

School News



Notebook

Poetry festival

North Point High School will hold a poetry festival and book signing on Saturday, April 27, celebrating the release of the school's fourth-annual poetry book.

"Colorful Language: A Color Your Own Poetry Collection," is a color-your-own collection of student poetry. The event starts at 2 p.m. and will feature panel discussions with the poets, slam performances, interactive live art, kids' activities, including a build-a-book session, and a pop-up shop (cash only), while supplies last. [A current schedule of events is available here.](#) The book is available for purchase at <https://tinyurl.com/2s3dn8j6>. North Point is at 2500 Davis Road in Waldorf.

Calendar survey

The Board of Education is seeking public input on the **2025-2026** calendar approval. At the April 2024 Board meeting, staff presented to the Board two calendar options for its consideration. The Board will review survey feedback at its May 2024 meeting and is scheduled to act on the calendar in June. [Take the survey before 11:59 p.m., Friday, May 10.](#)

Baseball Bash

The Education Association of Charles County (EACC), Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) will hold a [Back-to-School Baseball Bash](#) Friday, Aug. 23, at Regency Furniture Stadium.

Tickets are on sale through Aug. 9 and can be purchased at <https://www.teameacc.org/events/>.



Earth Day at Wade

William B. Wade Elementary School held an Earth Day celebration on April 20. Like in past years, Dante James, the son of RoShanda James, a first-grade teacher at Wade, put together an original song and video focused on recycling and other green themes the school participates in throughout the year. Pictured with the Charles County recycling mascot Chuck Itin and Wade's mascot Willy B. are Cartier Smith, a Wade kindergartner, left, Carson Davis, a prekindergarten student at Dr. James Craik Elementary School and Zoey Hawkins, a Wade kindergartner. [Touch the photo to view Wade's 2024 Earth Day video.](#)

James E. Richmond passes away

James E. Richmond, 80, Superintendent of Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) from 1997 to 2013, passed away April 25, 2024. Richmond was named Maryland Superintendent of the Year in 2003.



During his career, Richmond was honored by organizations for working to close student achievement gaps and has been credited with guiding CCPS into the 21st century by championing STEM programs. Read more on Page 4.

Williams named CCPS Principal of the Year

Erica Williams, principal of Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, has been named the 2024 Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Principal of the Year. She is also the CCPS nominee for *The Washington Post's* Principal of the Year award.

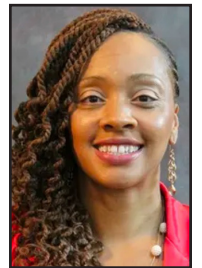
"Principal Williams doesn't just speak about what needs to be done here at Benjamin Stoddert, she becomes part of the solution," Karen M. Dennis, registrar and counseling secretary, said.

Williams earned her bachelor's and master's from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., before going on to teach math with Prince George's County Public Schools for just short of 10 years. In 2011, she came to CCPS as a math instructional resource teacher at John Hanson and General Smallwood middle schools before segueing into administration in 2015.

She served as the administrative intern at Stoddert for a year before becoming assistant principal at the school for two years. She was an assistant principal at Milton M. Somers Middle School for a year before being named principal at Stoddert in 2019, just as the school was in the thick of a \$45 million renovation project that would update and modernize a facility built in the mid-1970s.

"At one point, she was working out of an office that was literally in the center of an active construction zone," Marquelle Peavy, assistant principal at Stoddert, said.

Just as the renovation at Stoddert was getting underway, Williams was named Principal of the Year. See WILLIAMS, Page 3



Erica Williams

Notebook

On the cover

CCPS employees recognized at the April 16 Board meeting including Tina Laury, left, pupil personnel worker, Westlake High School; Mandi Blades, first-grade teacher, Indian Head Elementary School, and Melinda Jackowski, reading resource teacher, Billingsley Elementary School. To read more about those honored at the April Board meeting, [click here](#).

Be the Difference awards

CCPS is seeking nominations for its annual Be the Difference Awards program. The Be the Difference Awards were launched in 2018 to recognize the outstanding contributions school volunteers make to CCPS, students and staff. The awards program has five award categories including elementary school parent volunteer, middle school parent volunteer, high school parent volunteer, Charles County business volunteer and community organization volunteer. Employees of CCPS and members of the Board of Education of Charles County and their families are ineligible for nomination.

The nomination form and letter, and support letters must be received by May 15.

For more information, steps to submitting a nomination and a link to a nomination form, [click here](#).

Updated staff manual

The CCPS Employee Manual was recently updated with all CCPS employees expected to adhere to the guidelines outlined in the manual daily when they log into their CCPS-issued device. The CCPS Employee Manual outlines policies and expectations for staff. It includes policies, procedures, benefits, working conditions and more.

Additional trainings related to the Employee Manual content will be provided in the future. To read the manual, click here or visit the Document menu on the left-hand side of the [Staff page of www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com).



From left, Chief of Schools Marvin Jones, Ed.D., Wendie Newcamp, Superintendent of Schools Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., and Robert Griffiths, principal of Theodore G. Davis Middle School.

Newcamp is CCPS nominee for WaPo Teacher of the Year

Wendie Newcamp, a language arts teacher at Theodore G. Davis Middle School, is the 2024 Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) nominee for *The Washington Post's* Teacher of the Year awards program.

“She is such a committed, dedicated practitioner of the craft of teaching,” Christine Turner, eighth-grade language arts teacher and Newcamp’s grade-level and content partner, said.

Newcamp, who knew she wanted to be an English/language arts teacher since she was in first grade, has a bachelor’s in English from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and her master’s in curriculum and instruction from McDaniel College. She is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher, the eighth-grade co-team leader at Davis and a member of the school’s leadership committee.

Newcamp has been a teacher with CCPS for 26 years beginning her career as a language arts teacher at Piccowaxen Middle School where she spent a decade. From there, she became a gifted education resource teacher at General Smallwood and Davis middle schools for the following six years before shifting to a learning resource teaching role.

Then it was back to the classroom as a language arts teacher at Davis.

She writes language arts curriculum for CCPS and likes that it allows her to enact change that positively impacts student learning. “As a teacher, I believe in the power of

choice and voice, discussions being fundamental in my teaching approach,” Newcamp said. One curriculum writing moments she is most proud of was suggesting students be provided a choice of historical fiction titles to read and using literature circles in the classroom. “Yes, we still analyzed our texts and had the same rigor as presented in the existing curriculum, but there are other avenues to teach the standards and when students are more engaged and motivated, the experience is better for everyone,” Newcamp said. “Providing choice and voice opened access to all students.”

Davis eighth graders regularly earn the highest language arts scores and show the most growth on the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) test in the county, according to John Tompkins, content specialist for middle school language arts for CCPS. “Ms. Newcamp has always been a part of that team, even though many other teachers have come and gone throughout the years,” he said. “Collaborative planning is a way of life for the eighth-grade language arts team and is not seen as ‘another meeting.’ Planning with Mrs. Newcamp is the best form of professional learning Charles County has to offer. Wendie Newcamp is one of the best educators in Maryland.”

Read the complete story on Newcamp and what her students, parents and principal have to say about her in the [Latest News section of www.ccboe.com](#).

ting started so was a global pandemic that was gripping the planet and necessitated the use of virtual learning for staff and students. “As a veteran teacher, I knew that no matter what changes our educational environment faced interpersonally, technologically or physically, I always felt confident in Mrs. Williams’ leadership to guide us through any unknown adversity we were to face,” Sherry Mervine, choral director at Stoddert, said.

Students and staff returned for in-person learning in March 2021 while the school’s renovation was still underway with Williams and her team ensuring the school day was impacted by the construction work as little as possible. “The demands of planning, decision making, flexibility of scheduling and overcoming the many operation setbacks did not go unnoticed as Ms. Williams’ managed to handle this major project and school renovation, opening with grace and keeping the importance of our scholars at the forefront,” Casey Cleary, a mathematics teacher, said.

Williams is known among staff for her visibility around the school. She is in the hallways; she is in the parking lot during arrival and dismissal and attending student performances and activities.

“As a 21-year veteran teacher, I had enough experience to see excellence in action,” Mervine said. “Mrs. Williams mixes a calm demeanor with an authoritative delivery to invite a caring exchange with adolescents, all while projecting a firm manner of both body language and verbal tone.”

Off the ol’ Block Party

In what was the school’s and community’s darkest hour, Williams helped usher in light. “Ms. Williams chose that path, and she arrived dedicated to the rebuilding so sorely needed,”

From left, Benjamin Stoddert Middle School Assistant Principal Marquelle Peavy, administrative intern Kristen Demaranville, Principal Erica Williams, Assistant Principal Joseph Evans, Superintendent of Schools Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., and Chief of Schools Marvin Jones, Ed.D.

Kevin Clancy, a language arts teacher of 31 years at Stoddert, said.

One of the steps in rebuilding was introducing an event that would become a Stoddert tradition. The Stoddert Block Party is an annual event that brings not only students and their families together but incorporates the community and organizations such as the Charles County Department of Health, the Charles County Public Library, nonprofits and other groups. The first Block Party in 2017 hosted about 125 families. In 2023, more than 400 families showed up. The event features a three-on-three basketball tournament and other activities while strengthening the school-to-home bond and building partnerships between Stoddert and community organizations.

“Our mutual belief is if we as leaders lead our youth in building strong relationships with the stakeholders of our community the youth and their families will flourish as leaders and scholars,” Sarah Proctor, an assistant state’s attorney for Charles County from 2014 to 2020, said. Proctor met Williams when the latter was a vice principal at Stoddert.

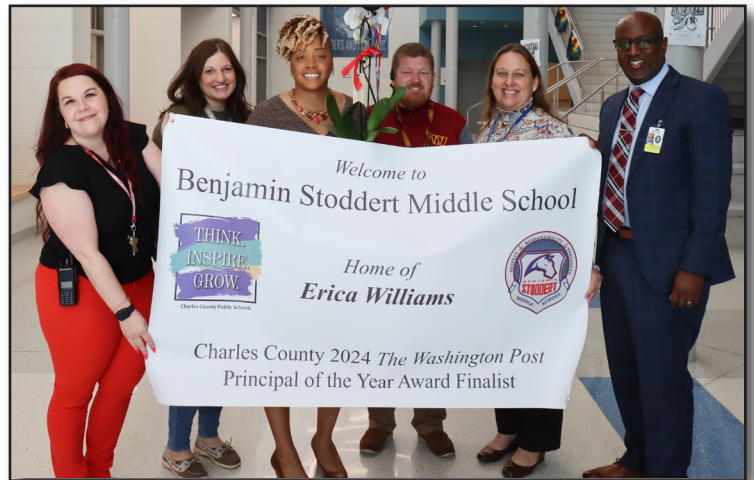
Williams puts students — they are called

scholars at Stoddert — first and they can often be found in her office being tutored in math, taking over her whiteboard to figure out problems. She has taken messy binders and organized them and showed kids how to open lockers.

“She is always making sure everyone is doing what’s right,” eighth-grade students Kaedyn Belasco and Darien Chase wrote in a joint letter. “She is loved by many because of her kindness and her work ethic and determination to make sure her students and staff don’t mess up and are on the right track.”

Staff on the right track are regularly shouted out and highlighted with a Golden Stallion Award or a Golden Apple Award. The Golden Stallion goes to employees who show character, energy and positivity. The Golden Apple is given to staff members who make strong instructional decisions, who are meeting students where they are and taking innovative approaches to support their academic needs.

“I can honestly say,” Peavy said. “I don’t know what I — or the Stoddert community — would do without her.”



Get your tickets and get to the theater before the final curtain call

The high school spring play season is nearing a close, but there’s still a few shows left on the bill.

Henry E. Lackey High School will stage “Freaky Friday the Musical” at 6:30 p.m., April 25 through 27, at the school at 3000 Chicamuxen Road in Indian Head.

La Plata High School will perform “Les Misérables School Edition,” 6:30 p.m., April 25, 26 and 27, and 2:30 p.m., April 28 at the school, 6035 Radio Station Road in La Plata.

St. Charles High School will perform “Footloose the Musical,” at 7 p.m., April 26 and 27, and 2 p.m., April 28, at the school at 5305 Piney Church Road in Waldorf. The show is rated PG-13. To buy tickets, visit www.gofan.co.

Maurice J. McDonough High School will perform “12 Angry Jurors,” May 2 and 3 in its Black Box Theatre. For tickets and more information, go to <https://mhsdrama303.boottix.net/>.

Richmond leaves behind a legacy as visionary leader, champion of education

James E. Richmond, a 47-year career retired Charles County Public Schools educator and former longtime Superintendent of Schools, passed away on Wednesday, April 24.

Mr. Richmond began his career as a classroom teacher at La Plata High School in 1966 and closed out his educational career as Superintendent of Schools in 2013. He served as the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Superintendent of Schools for four terms and was first appointed to the role in 1997.

Richmond was a visionary leader and sought to better the lives of every child in Charles County each day. Throughout his tenure as Superintendent, Richmond was often seen in schools visiting classrooms, talking with students, reading books to classes, meeting with teachers and staff and advocating daily on behalf of the students he proudly served. He was committed to advancing educational access and technology for students and received several accolades during his career to honor his commitment to the academic and personal success of all students.

“To say Jim enjoyed education would only scratch the surface. He embraced education, and he loved helping children,” Michael K. Lukas, member of the Board of Education of Charles County, said. Lukas was first elected to the Board in 2010 and worked closely with Richmond his last three years as Superintendent. “He did all of this never seeking the spotlight though he was honored for his many achievements,” Lukas said. “His legacy will live on and his impact on students will continue for generations.”

Under Richmond’s leadership, CCPS made advancements in technology and instruction, with opening new schools for a growing student population; implementing a systemwide data warehouse, establishing a strategic plan that focused on the academic achievement, career readiness and personal responsibility of all students; and focusing on the importance of closing achievement and access gaps among students.

He made strides in minority achievement; Richmond was recognized nationally, locally and by the state for Charles County Public Schools’ efforts to eliminate the minority achievement gap.

In 1996, Richmond pushed the Board of Education to form a Minority Achievement Committee and to approve the school system’s 10 requirements for Minority Achievement. Richmond was inducted into the Charles County NAACP Hall of Fame in 2005 for his dedication to excellence and achievement in education for all students.

Additionally, Richmond was honored with the



The James E. Richmond Excellence in Leadership Award was introduced by the late Col. Donald M. Wade, right, a Board member who served on the Board of Education while Richmond, left, was Superintendent.

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Excellence for Minority Achievement Chair Award and by the National NAACP Education Department as the recipient of the Daisy Bates Educational Advocacy Award for the school system’s work in seeking to improve equity and accountability in education.

As Superintendent, Richmond launched multiple programs to help students excel in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). CCPS developed partnerships with the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Andrews Air Force Base and the Patuxent River Naval Base to develop compelling and real-life-based technology programs for students. Additionally, Richmond was instrumental in launching the school system’s partnership with the Space Foundation to bring space-related STEM programs to teachers and students.

“I will remember Mr. Richmond for his visionary leadership. He worked to usher CCPS into the 21st century,” Linda Gill, Ed.D., CCPS executive director of schools, said. “The James E. Richmond Science Center and the partnership he developed with the Space Foundation inspired us to imagine the possibilities for students.”

Programs initiated under Richmond include Project Lead the Way, Gateway to Technology, the launching of CCPS into the MESA program — Mathematics, Engi-

neering and Science Achievement in 2007; developing partnerships with a wide range of space industry, military, government and educational institutions and individual scientists to support and supplement CCPS school programs; and including a digital classroom/planetarium with aerospace programming and Science on a Sphere for use by students throughout CCPS and the community at St. Charles High School.

In 2003, Richmond was named the Maryland State Superintendent of the Year. He also received national recognition for his work to upgrade and advance CCPS with technology for students. In 2007, Cisco Systems honored Richmond with its 21st Century Award and its Outstanding Vision and Leadership Award.

“Jim was a visionary and an innovator who wanted to put Charles County on the map with its educational opportunities,” Lukas said.

Under Richmond’s leadership, CCPS opened four schools — North Point High School, Theodore G. Davis Middle School and Mary B. Neal and William A. Diggs elementary schools, and completed renovations and expansion of four others, including the addition of the school system’s first indoor pool at Henry E. Lackey High School. To read more, [visit the Latest News section of www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com).

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Westlake High School teachers already have summer plans

Two Westlake High School teachers will be busy this summer.

Lisa Landrum-May, an English teacher, has been selected to participate in two [National Endowment of Humanities summer institutes](#). Through the institutes Landrum-May will be able to engage in discussions and gain insights into the study of the humanities.

“It will benefit my work as an English teacher because it will help me continue teaching using the interdisciplinary approach,” she said. “These institutes will provide background knowledge I will use when teaching various novels to my English students.” At Westlake, Landrum-May also teaches Advanced Placement (AP) African American Studies, which is new to CCPS, and both institutes will aid her in teaching the curriculum.

Landrum-May was also selected as a [Fulbright Specialist](#) in the Fulbright Specialist Program. The program allows for U.S. academics and professionals to take part in two-to-six-week project-based exchanges at host institutions around the world. Landrum-May’s area of expertise is education. She has not been assigned a project yet but will be on the roster for the next three years.

“I was intrigued by the program,” she said. “It will allow me to give back and learn more internationally since I will travel outside of the U.S. Moreover, it will benefit me because it will give me

more experience working with different cultures.”

Nelcy Avila, a Spanish teacher and the World Language department chair at Westlake, has been selected to participate in a [Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad Program](#), a program through the U.S. Department of Education which promotes, improves and develops modern foreign language training and area studies programs for all levels of American education.

Avila will participate in the Partners in Education: Working Together to Enhance the Teaching of Latin America — Peru, 2024, funded through the Department of Education and Towson University. While in Peru from to June to August, she will help create and implement curriculum with 15 other world language teachers and university professors.

Signing up for the program appealed to Avila. “I wanted to be a part of a team who builds a cross-disciplinary curriculum aimed at elevating the voices of various communities in Peru,” she said.

Avila is interested in learning more about Peruvians and their culture.

“Studying in Peru for the first time would permit me to learn from a wide range of Peruvians: educators, Afro-Peruvians, indigenous and migrants from the Andes,” Avila said. “Through unearthing historical and societal dimensions, my hope is to understand the fluidity of culture and the representation of identities in the Andean region.”

Personnel

Apply for positions online at www.cc-boe.com/jobs/currentopenings.php. All teaching positions require a bachelor’s degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job openings

Executive Director — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. A master’s degree and certification as a principal (Administrator II) by Maryland required. A minimum of five years of experience preferred as a school principal required — elementary and/or middle preferred. Apply by April 30.

Events Coordinator — North Point High School, 12-month employee. A high school diploma required with a minimum of two years of experience in events coordination or office management. Apply by May 2.

Staff Accountant — Jesse L. Starkey

Administration Building, 12-month position. A bachelor’s degree in accounting, finance or related field required, with a master’s degree and/or Certified Public Accountant (CPA) preferred. Apply by May 3.

Childcare Provider — North Point High School, 10-month position. Two years of experience working as a lead teacher primarily with preschoolers in a licensed childcare center required and meets lead teacher qualifications from MSDE. An associate’s or higher degree preferred. Apply by May 7.

Principal’s Secretary — John Hanson Middle School, 12-month position. A high school diploma or GED required along with at least two years of experience in bookkeeping or office management required. Apply by May 7.



Louise Evans, human resources assistant, left, Niki M. Majors, chief human resources officer, and Linda Henderson, HR assistant, enjoy the Central Office Administrative Professionals Breakfast.

Celebrating Administrative Professionals Week

Staff at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building kicked off Administrative Professionals Week April 21 to 27 on Monday, April 22, with a breakfast in the Boardroom. Administrative Professionals Day was Wednesday, April 24.