

School News



Weekend plays

La Plata High School is taking a trip [“Into the Woods,”](#) at 6:30 p.m., Dec. 7-9. [Purchase tickets at eventbrite.](#) Visit [St. Charles High School](#) to meet some pig in [“Charlotte’s Web,”](#) Dec. 8-10. Shows are at 7 p.m., Dec. 8-9, and 2 p.m. Dec. 9-10. For tickets, go to [www.gofan.co.](#)

Theatre pathway opens

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is introducing a [new theatre pathway](#) housed at Maurice J. McDonough High School for current eighth-grade students. Parents and students who are interested in learning more about the theatre pathway can attend an information night 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 12, at McDonough. Read more at [www.mcdonough.ccboe.com.](#)

Awards deadlines

CCPS is looking for nominees for its annual [Principal of the Year](#) and [Teacher of the Year](#) award programs.

The **Principal of the Year** Award honors exemplary leaders for not only their leadership, but for their commitment to providing an exceptional learning environment for students. Nominations are due by 2 p.m., Dec. 15. For more details about the nomination process, [click here.](#)

CCPS is accepting nominations for *The Washington Post* and Maryland **Teacher of the Year** awards programs. Nominated teachers will be considered as honorees in either one or the other awards program. The deadline for nominations is 2 p.m., Friday, Dec. 15. Additional information about the nomination process is posted at [MyCCPS](#) section, or contact 301-934-7242 or [rsvites@ccboe.com](#) for more details.



Charles County Public Schools physical education teachers are honored by SHAPE MD. From left are Elaina Malone of John Hanson Middle School, Alison Cheney of the F.B. Gwynn Educational Center, Daniel Perrotta of Thomas Stone High School and Alyssa Wheeler of Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School.

Four CCPS PE teachers earn awards for leadership

A game of catching and throwing, learning about stress management and archery have something in common. They are all taught by outstanding Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) health and PE teachers.

Four CCPS health and PE teachers recently were recognized by the [Society of Health and Physical Educators of Maryland \(SHAPE MD\)](#) for their outstanding teaching and service. The teachers are Alison Cheney, health and physical education (PE) teacher the at F.B. Gwynn Educational Center; Elaina Malone, health and PE teacher at John Hanson Middle School; Daniel

Perrotta, health teacher at Thomas Stone High School; and Alyssa Wheeler, health and PE teacher at Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School.

Every year, SHAPE MD selects health and PE teachers in Maryland for the Simon A. McNeely Award. Nominees must meet specific nomination criteria to be considered for the award. Criteria includes but is not exclusive to being actively involved in school and community affairs related to health, PE, recreation or dance; must be a current member of SHAPE

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CCPS to launch Oracle Cloud for payroll Monday, Dec. 11

Changes to payroll check processing and the submission of leave requests take effect on Sunday, Dec. 10, with the implementation of Oracle Cloud, a system new to CCPS that automates and manages workloads.

Employees who receive paper checks from Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) will have their checks mailed to their home address

from the Automatic Data Processing (ADP) offices in Georgia. ADP is a company that provides human resources management software and services. Employees who receive paper paychecks by mail may experience a delay in receiving a check as they will be mailed from Georgia beginning with the Jan. 5 paycheck. Employees who receive paper checks are en-

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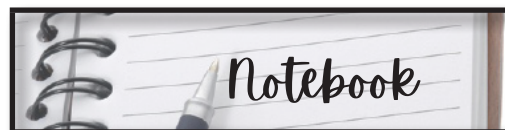


Congrats to NPHS football

The North Point High School varsity football team made it to the 4A/3A Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) State Championships Dec. 2 played at the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis.

The Eagles fell to the Mustangs of Mergenthaler Vocational School in Baltimore, 14-7. North Point's team is led by head coach, Bill Condo, engineering concepts teacher, and assistant coaches, Malik Lawrence and Mike Rucker.

The Eagles made it to States last year, as well, where the team won against Arundel High School.



On the cover

The Board of Education of Charles County recognized staff members for excellence at its Nov. 14 meeting. Pictured on the front cover from left are Amber Parry, special education teacher, Dr. James Craik Elementary School; Pauletta Brickey, attendance secretary, St. Charles High School; and Ana Maria Brown, instructional assistant, Malcolm Elementary School. Read more about the accomplishments of these and other staff members honored at the Nov. 14 Board meeting at the [Latest News](#) section of www.ccboe.com.



Managers and supervisors with Charles County Public Schools have been receiving training using the new Oracle system. Last week, building service managers, left, attended a session at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

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couraged to sign up for direct deposit in the Oracle self-service option. Staff members can sign up following the Dec. 10 launch.

After the Oracle payroll feature “goes live” Sunday, Dec. 10, CCPS staff will no longer be issuing paper checks. Corrections to paychecks — paper checks and direct deposit — will be processed by and paid through ADP. This process may take longer than in the past due to an outside company handling the issue. CCPS technology staff is encouraging employees to review timecards for accuracy before submitting them for payroll processing. Training for payroll processing will be available next week.

Direct deposit statements will be available to view through the Oracle self-service option. Direct deposit statements printed by CCPS will no longer be available. Payroll information will be available to view in Oracle one day before a pay date.

The rollout of the upcoming phase for human resources and payroll replaces payroll's staff ability to process paper-based leave slips and timesheets for hourly and temporary employees. Employees can track leave balances and requests in Oracle and will no longer have to use the CCPS Employee Por-

tal to view leave balances.

By using Oracle for paycheck processing and leave requests, employees are expected to gain greater security, visibility and transparency regarding paychecks and payroll information, while CCPS maintains compliance and regulatory standards, according to information provided by Oracle and the CCPS technology department.

The CCPS financial office began implementing the use of Oracle earlier this year to replace an outdated iSeries for financial, human resources and payroll functions.

Training is available via video in the Oracle app at www.ccboe.com/oracle. Employees can view training videos focused on paycheck information, direct deposit and managing personal information. [Click here to visit the Oracle training page](#). Note: The tutorial focused on payroll processing will not be available until Monday, Dec. 11. To read more about the payroll changes and to view a short video, visit the [important news and updates](#) at www.ccboe.com/oracle.

For more information or clarification, contact Charmaine Thompson, chief of instructional technology, at ccthompson@ccboe.com.

Early College Program parent information nights set

The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) is holding Early College Information Nights for parents at 6 p.m. this month and in January. The Early College Program is a partnership between Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) and CSM. Meetings are open to all CCPS juniors, seniors and their families regardless of what high school they attend.

Information nights

- 6 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 13, at Henry E. Lackey High School, 3000 Chicamuxen

Road, Indian Head. To RSVP, [click here](#).

- 6 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 14, in the BI 113 building of CSM's La Plata campus, 8730 Mitchell Road. To RSVP, [click here](#).

- 6 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 17, at North Point High School, 2500 Davis Road, Waldorf. To RSVP, [click here](#).

- 6 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 18, at St. Charles High School, 5305 Piney Church Road, Waldorf. To RSVP, [click here](#).

For more details about the Early College program at CSM, [visit CSM's Early College website](#).

MD or professional organization pertaining to field; and demonstrate outstanding teaching and service in health, PE, recreation or dance.

Alison Cheney

Hailing from upstate New York, Cheney, health and PE teacher at the Gwynn Center, knew from a young age that she wanted to help people in whatever career path she chose in the future. “I knew as a young person, I liked being active and I liked working with people,” Cheney said. As an adolescent she enjoyed teaching swim lessons for the American Red Cross and acting as a camp counselor at summer camps owned by the New York State Sheriff’s Association.

Cheney was a well-rounded athlete from a young age all the way through college. She started off playing soccer, swimming during the off season and then transitioned to women’s rugby in college. Her mom suggested she put her love for sports, hands-on activities and working with others together to pursue a career in health and physical education at Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, Pa. “I checked out Slippery Rock’s outdoor education program and decided that it was the right fit,” she said.

After graduation, she started her career with CCPS at North Point High School as a PE teacher. She worked there for 14 years before transitioning into her current role at Gwynn. “[Ms. Cheney] not only has a very engaging PE class for all students but uses all parts of her day to support students and teachers,” principal of Gwynn Todd Wonderling, said. After graduating from Slippery Rock, Cheney obtained her master’s in physical education from Canisius University in Buffalo.

Her enjoyment for the social aspect and everyday life skills that come with being a health and PE teacher and coach keeps her motivated on the job. “Everybody has a body, you can learn to be healthy as an individual in these classes,” she said. “There is a place for everybody in movement and health.”

Elaina Malone

For some educators, a teaching career is

an afterthought that becomes a reality, while others dream of the profession from even the youngest of ages. “I used to play school with my younger siblings,” Malone, health and PE teacher at Hanson, said. She said that she has always had a love for school, so becoming a teacher was no surprise. “My mom said that I was ready to go to school at young age,” Malone said. “I enjoyed school and had great teachers going through school.”

Malone is entering her seventh year at Hanson as a health and PE teacher after journeying to the school shortly after graduating from college. She started her career as a substitute teacher in Baltimore County Public Schools, became a math and science teacher in Calvert County Public Schools and eventually made her way to Charles County teaching at Hanson. “Elaina Malone is always willing to help out in a variety of ways at the school,” Hanson principal Benjamin Kohlhorst said. “She is the related arts department chair at Hanson, the head coach for girls track, started the PBIS Open Gym initiative, promotes health and wellness throughout the building, and assists with morning check-in with the buses and car riders at dismissal.”

Daniel Perrotta

The impact of a teacher can influence a student for the rest of their life. This was the case for Thomas Stone health teacher Daniel Perrotta. He was a student who was impacted by a former PE teacher which became one of the few motivating factors that led him to where he is today. “Growing up, I was the kid who was not as athletic and because of that I was not shown that much attention or pushed to be better by my PE teacher,” he said. Perrotta has been in the health and PE field of education for over 12 years. “I wanted to be the teacher that I did not have – seeking out the quietest kid in the room. Everybody is equal and uniqueness is what makes you so special.”

With nearly 26 years of experience in the field of education, Perrotta has learned how to adapt and adjust to opportunities. His interest in education started at an early age working at the Prince George’s County Parks and Recre-

ation at 13 years old where he developed an interest in teaching kids. His interest carried him all the way to Frostburg State University where he developed a love for physical education. “I hung out with the athletes and when they told me they were majoring in recreation or PE, I took a few classes and instantly fell in love with the material,” Perrotta said.

After college he started his career in health and PE at the middle and elementary school level in Montgomery County. He remained in that role for about 12 years before he became an assistant principal and a principal for eight years. He was an interim Head of School at Grace Christian Academy of Waldorf for a few months. After his administrative roles ceased, he found himself accepting a job back in the health and PE field teaching at Stone. He is now a full-time health teacher at the school.

Alyssa Wheeler

After attending CCPS as a student Wheeler returned as a PE teacher at Higdon. She is a Charles County native, having attended Dr. James Craik Elementary School, Matthew Henson Middle School and Maurice J. McDonough High School before attending Salisbury University for her undergraduate degree.

Wheeler has taught in the county for nearly 13 years. “I started in elementary at William B. Wade Elementary School, tinkered in middle school and eventually made my way back to teach the elementary level,” she said. “I feel like elementary is more like my home.” Wheeler knew going into college that teaching was a profession that she wanted to pursue. “I always knew I wanted to be a teacher,” Wheeler said. “My athletic history just gave me a nudge to become a PE teacher specifically.” Her athletic career started at a young age playing softball around four years old and volleyball on the high school level.

“In the heart of Dr. Higdon School, Mrs. Wheeler stands as a shining example of the positive impact an educator can have on both students and the school community,” Higdon principal Shannon Finnegan, Ed.D., said.

To read the full story, visit the [Latest News](#) section of www.ccboe.com.

Board of Education to meet Dec. 12

The Charles County Board of Education will meet Tuesday, Dec. 12, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata. The meeting opens at 1 p.m., with public forum starting at 6 p.m. For an agenda, visit the [Latest News](#) section of www.ccboe.com.

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Deadline approaching to sign up to help United Way of SoMD

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is again partnering this school year with the United Way of Southern Maryland. CCPS has a long-standing history as a United Way partner.

Prior to the pandemic, school system employees supported the annual United Way giving campaigns.

Between now and Dec. 15, CCPS staff can opt to donate through a one-time pledge or payroll deduction.

The United Way of Southern Maryland supports more than 30 local human service agencies in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties.

To support, CCPS staff can make a one-time donation or pledge through CCPS payroll deduction. One-time donations can be made online at <https://www.unitedway-southernmaryland.org/pledge-card-charles-county-public-schools>.

Staff can also use the online form to set up payroll deductions. The CCPS donation campaign runs through Dec. 15. Payroll deduction through United Way will start in January with the Jan. 5, 2024, paycheck.

For more information about the United Way and how to donate or enroll in the payroll deduction program, visit the [MyCCPS](http://www.ccboe.com) page of www.ccboe.com.



No Shave November at Starkey building

No Shave November, sometimes styled as Movember, is held throughout the country every November to bring awareness to men's physical and mental health issues. Six staff members at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building recently competed in a No Shave November for a Relay for Life fundraiser.

Mike Heim, chief of operations and supporting services, earned the title of Best Beard; Andrew Blumhardt, fine and performing arts specialist, was named Best Baby Face; and Brian Richard, foreman of the warehouse, was the top fundraiser donating \$321 toward Relay for Life.

Totals raised by No Shave November title winners break down to \$159 for Heim, \$72 for Blumhardt. Tom Antonielli, a benefits representative, raised \$88; Mike Mickey, network engineer, raised \$109; and Don Moss, emotional adjustment (EA) program coordinator, collected \$262 to the cause. Upcoming Relay for Life fundraisers at Starkey include a winter basket auction and craft fair Dec. 18-22 and a penny war in January.

Gift to self — EAP benefit offers various assistance

You already know that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, CompPsych GuidanceResources, can assist staff who are having issues with stress, depression, anxiety, workplace difficulties, substance abuse, marital problems, family or parenting conflicts, grief, violence and unhealthy lifestyles.

Did you know? The EAP can also assist with:

- Finding child and elder care.
- Hiring movers or home repair contractors.
- Divorce, adoption, family law, wills and trusts.
- Retirement planning, taxes.
- Relocation, mortgage and insurance.
- Budgeting, debt and bankruptcy.

For additional information call toll-free at 1-877-465-0865. The TTY phone number is 800-697-0353. Online tools are available at www.guidanceresources.com. To create an account, click Register and use the web ID: CCPSEAP.

To learn more, [click here](#). To view a video on the program and its benefits, [click here](#).

CCPS holiday schedule

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) winter break is Monday, Dec. 25, to Monday, Jan. 1. Schools will be closed for students. CCPS administrative offices are open Wednesday, Dec. 27 to 29. Offices are closed for winter break Monday, Dec. 25, and Tuesday, Dec. 26, and Monday, Jan. 1.

Substance use disorder resources

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) has many efforts in place to combat substance use disorder through ongoing education, counseling and prevention. CCPS has partnered with the county agencies to address issues surrounding substance use disorder. To learn more, visit the [Substance Abuse Awareness and Prevention webpage](#) at www.ccboe.com. For assistance, call SAMHSA at 1-800-662-4357.

Personnel

Purchasing Assistant — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. An associate degree in business, marketing and/or finance, with a minimum of five years of school system, local county or government purchasing experience, or a combination of education and experience is required. Apply by Dec. 13.