



School News



Superintendent March

Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., superintendent of Charles County Public Schools, will join other school superintendents from around the country in Washington, D.C., on March 30 for the [100 Superintendent March](#). The march is a joint event hosted by the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS) and the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE). ALAS and NABSE are teaming up for 2023 Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill to advocate for issues related to public education.

Apply for Erly award

Educational Systems Federal Credit Union's Support Education Foundation is accepting nominations for the Maurice Erly Professional Development Award. The one-time \$1,000 award can be used toward continuing education fees like workshop registration fees, certification fees and tuition. To be eligible, applicants must be an educator in one of the counties the credit union serves. The application period is open through April 1. To submit a typed application, essay and letter of recommendation email them to scholarships@supportededucation.org by April 1. Include Maurice Erly Professional Development Award in the subject line of your email. Application packages that are incomplete, emailed or postmarked after April 1 will not be considered. [Click here](#) for more information about the Erly award.



As luck would have it ...

Staff members in human resources at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building hosted a St. Patrick's Day coffee and donuts breakfast for staff at the central office. Rachel Svites, HR secretary, left center, and Angela Rogers, certification assistant, right center, worked together to organize the event.

Mattawoman eighth grader is Spelling Bee champ

The word that clinched the 2023 Charles County Spelling Bee for a Mattawoman Middle School eighth grader was "valedictorian."

Correctly spelling the word that defines a student with the highest academic achievements of a graduating class seems a fitting word for Alec Gallahan to nail.

He advances to the [Scripps National Spelling Bee](#) held this summer at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center at the National Harbor. The national contest will see more than 200 spellers from around the country visiting the Washington, D.C., area for the Bee. The National Spelling Bee semifinals will air on ION 8 p.m., June 1, with the finals broadcast 8 p.m., June 2.

To get to nationals, Gallahan had to out spell 39 of his middle school peers from schools around the county.

The students in the local Bee are the best middle school spellers in Charles County who first compete at the school level, then take an online spelling exam before earning a chair at

the in-person Bee. Every Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) middle school had a team of two-to-four students who advanced to the local competition Thursday, the same for three private schools — Archbishop Neale School (ANS), Southern Maryland Christian Academy (SMCA) and St. Peter's School. The final four spellers in the closing rounds were Gallahan, Angelo Milazzo and Selah Wolfe of Southern Maryland Christian Academy, and Alex Dusterwald of Archbishop Neale.

It was an Alec vs. Alex final round when the two eighth graders faced off at the end of the Bee, with Gallahan emerging as victor.

Dusterwald and his ANS teammates didn't walk away empty handed. They were named the Top Team in this year's Bee.

The award is given to the team that earns the most points in the online test and for words spelled correctly in each round. ANS gathered 56 points to come in first with Mattawoman and

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Notebook

On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are CCPS employees honored at the February Board of Education meeting. From left are Andrea Smoot, special education instructional assistant, F.B. Gwynn Educational Center, and Leigh Esmond, first grade teacher, William A. Diggs Elementary School. To read more about the outstanding employees, [click here](#).

Session proposals

The Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Office of Professional Learning is seeking proposals from certified educators interested in leading a session during the New Educator Orientation (NEO) 2023 this summer. Sessions will take place during the NEO on Aug. 15 and 16.

Those interested in leading a session can visit the [CCPS Professional Learning SharePoint](#) for the NEO session proposal template for details about what to include, as well as the NEO session proposal rubric for an explanation of how proposals will be scored. Please note that submission of a proposal does not guarantee its acceptance. Completed session proposals and questions should be directed to Holly Dolan, staff growth and retention specialist, at hdolan@ccboe.com. All submissions are due to Dolan by 11:59 p.m., April 12.

Early Learning Launch

An Early Learning Launch will be 10 a.m.-noon, April 15, at La Plata High School. The event will provide families of students entering prekindergarten and kindergarten resources. There will be school readiness activities and staff available to help parents register their child for prekindergarten and kindergarten. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Early Learning Launch.

It's Academic to air

The Maurice J. McDonough High School *It's Academic* team recently competed in a playoff game on March 13. The show will air June 3 on WETA.



Above, Victoria Farrell, a science teacher at Piccowaxen Middle School, goes over last minute instructions, including clocking the rise temperature using a thermometer, with a class. Right, Jackson Romine, eighth grader, enjoys the spoils of the solar oven experiment which was used to make s'mores.



Science lesson brings s'more insight

You know it's going to be a fun day in eighth-grade science class when there's a pile of pizza boxes in the corner and your teacher tells you to grab your s'more supplies.

The students in Victoria Farrell's class at Piccowaxen Middle School weren't indulging in junk food, they were studying thermal energy by gathering materials for a theoretical trip to the moon. Without an atmosphere, climate or weather, the moon is an ideal place to gather solar energy. It always exposed to sunlight outside of a rare lunar eclipse and if the students could lasso that energy, it would power almost everything that needed it.

With a pizza box, aluminum foil, thermometer, a lamp with a 100-watt bulb and a handful of other materials, teams of students designed and constructed a solar box

cooker. If they designed it correctly, the students' ovens should reflect and concentrate the lamplight. The light will be converted to heat which will be trapped inside the box. This should warm a s'more enough to melt the chocolate and soften the marshmallow. The temperature inside the box must increase by 15 degrees Celsius (59 Fahrenheit) in 10 minutes to achieve success.

"It was really fun," Kiley Grollman, an eighth-grade student, said. "It's something we don't have to do all the time. We never really have to do it."

Some communities regularly use solar cookers, including some countries that have ideal conditions for operating solar ovens. Such ovens can be used to cook food and pasteurize water that is safe to drink.

Solar cookers use free, renewable energy and don't add to pollution.

At-a-glance calendar available at www.ccboe.com

The CCPS 2023-2024 at-a-glance calendar has been published online for students and staff. The Board of Education in December 2022 approved the school calendar for next year. Dates listed are subject to change. To view the at-a-glance calendar, [click here](#).

SPELLING BEE

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Staff of Mattawoman Middle School attended the Charles County Spelling Bee to support students Alec Gallahan, Alexander Nguyen and Brent Travers, pictured third, fourth and fifth from left, respectively. Team member Dennis Harrison is not pictured. Gallahan was named the 2023 Charles County Spelling Bee champion.

Benjamin Stoddert middle schools tying for second place with 54 points each.

While studying for the competition hones a student's spelling skills, it also benefits other aspects of their education. "The competition encourages the exploration of words and life-long curiosity, with a focus on helping students set goals and dedicate time to study and preparation," John Tompkins, CCPS content specialist for middle school language arts, said. "Participation in the Bee program also provides an opportunity for students to gain experience in public speaking and displaying poise under pressure."

Below is a list of students who made it to the 2023 Charles County Public Schools Spelling Bee.

Theodore G. Davis Middle School — Xavier Obannon, sixth grade, Alexandra Powell, eighth grade, Mart Elam Lofranco, sixth grade, and Kayman Burwell, eighth grade. (Lofranco and Burwell did not attend the local Bee.) Kimberle Johnson is the coach.

John Hanson Middle School — Kyndel Tucker, sixth grade, Karaganne Burroughs, seventh grade, Aydin Jones, seventh grade, and Ikari Joseph, eighth grade. Jennifer Biegner is the coach.

Matthew Henson Middle School — Makayla McCall, Amir Rushdan, Syriana Stitt and Isabella Wilburg, all seventh grade. Debby Holder is the coach.

Mattawoman Middle School — Brent Travers, sixth grade, Alec Gallahan, eighth

grade, Dennis Harrison, eighth grade, and Alexander Nguyen, eighth grade. Christina Washington and Jody Bell are the coaches.

Piccowaxen Middle School — Olivia Schmelzer, sixth grade, Janae Northington, seventh grade, Karis Pilkerton, seventh grade, and Aubrey Vogel, seventh grade. Coaches are Amber Sullivan and Nancy Buter.

General Smallwood Middle School — Nhu Quynh Vo Phan, seventh grade, Myles Alexander, eighth grade, and Sanya Sitoula, eighth grade. McKenzie Rodriguez is the coach.

Milton M. Somers Middle School — Jayden Hill, seventh grade, Rebecca Johnson, seventh grade, Jhourni Jones, eighth grade, and Addison Kelly, eighth grade. Valerie Amend and Fara Walent are the coaches.

Benjamin Stoddert Middle School — Kaylee Paulk, seventh grade, Genevieve Macean-Heath, eighth grade, Aaron Nguyen, eighth grade, and Camila Rivera Lemus, eighth grade. Danielle Smith is the coach.

Archbishop Neale School — Tejas Suri, seventh grade, Dylan Wilkerson, seventh grade, Alex Dusterwald, eighth grade, and Joshua Vincent, eighth grade. Denise Oglesby and Susan Gardiner are the coaches.

Southern Maryland Christian Academy — Addison Huffer, sixth grade, Angelo Milazzo, sixth grade, Selah Wolfe, eighth grade, and Kaylee Strickland, eighth grade. (Strickland did not attend the Bee.) Kari King is the coach.

St. Peter's School — Mikaela Schnaubert, sixth grade, Christiana Williams, sixth grade, Gregory Avila, seventh grade, Grace McCourt-Santos, seventh grade. Kelli Schmidt is the coach.



Mock trial team makes CCPS history

The North Point High School mock trial team made history by being the first team from Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) to be named Circuit 7 champion in the program's 40-year history. The team then went on to win a quarterfinal match March 14 against Salisbury's James M. Bennett High School. North Point's team will be among the Final Four mock trial teams to compete in Annapolis during a two-day competition next week. The team is coached by Anna Newton, social studies teacher, and Frederick Sanford, business education teacher. Seun Williams is the team's attorney coach. For more information about mock trial, visit <https://www.mylaw.org/>.



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Editor/Writers

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Jordan Wilson

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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).



Charging into the winner's circle

Henry E. Lackey High School's girls varsity basketball team beat Kent Island High School March 11 to be the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) Class 2A champions. "It feels surreal," Nadeya Regala, a Lackey sophomore, said. "The excitement and the joy I get from playing with this team ... I wouldn't want to do it with anyone else." The head coach is Lackey physical education teacher, Jo'nel Barnes. [Click here](#) to view a feature about Lackey's championship game.

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

Budget Analyst I — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Bachelor's degree in accounting, business Administration, budget, finance and/or related field or equivalent experience. Apply by March 20.

Secretary — Westlake High School, 11-month position. A high school diploma is required. Apply by March 21.

Principal to the Secretary — Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED required, along with a minimum of two years of experience in bookkeeping or office management. Apply by March 21.

Building Services Assistant Manager — Mattawoman Middle School, 12-month position. High school diploma and one or more years of experience are required. Apply by March 28.



Sweet holiday for lovers of math

Members of the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) math department — known as the Women of Mathematics — Maureen Cassidy, left, Laura Buzzell and Sheila Hettel help CCPS staff celebrate math for National Pi Day March 14. Get it? The first three digits of the mathematical constant of Pi are 3.14 Staff brought in mini cherry and blueberry pies to help people celebrate.