



School News



Celebrations calendar

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) has a [celebrations calendar](#) highlighting important days, weeks and months that school staff may want to recognize throughout the year. [An at-a-glance version of dates](#) to remember can be printed out for quick reference with a page on www.cbcoe.com with links to resources and more information.

Among the dates that can be celebrated in schools this month are **Maryland Community School Coordinator Week** which is Sept. 15-21; **School IT Professionals Day** is Sept. 17; **Hispanic Heritage Month** is Sept. 15 through Oct. 15; **Human Resources Professionals Day** is Sept. 26; and **Building Service Worker Day** is Oct. 2.

Work session set

A Board work session will be 4:30 p.m., Monday, Sept. 23, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. Public forum will be held at 6 p.m.

Early dismissal

A two-hour early dismissal for students is Wednesday, Sept. 25.

Football previews

The fall sports season has begun. [CCPS varsity football previews](#) are available to view on the [CCPS YouTube channel](#), and the Charles County Department of Health will be at some varsity games this season to offer health services and information. See Page 3 for more details.

Visit the CCPS [High School Sports Schedules](#) page to view schedules for all fall sports including volleyball, golf and soccer as well as the upcoming sports for the winter and spring seasons.



Sliding into PreK

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) prekindergarten started on Tuesday, Sept. 3. Top, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School students Nasir Young, left, and Quadir Williams, students in Geraldine Still's class, have fun at recess. Right, prekindergarten teacher Eulalia Castelo at Arthur Middleton Elementary School, introduces Fanny Frog to her students including Kanaí Smallwood. Middleton's kindergarten and prekindergarten programs begin a dual immersion English-Spanish program this school year.



Virtual State of Schools event set for 7 p.m., Oct. 2

Superintendent of Schools Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., is hosting a State of the Schools event for parents, staff and community members at 7 p.m., on Wednesday, Oct. 2.

The event will be virtual through the Zoom platform. Anyone interested in attending must register in advance. A link to register is below. [Click here to register for the event through Zoom](#). Attendees must have an active Zoom account to participate.

During the event, Navarro will provide a short presentation on the state of the school system and progress in the three focus areas of the school system strategic plan.

The strategic plan includes three core focal areas: student learning and achievement; access and opportunities; and culture and climate. Each priority area includes goals and strategies with measurement metrics identified to evaluate progress.

Following her presentation, Navarro will answer questions shared through the event chat. The event will livestream on the CCPS website at www.cbcoe.com. Viewers following the event on the CCPS website do not need to register for the Zoom unless they would like to participate in the question-and-answer session.

Flu clinic set Sept. 25

The Charles County Department of Health will hold a private drive-through flu clinic for CCPS staff from 1-4 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 25, at Regency Furniture Stadium. The vaccines are free and those receiving them should anticipate parking/waiting for approximately 15 minutes after receiving the vaccination. Appointments are required and can be made online at the [Vaccine Administration Management System](#).

Homecoming games

Henry E. Lackey and Westlake high schools will hold their homecoming games on Friday, Sept. 27.

Professional learning

Visit the [Staff page](#) of www.ccboe.com for professional learning opportunities in October. In many cases, the MSDE-approved continuing professional development courses can be used for renewal of a professional Maryland Educator License. To learn more, [click here](#). Registration is through PowerSchool.

Telework application

CCPS has a new telework application for the 2024-2025 school year. Any employee who is interested and eligible to telework must complete an application for supervisor review and approval. [Click here for information about the telework program](#), including a list of eligible employees.

EAP benefit

To learn more about the CCPS Employee Assistance Program, visit the [Staff page](#) of www.ccboe.com. The EAP is available through [ComPsych](#) and can assist with issues such as stress, depression, anxiety, workplace difficulties, substance abuse, marital problems, family or parenting conflicts, grief, violence and unhealthy lifestyles. The EAP can also help with finding child and elder care, hiring movers or home repair contractor, and other needs. To learn more, [click here](#).

In Memoriam Joseph Benjamin

Joseph Benjamin, a building service worker at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, passed away Sept. 2, 2024.

Born Sept. 18, 1976, Benjamin was a graduate of Maurice J. McDonough High School and worked for Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) for more than 22 years, all at Stoddert.

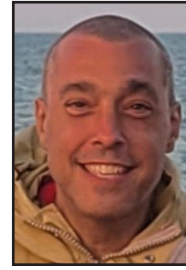
Renee Miller, a secretary in the main office, spoke to Benjamin every day when he was clocking in. "Joe has been at Stoddert for my entire career here — this is year 20 for me," she said. "I would always ask how he was doing and he in return would ask me the same. Joe was a kindhearted, caring person. He was always willing to help the teachers and staff with whatever they needed assistance with."

"He was truly a wonderful person and friend," Kevin Clancy, a language arts teacher who has taught at Stoddert throughout Benjamin's two decades at the school, said. "Gracious with his smile and willingness to help anyone at any time, altruistic in his authentically asking everyone how they are doing, joyful with his sense of humor," Clancy said.

Math teacher Casey Cleary remembered Benjamin making sure she made it to her car OK if she stayed after dark at school to work late. When she organized and ran the eighth-grade formal, Benjamin was a member of the building service team who stayed until the "bitter end" to ensure the gym was clean and ready for school on Monday. He asked about Cleary's dog; they chatted about workout routines and what TV shows they were currently binging. "He always came in with a smile on his face and I loved to catch up when I saw him," she said. "He was a Stoddert fixture, and his missing presence will definitely be felt."

Benjamin will be remembered for his strong work ethic and warmth.

"Mr. Benjamin's smile lit up any room he entered, and his laugh was infectious,"



Joseph Benjamin

Marquelle Peavy, acting principal at Stoddert, said. "He was the kind of person who never missed an opportunity to check in with his colleagues to see how their day was going. His kindness, warm heart and positive spirit will surely be missed."

Karl Meyer, building service manager at Stoddert, worked with Benjamin for the past seven years. Meyer remembered meeting him. "On my first day at

Stoddert, Joe gave me a firm handshake and greeted me with 'Welcome to Benjamin Stoddert, I'm so glad you're here,'" Meyer said. "He made me feel welcome as soon as I arrived." Meyer soon learned that he could count on Benjamin to pitch in regardless of the issue that came up. "No matter the situation building service had to deal with he would tell me 'I got your back, Chief,'" he said. Benjamin was quick with a joke and during summer when the school was near empty and the building service team would play music while tackling cleaning and other projects, Benjamin would be the first to show off a dance move or two. "[He'd] say, 'You don't know nothing about this right here,'" Meyer said. "He is greatly missed, but his presence and the memories we shared at Benjamin Stoddert will remain."

Benjamin's family said he enjoyed spending time with friends and family, enjoying simple pleasures in life such as walking on the boardwalk and watching the sunrise over the ocean.

He enjoyed visiting the Potomac Heights pool where he spent time with friends. He was a member of Potomac Heights Baptist Church.

He is survived by his siblings, Nathan Benjamin and his wife, Kim; Rachel Swatkoski and her husband, Steve; and Amanda Rosier and her husband, Scott; niece, Addy; nephews, Benjamin and William; and goddaughter, Macey.

A funeral service will be held 2 p.m., Sept. 21, at Potomac Heights Baptist Church, 37 Glymont Road, Indian Head.

Health & Wellness Tailgates at CCPS varsity football games this fall

The Charles County Department of Health will be at select Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) high school varsity football games this fall for Community Health and Wellness Tailgates.

Members of the health department's outreach team will be at the games to share health education, hold activities and host games and giveaways. The schedule is below.

- Thomas Stone High School, 7 p.m., Sept. 19.
- North Point High School, 7 p.m., Sept. 20.
- Maurice J. McDonough High School, 7 p.m., Sept. 21.
- La Plata, 7 p.m., Sept. 26.
- Henry E. Lackey High School, 7 p.m., Sept. 27.
- St. Charles High School, 6 p.m., Oct. 4.
- Westlake High School, 7 p.m., Oct. 5.
- North Point, 6 p.m., Oct. 10.
- Lackey, 4:30 p.m., Oct. 11.

- St. Charles, 6 p.m., Oct. 18.
- Westlake, 7 p.m., Oct. 24.
- Thomas Stone, 7 p.m., Oct. 25.
- McDonough, 7 p.m., Nov. 1.

Family flu clinics will be available at the Sept. 26 La Plata game, the Sept. 27 Lackey game, the Oct. 5 Westlake game, the Oct. 10 North Point game, the Oct. 18 St. Charles game, the Oct. 25 Thomas Stone game and the Nov. 1 McDonough game. The health department offers several programs including community health and education, chronic disease prevention, prevention of tobacco and cannabis use and behavioral health services. For more information about the services offered by the health department, visit <https://www.charlescountyhealth.org/>.

For a CCPS high school sports schedule, visit <https://www.ccboe.com/about/calendar/high-school-sport-schedules>.

CCPS to hold reunification exercise Oct. 13, seeks student volunteers

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is hosting a family reunification exercise on Sunday, Oct. 13. The exercise will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and is a simulation of how the school system will reunite students with parents/guardians in the event of an emergency at a school or center.

The Charles County Fairgrounds is the official reunification site for CCPS, and the exercise will be staged there. The fairgrounds are located at 8440 Fairground Road in La Plata. There will be signage at the fairgrounds to indicate the activity is part of a simulation, and not a real-life event.

CCPS is seeking 250 student volunteers in Grades 4-12 with parent/guardian permission to participate. The outline of the exercise is below and features what students and parents can expect if they volunteer to participate. Students will be supervised by CCPS staff throughout the exercise. Middle and high school students will earn student service learning (SSL) hours for participating.

- Families will drop off their child at 9 a.m. at one of three designated school locations: La Plata High School, General Smallwood Middle School or Thomas Stone High School.
- CCPS pupil personnel workers (PPW) and other CCPS staff will check students in upon arrival.
- From these three school sites, students will be taken by CCPS buses to the Charles County Fairgrounds – the

CCPS established reunification site.

- At the fairgrounds, CCPS pupil personal workers and other CCPS staff will greet students, process their contact information (name, school, etc.) and call their identified parent/guardian to pick up their child once the exercise is complete.
- Parents must agree to pick up their participating child from the fairgrounds when contacted, but no later than 1 p.m.
 - * Students will not be allowed to leave the exercise through any ride-share programs like Van Go, Uber or Lyft.
 - * Students may also be released to any person listed in the CCPS student information system as an emergency contact. No other persons will be permitted to pick up a student from this exercise.
- This exercise is a simulation of the CCPS reunification process in the event of an emergency.
- Students should bring a water bottle.

Parents must opt their child in to participate by completing the form below. The exercise is limited to 250 students total in Grades 4-12. The deadline to sign up for the exercise is 5 p.m., Friday, Oct. 4. Parents who complete the form will receive confirmation from CCPS of their child's participation following

Shortcut to registration

The deadline to sign up for the exercise is 5 p.m., Friday, Oct. 4. Parents who complete the form will receive confirmation from CCPS of their child's participation following the Oct. 4 deadline.

[Click here to opt in a student to participate.](#) Only a parent/guardian is able to complete the form.

the deadline.

[Click here to opt in a student to participate.](#) Only a parent/guardian is able to complete the form.

Middle and high school students who are opted in by a parent/guardian to participate will earn student service learning (SSL) hours from CCPS. Information about SSL requirements is posted on the CCPS website at <https://www.ccboe.com/departments/student-service-learning>.

Parents interested in opting in more than one child must complete the form for each child. Questions about the exercise can be directed to Jason Stoddard, CCPS school safety and security director, at jstoddard@ccboe.com.

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Charles County Public Schools
301-932-6610
301-934-7220
Fax: 301-932-6651

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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 Dr. Mike Blanchard, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Niki 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).

High school students to learn the importance of voting

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) regularly partners with the Maryland State and Charles County boards of elections.

Many CCPS facilities, including schools, serve as polling locations during local, state and national elections.

Staff from the Charles County Board of Elections is set to visit the seven CCPS high schools next month to share information with students about how to vote, voter registration and how to serve as an election judge.

These visits will occur during school lunch shifts so student instructional time is not impacted.

Schools will notify parents/guardians of the schedule in advance so they can talk with their child about the opportunity to learn about voting.

Charles County Board of Election staff are State of Maryland employees with the Maryland State Board of Elections and do not represent any political party or affiliation or candidate in any election cycle.

CCPS plans to offer this opportunity to high school students annually.

To learn more about the Board of Elections, visit <https://www.charlescountymd.gov/government/board-of-elections>.



Rock the vote

Representatives of the Board of Elections will visit CCPS high schools on the following days:

- Monday, Sept. 16: **La Plata High School.**
- Tuesday, Sept. 17: **North Point High School.**
- Tuesday, Sept. 17: **Thomas Stone High School.**
- Wednesday, Sept. 18: **St. Charles High School.**
- Wednesday, Sept. 18: **Westlake High School.**
- Thursday, Sept. 19: **Henry E. Lackey High School.**
- Thursday, Sept. 19: **Maurice J. McDonough High School.**

Personnel

Apply for positions online at www.cchoe.com/jobs/currentopenings.php.

All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job openings

Secretary to the Principal — T.C. Martin Elementary School, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED required. Minimum of two years experience in bookkeeping or office management required. Experience with budgets, payroll and cash handling preferred. Apply by Sept. 16.

Guidance Secretary — Westlake High School, 11-month position. High school diploma or GED required. Apply by Sept. 17.

Technology Facilitator — C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School, 10-month position. High school diploma or GED required. Associate's degree or pass the ParaPro Assessment. Apply by Sept. 17.

IEP Facilitator — Jesse L. Starkey Ad-

ministration Building, 11-month position. Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred. Hold or be eligible for a Maryland Standard Professional Certificate with special education endorsement, along with three years of satisfactory special education classroom teaching experience required. Position open until filled.

Position Control Specialist — Starkey building, 12-month position. A bachelor's degree in finance, accounting, business administration or a related field, or equivalent experience. A master's degree or CPA preferred. Position open until filled.

Food Service Assistant Manager — Location to be determined, 10-month position. High school diploma or equivalent required, and a minimum of three years of experience in food service required. Position open until filled.

ProStart Food and Beverage Manage-

ment Teacher — North Point High School, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree or higher and meets certification requirements as established by the MSDE. At least five years of full-time experience working in the restaurant, hospitality and/or food service industries can be considered in lieu of degree. Position open until filled.

Secretary to the Principal — Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED required. Minimum of two years of experience in bookkeeping or office management required. Position open until filled.

Extra Pay Positions

Indoor Track & Field Coach — La Plata High School.

Head Golf Coach — Thomas Stone High School.

Head Field Hockey Coach — Henry E.

Lackey High School.