

School News

Calendar survey

The deadline to take the **2025-2026 Calendar Survey** is **11:59 p.m., Friday, May 10.**

Dates to note

Schools will be closed for students and teachers on Tuesday, May 14, for Primary Election Day. There is a two-hour early dismissal on Thursday, May 16, for students. Friday, May 17, is the last day for seniors.

Community Day set

The Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Department of Student Services is hosting a [Community Day event](#) on Thursday, May 16, from 3 to 6 p.m., at St. Charles High School, 5305 Piney Church Road, Waldorf. Participants will learn about resources such as family support services, personal hygiene services/resources, and housing and utility financial support. Participants can also join on-site behavioral health workshops from 4 to 5:45 p.m. Entertainment for children, food and supplies will also be available. [To learn more about the workshops, click here](#) or visit Page 2.

Board meeting May 21

The Board of Education will meet 11 a.m., Tuesday, May 21, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata. (Note the time difference from the printed Parent Handbook/Calendar.) Public forum is at 6 p.m. An agenda will be posted at www.ccboe.com early next week.



Super sub in Spanish class

Superintendent of Schools **Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D.**, taught a couple of classes Tuesday for **Joshua Clark**, the 2024 Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Teacher of the Year at Henry E. Lackey High School. Navarro visited Lackey to celebrate Teacher Appreciation Day on



May 7. Right, Clark and sophomore Jiania Dotson go over a class assignment.

Memorial service set for Richmond

A memorial service for former Superintendent of Charles County Public Schools **James E. Richmond** will be held Saturday, May 18.

The service will be held from 1:30 to 4 p.m. at the James E. Richmond Science Center at St. Charles High School at 5305 Piney Church Road in Waldorf. During his 47-year career, Mr. Richmond worked as a teacher at La Plata High School and transferred to Thomas Stone High School in 1969 when it opened. He became principal at Stone in 1973.

In 1985 he was appointed director of supervision and curriculum. Before becoming Superintendent, Mr. Richmond also served as

director of school administration and as a regional administrator until being appointed as interim Superintendent.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in his memory to the James E. Richmond Science Center Memorial Fund. The donations will go toward scholarships in honor of Jim's love of space and science. Donations may be made to [James E. Richmond Science Center Fund.](#)



James E. Richmond

On the cover

Pictured on the front are Agnes Hindle, a math interventionist instructional assistant at Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School. left, and Duania Darby, social studies teacher, Theodore G. Davis Middle School. Hindle and Davis, along with others, were honored during the April 16 Board meeting. To read more, [click here](#).

Redistricting hearing

The Board of Education of Charles County and staff of CCPS will hold a redistricting hearing 6 p.m., Wednesday, May 22. Held in the boardroom of the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata, CCPS staff will discuss the two options for redistricting that is necessary to create an attendance zone for Margaret J. Thornton Elementary School and help alleviate overcrowding at schools and balance school enrollments. An CCPS redistricting committee in March 2024 presented to the Board two proposals, [available to view on the CCPS redistricting page](#). Parents and community members can submit comments and ask questions during the May 22 hearing about redistricting. The meeting will also be livestreamed at www.ccboe.com or the [school system's YouTube channel](#).

Blueprint survey

A Blueprint Town Hall was held virtually on April 25, as well as other opportunities for stakeholders to become familiar with the Blueprint. CCPS staff is seeking feedback on the Blueprint implementation via an online survey. The survey is open through 11:59 p.m., May 31. To view the most recent town hall, a presentation and survey, [go to the Blueprint for Maryland's Future page at www.ccboe.com](#).

Baseball Bash Aug. 23

The Education Association of Charles County (EACC), 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/>.

[Go to MyCCPS for more information about the event.](#)

National council elects Stoddard chairperson

Jason Stoddard, Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) director of school safety and security, was recently elected as the inaugural chairperson of the National Council of School Safety Directors (NCSSD). The NCSSD is the first and only organization created to represent, educate and build a national certification and continuing education program for kindergarten through Grade 12 school safety directors.

The NCSSD hosted a virtual press conference to announce the establishment of the organization.

The keynote was delivered by Texas Congressman Tony Gonzales, a member of the non-partisan School Safety Sub-Committee. Stoddard provided remarks and led a panel discussion consisting of members of NCSSD's founding leadership committee.

The NCSSD is a new organization launched by the non-profit organization ZeroNow. ZeroNow is a member-based non-profit that facilitates collaboration between industry, associations, and education partners to foster new solutions to keep schools safe and secure.

Objectives of the NCSSD include:

Developing standards and certification programs for individuals aspiring to be a school safety director.

Creating a network of collaboration where school safety professionals and school systems can learn and share resources, best practice and expertise.

Advocating for federal and state legislation to provide a mandated legal framework to establish a school safety director role in all school systems.

Securing additional funding through a combination of federal and state grants or local taxes to cover the cost of hiring and supporting school safety directors.

A 2022 report by the Education Commission of the States reported that 32 states have a dedicated school safety entity, and only half require safety training for teachers and staff. School safety directors lead and implement school safety programs, collaborate with local law enforcement, support prevention programs, and oversee security technology, emergency response planning and training.

The NCSSD supports the role of dedicated school security directors and personnel in school systems to mitigate safety and security risks while securing a safe learning and working environment.



Jason Stoddard

Behavioral health workshops set at Community Day

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) [Student Services Community Day](#) will be 3 to 6 p.m., Thursday, May 16, at St. Charles High School.

Parents and caregivers are invited to attend free [behavioral health workshops](#) hosted by representatives of CCPS, the Center for Children, Center for Abused Persons, the Maryland School Mental Health Response Program and PFLAG SoMD.

The workshops are designed to help parents and others understand and recognize mental and behavior health issues that could affect children and young people.

Among the topics covered at the workshops will be recognizing self-harm behaviors, learning the signs of dating violence, un-

If you go

Community Resource Day will be 3-6 p.m., Thursday, May 16, at St. Charles High School, 5305 Piney Church Road, Waldorf.

derstanding indications of raising a bully and promoting resilience, creating safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth and teaching emotional regulation and coping skills.

Workshops will be held during the event from 4 to 4:45 p.m., and 5 to 5:45 p.m. [Sign up in advance for the workshops](#). St. Charles is at 5305 Piney Church Road in Waldorf.

Student leaders honor Carpenter, Winsett for advisor roles

If you ever walk into St. Charles High School and see an enthusiastic academic mentor repping a school polo shirt, it's probably Danielle Carpenter.

Carpenter, academic mentor and student government association (SGA) advisor at St. Charles, recently received the Mike Michaelson Advisor of the Year Award through the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MASC) for her dedication to her role.

The MASC Advisor of the Year program was created to recognize the contributions of advisors to student council success across the state of Maryland. The Mike Michaelson Advisor of the Year Award is named after a science teacher and SGA advisor from Montgomery County. He served as an advisor for nearly 35 years, starting in 1960 and retired in 1995.

Carpenter grew up in Montgomery County. She journeyed through her primary years in school thinking that she wanted to be a lawyer like her grandfather. That all changed once she met her seventh-grade social studies teacher. "I wanted to be her," she said. This teacher inspired her to start thinking about education as a career. Later, Carpenter attended Frostburg State University and graduated with an undergraduate degree in social studies and psychology and a master's in education.

"I am a living testament to what a student can accomplish with the right guidance and support, and I firmly believe that I would not be the person I am today without Ms. Danielle Carpenter," Mechelle Johnson-Reeves, a St. Charles senior, said. Johnson-Reeves currently serves as a liaison to the Board of Education of Charles County and attributes her success in the position to Carpenter. "Even after facing two failed Student Member of the Board (SMOB) elections, I can confidently state that I would not be in this position without Ms. Carpenter's unwavering belief in me," she said. "She instilled in me the confidence to rise above setbacks and continue advocating for what I believe in."

Carpenter can be seen around St. Charles assisting new teachers and providing them re-

sources and support within their classrooms. She is a Relay for Life team coordinator and has extensive experience in planning events for the school such as pep rallies and Spirit Week voting. All that she does is for the success of the students who cross her path, helping them find their voice in high school and beyond. "A significant number of my students have graduated and come back and told me that they are in SGA at their colleges. I'm proud of the fact that they take what they've learned here and apply it throughout their lives," she said.

Carpenter believes in student advocacy. As a former SGA member in middle, high school and college, the student voice has been important to her and something that she has been interested in, something that keeps her going in her role and what led her to her recent award recognition. "I was very surprised. You don't do this kind of stuff for recognition and the [nomination] letters that were written were very sweet," Carpenter said.

From his earliest years of learning at Dr. James Craik Elementary School to now teaching social studies at Thomas Stone High School, Gary Winsett is no stranger to Charles County Public Schools (CCPS). "I grew up in the county," he said. "I graduated from Maurice J. McDonough High School in 1994, attended Craik and Milton M. Somers Middle School." After high school, Winsett attended College of Southern Maryland (CSM) previously known as Charles County Community College (CCCC). He later graduated with his undergraduate degree from St. Mary's College of Maryland in 2001.

Originally headed to college to pursue a sportscasting career, Winsett said that he wanted to follow in his father's footsteps in broadcasting.

He eventually landed on attending St. Mary's for a degree in history and anthropology, but still not as a teacher. "I came home from class one day and was asked to teach the youth one Wednesday night at church," he said. "I know that teenagers don't typically pay attention to teachings but

when I saw that they were engaged in what I was saying, I was like 'OK I can teach this.'" This led him to stay an extra year at college to obtain his certification in teaching. Right after college he started teaching history at Stone and has been there ever since.

Winsett served as the school's SGA advisor for about six years before the regional advisor role opened.

Winsett did not think of applying for the position, he just wanted to help until the position was filled. "I started to help coordinate events while they found a replacement advisor," he said. Eventually they saw the work that he was doing, he interviewed for the position and was named the new Charles County Association of Student Councils (CCASC) advisor.

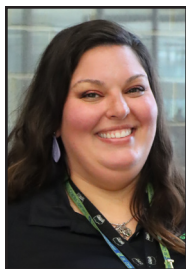
"Mr. Winsett's exceptional leadership has not gone unnoticed," Christian Kotvis, student liaison to the Board and a senior at Stone. "He has performed a plethora of roles within CCPS, including organizing CCPS' participation in the Polar Plunge, Every 15 Minutes, Student Member of the Board election and oversight committee, Student Liaison Committee, and hosting two MASC events in Charles County in past years, all in addition to teaching U.S. Government classes," Kotvis said. "He is always the first to volunteer to take on any initiative's students or CCPS leadership bring up."

Winsett is the type of advisor that you will see in the background of a group of students. He makes sure that students are seen and not so much himself. "If you see students in a group and see a tall guy in the background they'll say 'that's Winsett,'" he said. He values when his former students graduate and work for CCPS. "That's the coolest thing ever," Winsett said.

Winsett recently received the Karen L. Crawford Regional Advisor of the Year Award named after a former regional advisor for the Montgomery County Junior Councils (MCJC), regional advisor for the Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MCR).

"To inspire, if I am any kind of influence on students to be a leader or anything along those lines, that's my favorite part," Winsett said.

Carpenter and Winsett both were recognized at the April 13 award ceremony at Hagerstown High school in Washington County.



Danielle Carpenter



Gary Winsett

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La Plata High School senior earns a perfect score on ACT

About one-quarter of 1% of students who take the ACT each year earn a perfect score. In 2022 — the last year for which statistics are available — that was 3,376 students out of 1.34 million who earned a composite score of 36.

It's not known how many students have taken the ACT in 2024 yet. But Will Alcorn, a senior at La Plata High School, is one of those who reached perfection — a 36.

The ACT contains multiple-choice tests in four areas — English, mathematics, reading and science. It also has an optional writing test which is not included in the composite score. The test is a curriculum-based achievement exam that measures what students have learned in school. Students who earn a 36 composite score have likely mastered all of the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in first-year college courses in core subject areas, according to a news release from the ACT. "Earning a top score on the ACT is a remarkable achievement," Janet Goodwin, ACT CEO, said. Alcorn has taken the ACT four times. The first time he didn't do well, probably



Will Alcorn

because he was well hydrated and had to use the restroom. "It sounds silly," he said. Alcorn advises test takers not to drink too much water the night before or morning of the test — "or else that problem arises," he said.

Study habits

He pored over the same ACT study book his older brothers used. "I mainly studied some of the geometry material since I missed half of that class due to Covid and English punctuation and grammar because I was never quite good with grammar," Alcorn said.

Alcorn, currently ranked No. 1 in La Plata's Class of 2024, has committed to the University of Alabama where he plans to study accounting. At La Plata, he has participated in the Key Club, has been on the *It's Academic* team each year since ninth grade and a member of the National Honor Society and the math team since he was a sophomore. He is currently the vice president of the Student Government Association (SGA) and a member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Alcorn has been active in Unified Sports taking part in Unified tennis earlier this year and is a member of the Unified track team.

Alcorn is the son of John and Susan Alcorn. Susan Alcorn is a secretary at La Plata.

Personnel

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

Upcoming job fairs

A special education teacher job fair is 9 a.m. to noon, May 14, at the F.B. Gwynn Educational Center, 5998 Radio Station Road, La Plata. [Click here to register.](#)

A virtual teacher job fair is 3 to 5 p.m., May 16. [Click here to register.](#) Another virtual teacher job fair will be 3 to 5 p.m., June 17. [Click here to register.](#)

A food service job fair is set for 9 to 11 a.m., June 10 at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 5980 Radio Station Road, La Plata. The event is for those looking for work as food service managers, food service assistant managers, food service workers and food service substitutes. [Click here to](#)

[register.](#)

To view upcoming job fair events, visit the Careers page at www.ccboe.com.

Job openings

Theatre Teacher — Henry E. Lackey High School, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree or higher required and meets licensure requirements as established by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Apply by May 15.

Secretary to the Director of Career and Technical Education — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. High School Diploma or GED is required, associate degree preferred. Three years of demonstrated administrative/secretarial experience is required. Apply by May 16.

HVAC Mechanic II — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. High school diploma, general education degree (GED) or trade school education required, and valid Maryland State Journeyman license preferred. Maryland Class C license required. Apply by May 17.

SAIL Program Instructional Assistant (IA) — Maurice J. McDonough High School, 10-month position. High school diploma required along with experience working with children. Position open until filled.

Student Service Behavior Teacher — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 11-month position. A master's degree required with a BCBA or BCaBA certification, preferred. Experience teaching and implementing behavior plans with early elementary age students preferred. Position open until filled.