



School News

Notebook

Blueprint focus groups

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is seeking volunteers to serve on various school system sponsored Blueprint for Maryland's Future focus groups. The purpose of these groups is for members to help make recommendations on different aspects of the CCPS Blueprint Implementation Plan. There are different opportunities for volunteers to serve and participation is open to parents, CCPS staff and community members. [Click here to complete an interest survey.](#) Deadline to complete the survey is 11:59 p.m., Monday, Oct. 16.

Unity Day is Oct. 18

Unity Day is Wednesday, Oct. 18. Participants are asked to wear orange to unite for kindness, acceptance and inclusion. To learn more, go to www.pacer.org/bullying/.

Ready for i-Ready

CCPS is hosting an i-Ready information meeting for parents via Zoom at 6 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 19. Parents should check their email or go to www.ccboe.com for a meeting link. School system staff, along with representatives from i-Ready, will discuss parent data reports and share information on how to review their child's data, and also how to support their children in subjects such as reading and math at home.

Early dismissal

A two-hour early dismissal day is Wednesday, Oct. 25. Three-year-old students enrolled in the prekindergarten program do not attend school on early dismissal days.



State of the Schools



Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) and Superintendent Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., above left, hosted a State of the Schools event Thursday, Oct. 12, at St. Charles High School. The evening included a presentation by Navarro on the [school system's Strategic Plan](#) and how staff and students are working to achieve the goals outlined in the plan. Principals and other leaders from all CCPS schools and centers also hosted breakout rooms for parents and families who wanted one-on-one time with administrators to learn more about each school's improvement plan. St. Charles students acted as tour guides helping visitors find the proper classroom where their child's school was set up. Above right, Taylor Goines, a St. Charles senior, left, and Kayla Dotson, a junior, greeted guests entering the auditorium. For more on St. Charles, visit Page 4.

Board to hold interviews for D1 vacancy

The Board of Education of Charles County will conduct public interviews for candidates applying for the vacant District 1 position on the Board.

Interviews will take place on Friday, Oct. 20, in the boardroom at the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building at 5980 Radio Station Road in La Plata.

All interviews are open to the public and will be recorded. Interview videos will be posted on the CCPS YouTube channel. The

interviews will not be livestreamed. The first interview will begin at 8 a.m., with the final interview starting at 1 p.m.

The candidates and their respective interview times are listed below.

- Jennifer Abell, 8 a.m.
- Mark Attucks, 8:50 a.m.
- Zachary Ball, 9:40 a.m.
- Sonja Davis-Black, 10:30 a.m.
- Shellee Stine, 11:20 a.m.
- Samichie Thomas, 12:10 p.m.
- Christina Vigorito, 1 p.m.



On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are [CCPS staff members honored by the Board of Education](#) at its October meeting. Pictured from left are Jennifer Gibala, fourth-grade teacher, Mary H. Matula Elementary School; Heather Hartman-Jansen, librarian, Milton M. Somers Middle School; and Katrina Spriggs, school counselor, Arthur Middleton Elementary School.

All-county concerts

The All-County Orchestra concert is 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 24, at Thomas Stone High School at 3785 Leonardtown Road in Waldorf. The All-County Chorus concert is 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 26, at Westlake High School at 3300 Middletown Road in Waldorf.

#ccpspinkout is Oct. 27

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is sponsoring a “Pink Out Day” on Friday, Oct. 27, to support Breast Cancer Awareness Month and kick off the Relay for Life season. Wear your favorite shades of blush and bashful — salmon, bubblegum, rose ... the list goes on. If you take a picture and post it online, tag it #ccpspinkout to be featured by CCPS social media accounts.

Host families needed

Bunkyo University students will visit CCPS from Feb. 19 to March 1 to work with school-based instructional staff observing and conducting lessons. Host families are needed to house the 29 students who are studying to become teachers. Those interested in becoming a host family can fill out an interest form by Friday, Oct. 20 at <https://forms.office.com/r/2MZsH2J5fX>. A virtual Q&A session will be held 4-4:30 p.m., Oct. 23.

Wreaths Across America

The U.S. Army JROTC Cadet Battalion at Maurice J. McDonough High School participates in the Wreaths Across America program each year. McDonough’s JROTC program will receive \$5 from each wreath purchased through its site at wreathscrossamerica.org.



Derrick Blackwell, a computer science teacher at Matthew Henson Middle School, is featured in the latest ‘Way to Be’ magazine, a publication of the Maryland Roundtable for Education.

Henson teacher featured in ‘Way to Be’ mag

Derrick Blackwell, a computer science teacher at Matthew Henson Middle School, was recently featured in “Way to Be” magazine, a publication of the Maryland Roundtable for Education. Blackwell said his favorite class growing up was science and he enjoyed participating in the Potomac High School’s JROTC program while he was a student.

While he was growing up, Blackwell’s mother, Cynthia Boots, worked at NASA.

Her job played a role in shaping Blackwell’s ambitions.

As a child, he dreamed of becoming an astronaut. As he grew older, his career plans were more rooted on the ground, and he aspired to become an electrical engineer before joining the U.S. Army after high school.

After he completed his service, Blackwell worked a series of jobs that didn’t fulfill him, and he headed for college.

He earned an associate degree in electronics and computer technology and a Bachelor of Science in technical management. Blackwell has a master’s in business administration.

After cutbacks at a previous job, Blackwell began searching for teaching posi-

tions and found that Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) was hiring.

He figured with his educational background, he had the background to become a high school business teacher. Finding all those positions filled, he took a job at Henson as the computer science teacher and has been there ever since.

At Henson, Blackwell is team lead for related arts and often checks in with other members to ensure the group has what it needs to be successful.

To prepare students for a career teaching computer science, Blackwell asks that they take their education seriously.

“Students must be attentive, take notes and ask questions,” he said. “Students can also start looking at colleges which specialize in teaching degrees. Students can also volunteer at camps during the summer.”

To read more about Blackwell’s career, go to Page 58 and 59 at The Daily Record’s “Way to Be” site at <https://thedailyrecord-md.newsmemory.com/?special=Way+to+Be>.

www.ccboe.com

CCPS, county gov't partner for iRecycle Smart program

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) and the Charles County Government are partnering for an iRecycle Smart program focusing on the “big three” — single use plastic bottles, paper and aluminum cans. The program was developed to reduce contamination of recyclable materials.

By streamlining and simplifying the recycling program in schools, organizers are hoping to collect more discarded items that will make the cut at the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), a plant that separates and readies single-stream recycling for sale to buyers.

Principals were introduced to the iRecycle Smart program during a summer leadership institute and brought information back to school-based staff before the start of the new school year. Teachers and staff will introduce the program to students. Separate short videos — one for secondary students, another for those in elementary school — offer a quick “how to.”

Building service teams play an integral part in the success of the program and receive focused training, said Tim Emhoff, environmental education resource teacher at Nanjemoy Creek Educational Center (NCEEC). Bins will be emptied once a week by building service workers unless a student-led club — such as a Green Team, JROTC, honor society — assumes the responsibility.

Gina McCullough, an environmental education assistant at the NCEEC, said that recycling in the U.S. isn't a broken system. “It is a little disjointed,” she said. “So, what happened? People happened.”

As well intentioned though they may be, people tend to recycle the wrong types of plastic, don't rinse out containers and wishcycle, the practice of throwing something in a recycle bin and making a wish that they're making the correct choice.

“When in doubt, throw it out,” McCullough said. Just because a used pizza box is made of cardboard, doesn't mean it should be thrown in the recycling bin. “Pizza parties, yes. Pizza boxes, no,” Emhoff said.

Food residue, oils and other ingredients left behind can pose a threat to machinery that processes recycling materials. The same goes for items that seem like they can easily be recycled. Plastic grocery bags, Ziploc and other plastic storage bags, plastic straws and plastic silverware cannot be easily recycled, Emhoff



Above, iRecycle Smart signs posted near recycling bins and trash cans help students and staff figure out what can be recycled and what should be thrown away. Right, Maria Navarro, Ed.D., superintendent of schools, far right, is pictured with Mr. Chuck Itin, the recycling program's mascot.



said.

Such items can be tangled in machinery causing the entire bale to be contaminated and ultimately discarded. Unrinsed food containers that have food left behind — such as peanut butter jars and grease-stained pizza boxes — can contaminate bales and cause them to be trashed.

MRFs set a recovery rate — or percentage — for each bale. If the facility's recovery rate is that a bale can contain 10% of non-recyclable material and a bale is determined to contain 11% — the entire thing is ditched. The other 89% of recyclable material is headed to the landfill.

iRecycle Smart in schools

The iRecycle Smart program focuses on three recyclable items often found in schools — paper, single-use plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Aluminum is a hero in the recycling world. It has an endless life span with the turnaround from recycling bin to store shelves spanning only about 60 days.

CCPS facilities produced about 3,785 tons of trash and recycled 207 tons of materials in the 2022-2023 school year with a recycling rate of 5.2%, April Murphy, supervisor of operations for CCPS, said.

Program organizers are eyeing piloting a program in January that will study how well recycling at a high, middle and elementary school cafeteria can be operated. The various

types of plastics used in food service call for a more nuanced approach when it comes to recycling, Murphy, said.

The county government gave CCPS \$17,000 to implement the program with \$15,000 going to purchasing an additional 1,490 recycling bins for schools. The other \$2,000 went toward promotional materials, including posters placed at the bins with pictures of the Do's and Don'ts of the iRecycle Smart program. Another element of the program is the blue bin mascot, Mr. Chuck Itin, that will officially kick off the iRecycle Smart at the Charles County Fair on Friday, Sept. 15, and will be available to attend other community events.

CCPS facilities produced about 3,785 tons of trash and recycled 207 tons of materials in the 2022-2023 school year with a recycling rate of 5.2%, Murphy said.

The bins and posters will be placed next to trash cans giving people the opportunity to make the decision to recycle or throw something out. “Studies show that if given a choice, they will choose properly,” McCullough said. The success of the program calls for students, staff and community members to reevaluate the “chasing arrows” on items heading to the recycling bin and to reduce, reuse and rethink.

Watch videos featuring CCPS students about the iRecycle Smart program [here](#) and [here](#).

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301-932-6610
301-934-7220
Fax: 301-932-6651

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Editor/Writers

Shelley Mackey
Sara K. Taylor
Jordan Wilson

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AP-arty for St. Charles students

St. Charles High School students who earned a passing grade on an Advanced Placement (AP) test last spring were recently treated to a party at school hosted by their AP teachers. The AP teachers at St. Charles intend to make the party an annual tradition to celebrate students' accomplishments. "My AP colleagues and I wanted to lift up these students and let them know what a bright light they are for our school," Liz Lawless, AP language arts teacher, said.

Family & Friends Night at science center

The James E. Richmond Science Center is holding a Friends and Family Night tonight, Oct. 13, at the center. The event starts at 7 p.m., with an immersive fulldome movie: "The Sun," and a planetarium show. To purchase advance tickets, go to <https://sciencecenter.ccboe.com/friends>.

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

Special Education Services Coordinator — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Applicants should have a master's degree or higher, and be a certified special education teacher with five or more years of leadership experience in middle and/or high school experience preferred. Apply by Oct. 15.

Building Service Worker — Theodore G. Davis Middle School, 12-month position. A high school diploma or GED required. Apply by Oct. 17.

Career Coach — John Hanson Middle School, 10-month position. A minimum of

two years of college with at least 60 college credits is required with a bachelor's degree preferred. Experience in youth development preferred. Apply by Oct. 17.

Security Alarm Monitor — CCPS Maintenance Shop, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED is required with experience with security monitoring systems preferred. Apply by Oct. 18.

Principal — J.C. Parks Elementary School, 12-month position. A master's degree from an accredited college or university is required and applicants must have a current Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate with Administrator II endorsement. Three years of teaching experience and experience as an assistant principal required. Apply by Oct. 20.

Building Service Worker — Eva Turner Elementary School, 12-month position. A high

school diploma or GED required. Apply by Oct. 23.

Building Service Worker — General Smallwood Middle School, 12-month position. A high school diploma or GED required. Apply by Oct. 24.

Bus Driver — Annex 1, 10-month position. A high school diploma required with five years of work experience as a school bus driver in Maryland preferred. Position open until filled.

Dual Language Immersion Elementary Teacher — Arthur Middleton Elementary School, 10-month position. A bachelor's degree required. Apply by Dec. 31.

Title I Nonpublic Tutor — Temporary position. Bachelor's Degree and professional certificate in early childhood or elementary education required. Apply by Dec. 29.