

# School News

## Notebook

### Bash is a homerun

The Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Baseball Bash was a hit!

Held Aug. 26 at Regency Furniture Stadium during a home game between the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs and the Lexington Counter Clocks of Kentucky, the event was hosted by the Education Association of Charles County (EACC), the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and CCPS. The Baseball Bash kicked off the school year.



**CCPS Superintendent Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., hangs out with Pinch during the Baseball Bash.**

### Labor Day is Sept. 4

Schools and offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 4, for Labor Day.

### PreK first day

The first day of school for pre-kindergarten students accepted into the prekindergarten program is Tuesday, Sept. 5.

### Board meets Sept. 12

The Board of Education will meet 1 p.m., Sept. 12, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata. Public forum begins at 6 p.m.



### And we're back!

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) staff welcomed students in kindergarten through 12th grade back to school on Monday, Aug. 28.



## A singular sensation

### All-County Thespian Troupe to stage 'A Chorus Line' Sept. 8-10

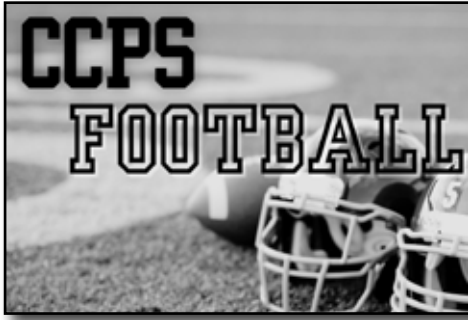
The stories of wanting to fit in while standing out, seeking out acceptance and love, wondering if chasing a dream is a goal or a distraction are among the themes taking center stage in "A Chorus Line: Teen Edition" performed by the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) All-County Thespian Troupe.

Students from the seven high schools have spent part of the summer rehearsing for the show and working behind the scenes to produce "A Chorus Line: Teen Edition" Sept. 8 through 10 at St. Charles High School. The teen edition of the show edits out some of the profanity and more mature themes of the original show.

CCPS theater teachers first began mulling the idea of staging an all-county musical while chatting during the Maryland Thespian Festival last January.

See CHORUS LINE, Page 3

Notebook



Homecoming games schedule

While the summer temps are hanging around for now, the crunch of fallen leaves and scent of pumpkin spice everything will soon fill the air. CCPS high schools are holding homecoming games this month and in October. Thomas Stone High School will play 7 p.m., Friday, Sept. 22; St. Charles High School's game is noon, Saturday, Sept. 23; Henry E. Lackey High School will play 7 p.m., Friday, Sept. 29; La Plata and Westlake high schools will both hold games at 7 p.m., Friday, Oct. 6; Maurice J. McDonough will play 7 p.m., Friday, Oct. 13; and North Point High School's homecoming game is 7 p.m., Friday, Oct. 20.

To view football previews, visit the [CCPS YouTube page](#). Each team is featured with players and coaches sharing their thoughts about the upcoming football season.

EAP benefit available

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through ComPsych is dedicated to helping CCPS employees improve their health and well-being through quality services. The EAP benefit is no cost to employees and their dependents, and it is also confidential.

ComPsych representatives have considerable expertise and clinical knowledge. They are well versed in helping clients of all ages, from young children to the elderly. The EAP can assist with many issues, including stress, depression, anxiety, workplace difficulties, substance abuse, marital problems, family or parenting conflicts, grief, violence and unhealthy lifestyles. To learn more visit the Employee Assistance Program page at [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) or go to the website for [ComPsych Guidance Resources](#).

In Memoriam Ruth Barbour

Ruth Barbour, an instructional assistant (IA) with the ACHIEVE program at Theodore G. Davis Middle School, passed away on Aug. 24, 2023.

Barbour began working for Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) in 2010 as a substitute teacher. She continued in the role before taking a position as an IA at Davis in the Life Skills program. She remained at Davis as an IA when the Life Skills program transitioned to ACHIEVE. Supervisors throughout her time with CCPS continually spoke of Barbour's contributions and positive attitude.

"Ms. B. had a heart of gold. She was the warmest person at Davis," Robert Griffiths, principal of Davis, said. "She made Davis a better place, she made me a better principal. She made me a better person."

Former Davis assistant principal,



Ruth Barbour

Wanda Huffman, praised Barbour for her dedication to students. "She knew and understood each of the students, working to help them achieve success," she said.

Beyond helping them meet their academic needs, Barbour ensured students — and staff — were looked after. "She cooked for kids and staff as if they were her own. She gave and gave and gave — school supplies, snacks, and my favorite — hugs," Griffiths said. "She kept me personally in the moment always. When I was running around the building too fast, she made sure I ate or at least nibbled on something."

A viewing will be 10 a.m., Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2023, until time of service at 11 a.m. at The Temple of Praise, 700 Southern Avenue SE, in Washington, DC. Interment will take place following the service at Sacred Heart Catholic Church Cemetery on St. Mary's Avenue in La Plata.

Charles County Public Schools	
2023-2024 IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER	
<b>AUGUST</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First day for returning teachers: 21</li> <li>First Day of School (K-12): 28</li> </ul>
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Awareness Month</li> <li>Suicide Prevention Month</li> <li>Hispanic Heritage Month</li> <li>Library Card sign-up Month</li> <li>Stroke Cell Awareness Month</li> <li>Labor Day (No School): 4</li> <li>First Day of School for PreK students: 5</li> <li>National Arts in Education Week: 10-16</li> <li>Schools closed for students only: 15</li> <li>IT Professionals Day: 19</li> <li>Human Resource Professionals Day: 26</li> </ul>
<b>OCTOBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Principals Month</li> <li>National Bullying Prevention Month</li> <li>Breast Cancer Awareness Month</li> <li>Learning Disabilities Awareness Month</li> <li>Building Service Worker Appreciation Day: 2</li> <li>Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day (schools closed for students only): 9</li> <li>National School Lunch Week: 9-13</li> <li>National School Bus Safety Week: 16-20</li> <li>CCPS Unity Day (wear orange): 18</li> </ul>
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Native American Heritage Month</li> <li>College Application Month</li> <li>National STEM Day: 8</li> <li>Veterans Day observed (schools closed for students only): 10</li> <li>School Psychology Week: 6-10</li> <li>American Education Week: 13-17</li> <li>National Education Support Professionals Day: 15</li> <li>National Parent Involvement Day: 16</li> <li>Substitute Educators Day: 17</li> <li>Thanksgiving holiday (schools/offices closed): 22-24</li> </ul>
<b>DECEMBER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Day of Persons with Disabilities: 3</li> <li>Computer Science Education Week: 4-10</li> <li>Winter Break: 25-Jan. 1</li> </ul>
<b>JANUARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School Board Recognition Month</li> <li>New Year's Day (no school): 1</li> <li>Return from Winter Break: 2</li> <li>Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday (no school): 15</li> </ul>

CCPS Celebrates

Don't forget a date with the help of the [CCPS Celebrates calendar](#). The quick view calendar highlights special days, weeks and months that call for celebrating and commemorating. Print out the calendar in English or Spanish or consult the web page to learn more.

## CHORUS LINE

continued from Page 1

Ben Simpson, a theater arts teacher at St. Charles, said CCPS has staged all-county plays in the past, but never a musical. “The only way to make it happen is if we did it over the summer,” Simpson said.

The time crunch, along with bringing students together from different schools, meant the musical selection had to be one where they could hit the ground running. Since “A Chorus Line” is one of Simpson’s favorites, he suggested it as the all-county inaugural musical. “It has a limited set, limited costumes, it was a little more accessible,” he said. “It’s a fun story the kids can really delve into character-wise, and they can really embrace the real people that they are portraying.”

CCPS theater teachers started pitching the show to students before the end of the 2022-2023 school year. Most of the students had no idea what the show — which debuted on Broadway in 1975 — was about.

“I heard ‘A Chorus Line,’ and I thought I get to sing. We’d be singing, standing in a line,” Joshua Pelzer, a Westlake High School senior, said. “I get here and saw all this dancing and said, ‘Oh, my gosh.’” Pelzer, who has had roles in Westlake’s productions of “SpongeBob SquarePants,” “In the Heights,” and “The Descendants,” said he didn’t mind sacrificing part of his summer break to memorize lines and learn dance steps. “I’d rather spend my summer cooperating and being with everybody,” he said.

Bringing together actors and tech staff from different schools went smoothly. Students interested in theater tend to share interests and cheer each other on. “You have great dancers, you have great singers, great tech people,” Pelzer said. “You put that all together and it just shows how amazing Charles County really is, performing arts wise.”

St. Charles senior Ricaria Lawson admitted to being a bit nervous about auditioning for the show, eventually landing the role of Diana Morales. “It would be a privilege to work with some of the most talented people in the county,” she said. “I was onboard, and I was



The cast and crew of ‘A Chorus Line: Teen Edition’ are made up of students from the seven high schools. Students and CCPS staff worked throughout the summer to ready the show for performances Sept. 8 to 10 at St. Charles High School.

### If you go

**“A Chorus Line: Teen Edition” will be staged 7 p.m. Sept. 8 and 9, with matinees at 2 p.m. on Sept. 9 and 10. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students and senior citizens. CCPS employees can receive a complimentary ticket with presentation of CCPS badge. All shows will be staged at St. Charles High School, 5305 St. Linus Drive, Waldorf. Tickets can be purchased at [mhsdrama303.booktix.net](https://mhsdrama303.booktix.net). Concessions will be sold before the show and during intermission. The concession stand only accepts cash.**

really excited about it.”

During the early 1970s, Tony-winning director and choreographer Michael Bennett worked with friends who were performers on developing the show. The stories told during the musical were sourced from true stories of performers and inspired by others heard in auditions. In the show, while performers come from various backgrounds, have different ex-

periences and trauma, there is something universal about all the stories.

“What I like about the show is how we get every individual story,” said Pelzer, who plays Paul San Marco. “There’s not a main character. We’re not following Pippin or SpongeBob. We’re following Diana, we’re following Paul, we’re following Connie, Zach. We’re getting each story and how they meld together. I like it because you can find yourself in every single character on that stage.”

Lawson said she thinks “A Chorus Line” will resonate with new audience members as it has for nearly 50 years. “These are real people. It’s gritty and talks about the fears and real possibilities the dancers might face if they can no longer act or dance,” she said. “It leaves the audience wondering what they would do if they could no longer do what they love.”

Lawson has been active in theater at St. Charles where she has acted in “Legally Blonde,” “The Wiz,” and “Chicken & Biscuits.” She was the stage manager for “As You Like It,” and would like to continue to study theater in college. Working on a show with students from various schools has built bridges in the CCPS theater community. “I met some of my closest friends in the last few months,” she said. “I feel like we’ve built a family.”

## Mental Health First Aid for parents

CCPS is bringing [Mental Health First Aid](#) classes to parents and caregivers of children between the ages of 12 to 18.

Each class will be held over two sessions Tuesday and Thursday evenings at the CCPS Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building at 5980 Radio Station Road in La Plata. The first class is set for 4:30 to 8:30 p.m., Sept. 18 and 21.

For a full schedule of class dates, visit [cboe.com](https://cboe.com).

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

**Board of Education Members**

Michael K. Lukas, *Chairperson*  
Yonelle Moore Lee, Esq.,  
*Vice Chairperson*  
Dottery Butler-Washington  
David Hancock  
Nicole M. Kreamer  
Jamila Smith  
Brenda Thomas  
Linda Warren  
Treasure Perkins, *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).

# A giant donation to CCPS helps fight food insecurity

You know when you're at a store and the card reader asks if you would like to round up your total to benefit a nonprofit or other organization?

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) was recently awarded \$17,758 to help fight food insecurity among students through that practice.

The money was raised during Giant Food's Nourishing Our Youth food initiative.

From June 16 to July 27, Giant invited customers to round up grocery purchases at the register and join in the support of local public school system's food and meal programs.

"CCPS thanks community members for their contributions toward childhood hunger by giving beyond their normal purchase total at Giant Food Stores this past summer," Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., said. "Your donations make it possible for us to continue to bring meals to our students to ensure they are ready to learn."

With the help of its customers, Giant Food raised more than \$550,000 to address childhood hunger throughout local public-school systems in the communities it serves across four states.

Through the Nourishing Our Youth initiative, school systems will be able to use the funds to support meal programs such as covering outstanding student meal debt, expanding food distribution



programs, creating on-campus food pantries and supplying extra weekend meals.

"Last school year, CCPS was able to use the funds from the Giant Food Stores fundraiser to provide students across our school system with weekend meal bags, meals and snacks for students attending after school programs, dinner for students who attended the annual ESOL Community Night, and dinner and snacks for students who attended Title I school events," Bethany Goodwin, CCPS Youth in Transition coordinator, said. "We are so excited that Giant Food Stores is awarding us with grant funds again this year to support our students across CCPS."

[www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com)

## Personnel

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

**Job openings**

**Middle School Career Coach** — Piccowaxen Middle School, 10-month position. At least two years of college with at least 60 college credits, bachelor's degree is preferred. Apply by Sept. 6.

**Compliance Facilitator** — General Smallwood Middle School, 10.5-month position. A bachelor's degree is required, and applicants must meet certification requirements as established by the MSDE, along with three years of special education classroom experience. Apply by Sept. 6.

**Dance Teacher** — Maurice J. McDonough

High School, 10-month position. A bachelor's degree is required, and applicants must meet certification requirements as established by the MSDE. Apply Sept. 10.

**Building Service Assistant Manager** — All schools, 12-month position. A high school diploma is required along with one or more years of experience. Apply by Sept. 12.

**U.S. Army JROTC Instructor** — Maurice J. McDonough High School, 11-month position. Applicants must have a bachelor's and have served a minimum of 20 years of active duty or have retired under the Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA). Apply by Sept. 15.

**Academy of Health Professions Teacher - CNA Nursing** — North Point High School, 10-month position. Must be a registered

nurse licensed to practice in Maryland, have a Bachelor of Science and at least two years of nursing experience; at least one year should be in caring for elderly or chronically ill in the past five years. Apply by Sept. 15.

**Dual Language Immersion Elementary Teacher** — Arthur Middleton Elementary School, 10-month position. A bachelor's degree is required, and applicants must meet certification requirements as established by the MSDE. Apply by Dec. 31.

**Extra Pay Positions:**

**Fall Cheerleading Coach** — All high schools. Apply by Oct. 30.

**Cross Country Coach** — All high schools. Apply by Oct. 30.

**Field Hockey Coach** — All high schools. Apply by Oct. 30.