation on Monday morning, Kiran Sitoula went over some of the highlights within the book's binding. The U.S. Constitution is in it, information about U.S. presidents and states, and facts about countries around the world are contained between the front and back covers. Countries like Nepal, where Kiran Sitoula, was born. Sanya and her father taught students about Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world, which Sanya saw out of her bedroom window while visiting Nepal for an extended stay recently.

Students discussed the population of countries they have visited or hope to in the future. They also took a shot at saying the longest



Paige Koerbel, left, a teacher at Indian Head Elementary School, helps her student, Damyah Walston, look up a fact in her new dictionary.

word in the English language – more than 1,900 letters of it. The chemical name of titin, the largest known protein, takes up more than half of the page it's printed on in the students' dictionary.

"If we get that word on the spelling bee, we're so out," Kristopher Garcia, a third grader in Paige Koerbel's, class said.

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day's event, 150 elementary school students signed up and were taught by 12 CCPS teachers and 14 high school mentors, Andrew Blumhardt, CCPS content specialist for fine and performing arts, said.

"It gives them another performing experience," he said of the younger students. "Many of the students have done a winter concert, some haven't. So, for some of the kids this is their first performing opportunity."

The Instant Concert concludes with a short performance for parents. It's one the students look forward to all day. "I want to show people that I can play violin," Hannah Anne Milan, a William B. Wade Elementary School fifth grader, said.

Fifth grader Laila Morris is a classmate of Milan's at Wade. She was inspired to learn to play the flute from a couple of different sources. "I saw a lot of fifth graders in the hallways that were in band, and I just wanted to try it out. And another reason I wanted to play is because my mom played," Morris said. "It feels good to play. I don't know why. It just feels good."



David Monk, instrumental music teacher at North Point High School, directs high school musicians during a break at the Instant Concert event. High school students serve as mentors to the younger students. About 150 elementary school students signed up to take part in the Instant Concert.

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A cut above

Channing Trent, pictured left in top left photo, the barbering teacher at Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, observes barbering students Naki Battle and Ahmod Stewart as they work with VIP clients — Stethem's Principal Louis D'Ambrosio, right in top left photo, and Assistant Principal Mike Heiser, left in top right photo. Other barbering students took notes as they observed the hands-on lesson. If you are interested in helping CCPS students get more hands-on experiences in a salon, North Point High School's cosmetology department runs a nearly full-service salon. Cosmetology students working toward their state certification work with clients. To book an appointment, [click here](#). Visitors to North Point must follow the CCPS visitor protocols. February is Career and Technical (CTE) Education Month. To learn more about CTE programs offered by Charles County Public Schools, visit the [CTE website](#) or follow the CTE department on Twitter at [@CTECharles](#).

As seen at [@StethemCenter](#) on Twitter

Check out the At-a-Glance calendar for 2023-2024

The Board of Education in December 2022 approved the school calendar for next school year. Dates listed are subject to change. To view the at-a-glance calendar, [click here](#).

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

Math Interventionist Instructional Assistant— Malcolm Elementary School, 10-month position. High school diploma required; associates or bachelor's degrees preferred. Apply by Feb. 13.

Inventory Specialist — Associates degree in business or a combination of experience and training, or bachelor's in business or related subject. Apply by Feb. 13.

Social Studies Teacher — Westlake High School, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree or higher and meets certification requirements as established by the Maryland State Department of Education. Apply by Feb. 15.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) Facilitator — All schools, 11-month position. Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred. Hold or be eligible for Maryland Standard Professional Certificate with special education endorsement. Apply by Feb. 17.

Middle School Instructional Assistant — All middle schools, 10-month position. Apply by April 30.

Special Education Instructional Assistant — All middle schools, 10-month position. Apply by April 30.

Special Education Instructional Assistant — All high schools, 10-month position. Apply by April 30.

ESOL Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 31.

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.