



# School News



## Apply for minigrant

Classroom teachers can apply for one of six mini grants offered by the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association (MRSPA). The mini grants — awarding up to \$500 per teacher — may be used on special projects or activities that are not funded through the school system, PTO or PTSO. The grants are sent to the winning teacher’s school for use in the current school year. Completed mini grant applications must be emailed to [mrspa@mrspa.org](mailto:mrspa@mrspa.org) by Nov. 1, with winners notified in January. To learn more about the program, visit [www.mrspa.org](http://www.mrspa.org). To obtain an application, [click here](#). Questions can be emailed to [mrspa@mrspa.org](mailto:mrspa@mrspa.org).

## Special days coming up

Building Service Worker Appreciation Day is Wednesday, Oct. 2. Be sure to thank your building service team at your school or center. Child Health Day is Monday, Oct. 7. The day highlights the importance of the physical and mental health and safety of children in the U.S.

## EAP benefit

To learn more about the CCPS Employee Assistance Program, visit the [Staff page](#) of [www.ccboe.com](http://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 a home repair contractor. To learn more, [click here](#).



Pictured from left are Judge H. Jay West, Wanda Proctor, Judge Donine Carrington Martin, Sayeed Nassar, McKenzie Gutrick, Ethan Rawlings, Chavelle Phipps, Elijah Nassar, Judge Monise Brown, Ryon Principal Nick Adam and Judge Patrick Devine.

## From Courtroom to Classroom

### Judges visit J.P. Ryon ES to read to third graders

Four Charles County judges recently traded in the courtroom for the classroom when they brought the Reading & Robes program to J.P. Ryon Elementary School. A community outreach initiative of the National Judicial College, Reading & Robes promotes literacy and civic education among children.

Judge Monise Brown of the Charles County Circuit Court has participated in the program before. While attending a judicial conference in Cambridge, she took time to read at a school.

This is the first year for Reading & Robes in Charles and Montgomery counties, Brown said, and the second year the program has been held in Maryland. It didn’t take much convincing to find colleagues at the Charles County Courthouse to join her Tuesday, Sept. 10, at Ryon. When Brown floated the idea to her fellow judges, they were all on board to volunteer.

She could only take along three — the other four would have to stay behind to cover the courthouse.

Joining her to read at Ryon were Circuit



Chavelle Phipps, left, fifth grader at J.P. Ryon Elementary School shares a laugh with Principal Nick Adam during the recent Reading & Robes event at the school.

Court Judge Donine Carrington Martin, who has volunteered with the Reading & Robes program in the past and reading program rookies District Court Judge Patrick Devine and the Honorable H. Jay West, administrative judge of the Charles County Circuit Court. At Ryon, the four would read “Turning Pages: My Life

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## Schools closed Oct. 14

Schools will be closed Monday, Oct. 14, for students only.

## Board to meet Oct. 15

The Board of Education will meet 1 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 15, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. Student and staff recognition will begin at 4:30 p.m., with public forum at 6 p.m. An agenda will be posted at [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) about a week before the meeting.

## Inclement weather info

The weather is OK now, but it'll be frightful-ish before you know it. Become familiar with the [CCPS inclement weather procedures](#) before it's 4 a.m. on a winter morning.

CCPS strives to make the call by 5 a.m. and buses have to get on the road to delay or cancel school due to bad weather or road conditions. The school system will display the information in a pop-up box front and center on all of the school system's websites including the home site at [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com). The announcement will also be plastered on the CCPS social media accounts at Facebook, X (the site formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram. Call the 24-hour information line at 301-934-7410 or 301-932-6656 to hear the information.

Notification is made to radio and television stations at the same time school closings are announced (radio and television stations are also listed on page 10 in the Parent Handbook and School Calendar.) However, TV and radio stations have been known to get inclement weather incorrect and CCPS is not responsible for inaccurate reporting, also stations are not obligated to run school closure and delay information. Always check [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) for the most accurate information about inclement weather.

CCPS employees should know if they follow the Code system — only 12-month employees do — and learn what [Code 1, 2, Red and Blue mean](#).

## Reading

Story," by Sonia Sotomayor, a Supreme Court justice, to students in Ryon's third-grade classrooms.

"The Reading & Robes program focuses on Title I schools," Brown said, adding that visiting third-grade classrooms is a conscious choice. "Third grade is a very important year for reading."

Third grade is a pivotal year in a child's education, particularly when it comes to mastering literacy, according to the [National School Boards Association](#). It is the year where students go from learning to read to reading to learn.

The judges read the book, and if the students are comfortable doing so, they can volunteer to read a page or two. The program isn't limited to reading, students get to ask judges questions about the judicial system.

"It's amazing to see how much more they know about the world than you might think," Brown said. "So, it's important we debunk any myths they have about the judicial system and encourage them to advocate for themselves."

### Reading at Ryon

Brown connected with Wanda Proctor, community school coordinator at Ryon, last spring about bringing Reading & Robes to the school. "Wanda Proctor was instrumental in pulling this all together," Brown said.

Proctor said she is always looking for ways to support the goals of Ryon's administrators and staff while strengthening bonds between the school and community.

"It is vital we build relationships and connect our community leaders, businesses and faith-based organizations to our school, students and families," Proctor said.

[Community Schools](#) — Charles County

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Jessica Naylor, a third-grade teacher at J.P. Ryon Elementary School, helps students Cristhel Lopez Anton and Oscar Avila Rodriguez, read "Turning Page: My Life Story," by Sonia Sotomayor during a Reading & Robes event at the school.

Public Schools (CCPS) has 10 — provide students and families with access to academics, health services, mental health support, crisis support, adult education classes and other services.

About a week before the Sept. 10 visit from the judges, each third grader at Ryon received a backpack from the Reading & Robes program with a copy of "Turning Pages," and "The Highest Tribute: Thurgood Marshall's Life, Leadership, and Legacy," a children's book by Kekla Magoon, along with swag like a water bottle and gavel-shaped stress toy.

Reading & Robes is an initiative of the National Judicial College with the Maryland program made possible through a grant from the Maryland Bar Foundation and the American Bar Association Education Fund as well as other partners. On Sept. 10, other reading programs were taking places around the state in Baltimore, Annapolis, Takoma Park, Silver Spring, Rockville and Mitchellville.

## Fall chess tournament set for Oct. 12 at Stone HS

The Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) fall chess tournament is 8:15 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 12, at Thomas Stone High School.

It is open to players in kindergarten to 12th grade. Students in grades 6 to 12 will use chess clocks.

Players must be checked in by 8:45 a.m. as games start at 9 a.m. Registration closes on Oct. 9 and no walk-in registration will be accepted. Thomas Stone is at 3785 Leonardtown Road in Waldorf. Email [ccpsgifted@ccboe.com](mailto:ccpsgifted@ccboe.com) with questions. [Click here to register.](#)

## In Memoriam Tonya Jackson



Tonya  
Jackson

Tonya Jackson, an IEP facilitator at La Plata High School, passed away on Sept. 13, 2024. Prior to working at La Plata, Jackson was the individualized educational plan (IEP) facilitator at Theodore G. Davis Middle School transitioning to the role from teaching students in the special education program at Berry Elementary School.

“Mrs. Jackson was a ray of sunshine at Berry,” Lou D’Ambrosio, former Berry principal, said. Now principal at Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School, D’Ambrosio remembered Jackson as providing a safe space for students and their families. “Mrs. Jackson was a consummate professional as a special educator who brought her positive attitude to students that had a difficult time seeing school as a positive place,” he said. “She built relationships with students and parents.”

She brought that skill when moved to Davis as an IEP facilitator, a position where Jackson displayed tact and patience even when dealing with heated situations. “She used kind words in a calm demeanor that allowed for resolution not conflict,” Davis Principal Robert Griffiths said. “Her kindness is what I will remember over everything else.”

Jackson was an advocate for students who possessed the ability to switch up her plans on a moment’s notice — an advantage in a busy school. “She was flexible and willing to pivot on a dime,” Griffiths said. “I appreciated her willingness to be flexible. She always ran her plan by me. She didn’t have to — her job took precedence to most of what I did. She was honest and open about what her goals were. I will miss her.”

Jackson held bachelor’s and master’s degrees and was a doctoral candidate. For a time, she served as an adjunct professor at the College of Southern Maryland and taught online classes for Southern Hampshire University. Before starting her career with Charles County Public Schools, she worked for the Calvert County Office on Aging and Calvert County Public Schools.

Beyond her interest in education, Jackson was a performer who produced a CD, “Sweet Surrender,” in 2005, performed on Broadway in “You’re a Good Man, Charlie

Brown,” and appeared on stage at the legendary Apollo Theater in New York City.

She shared her talents with colleagues and students. D’Ambrosio remembered a talent show at Berry where Jackson sang accompanied by another staff member on guitar. “They brought down the house and made me glad I stayed off that stage,” he said. “Tonya was the kind of person that brought out the best in the people she was around. The world isn’t as bright without her in it.”

Jackson also founded and co-pastored the Believer’s Tabernacle of Faith Worship Center with her husband, Kevin Jackson Sr., principal of Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary School.

In addition to her husband, Kevin Jackson Sr.; she is survived by her parents, Carolyn and Pastor Donald Stowe Jr., and Bishop Claude and Virginia Turner; daughters, Meagan Turner, Taylor Jackson and Michayla Jackson; son, Kevin Jackson Jr., and several family members and friends. Visitation and services were held earlier this week.

To read a complete obituary, [click here](#).

## In Memoriam Gregory Adkins



Gregory  
Adkins

Greg Adkins, a plumber with the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) maintenance department, passed away on Sept. 20, 2024.

Following high school graduation, Adkins worked for Local 1 and Local 5, and has been employed by CCPS since 2016.

He was a valued member of the CCPS maintenance staff.

“I have been fortunate enough to work with him the past four years,” Jennifer Boteler, maintenance assistant, said. “He made a point to say ‘Hello,’ and genuinely ask how your day has been. Not only to myself, but to anyone that he was passing in the shop as well.”

If you heard him laugh, you knew it was him, Boteler said. “It was infectious,” she said.

“Not a day passed when Greg’s smile or laughter didn’t fill the room,” Tom Gragan, CCPS supervisor of maintenance, said. “Greg’s personality was contagious. He had the gift to befriend everyone he met.”

Adkins was a fan of NASCAR, and enjoyed spending time with his grandchil-

dren, family and friends, camping with his “church group,” attending dirt track races and hunting with his buddy, Dave.

“He was a great colleague and friend,” Gragan said. “Greg will be missed by all who had the privilege to know him.”

He is survived by his wife, Wendy; daughter, Candace Sowers and her husband, George; grandchildren, Monroe, Tynan and Clifford; and several family members and friends. Visitation will be 2-4 p.m., Oct. 2 with a service beginning at 5 p.m. at Raymond Funeral Services Chapel, 5635 Washington Ave., La Plata.

For a complete obituary, [click here](#).

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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.

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.ccboe.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.

College & Career readiness events, Spotlights on CTE

Middle and high schools are planning to hold information nights for eighth-grade students and sophomores and their families next month to share details about Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) programs designed to prepare students for life after graduation.

With the application window set to be open from Oct. 21 to Nov. 8 for Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Advanced Placement (AP) and early college/dual enrollment programs available, the information nights will help acclimate families to programs and processes associated with

them. While the information nights are hosted by specific schools, students and families can choose to attend the session that best fits into their schedule, they don't have to attend the session set at the child's home school.

Maurice J. McDonough and North Point high schools and the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center will hold Spotlight of CTE events to showcase the programs housed at each school. For more information on the information nights and spotlights, visit www.ccboe.com.

Personnel

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

Guidance Secretary — La Plata High School, 11-month employee. High school diploma or GED required. Apply by Sept. 30.

ALS Instructional Assistant — La Plata High School, 10-month position. High school diploma and experience working with children required. Apply by Sept. 30.

ACHIEVE Instructional Assistant — La Plata High School, 10-month position. High school diploma and experience working with children required. Apply by Sept. 30.

Computerized Maintenance Management System Administrator — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED, and Maryland Class C license are required. Apply by Oct. 3.

Secretary — Maurice J. McDonough High School, 12-month employee. High school diploma or GED required. One-to-three years of demonstrated secretarial experience required and knowledgeable with Microsoft programs. Apply by Oct. 7.

Office of Teaching and Learning Secretary — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month employee. High school diploma or GED required. One-to-three years of demonstrated secretarial experience required and knowledgeable with Microsoft programs. Apply by Oct. 7.

Upcoming job fairs

Temporary Instructional Assistant (IA) Job Fair — All grade levels, all schools, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Oct. 2, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 5980 Radio Station Road, La Plata. RSVP here.

Teacher and Counselor Job Fair — All grade levels, all schools, 9 a.m. to noon, Oct. 19. Billingsley Elementary School, 10069 Billingsley Road, Waldorf. RSVP here.

Temporary Instructional Assistant (IA) Job Fair — All grade levels, all schools, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m., Nov. 14, Starkey building, RSVP here.