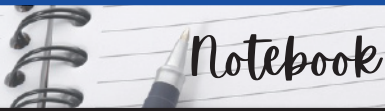


School News



Schools, offices closed

Charles County public schools and offices are closed Monday, Nov. 11, for **Veterans Day**.

It's show time

CCPS high schools are staging fall shows this month.

The documentary-style "Trap," by Stephen Gregg will be staged through Nov. 9 at **North Point High School**. The shows will be 7 p.m. Nov. 8 and 9, and it is rated PG-13. Tickets are \$5 for students who are 18 and younger and \$10 for adults. Tickets can be purchased online at nphs7040.ludus.com or at the door.

The first of **Maurice J. McDonough High School's** slated three shows this season is "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." Shows are 7 p.m., Nov. 8 and 9, and 2 p.m. Nov. 9 and 10. For tickets and more information, visit <https://mhsdrama303.booktix.com/>.

Henry E. Lackey High School stages "Alice in Wonderland." Shows are 6:30 p.m. Nov. 14-16. Call 301-753-1753 for more information.

Westlake High School students will tell the tale of "The Witch's Princess," by Don Zolidis. Shows will be 7 p.m., Nov. 14-16. Tickets are \$6 for students, \$8 for adults. Tickets will be available at westlake.ccboe.com.

McDonough's second offering of the season, "Ride the Cyclone: The Musical," is set to be performed 7 p.m., Nov. 21 and 22. Visit <https://mhsdrama303.booktix.com/> for more information.

Thomas Stone High School is going back to 1942 for "Suite Surrender: A Farce." Shows are 6:30 p.m., Nov. 21-23. Call 301-753-1756 for more information.

St. Charles High School will stage "The Laramie Project" in December.



Honoring veterans

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is honoring staff members who served in the U.S. military. For Veterans Day, schools often recognize staff members who are veterans and invite community members to events honoring military service. This year, CCPS encouraged staff members who are military veterans or active service members to share a photo and information about their stint in the service. To view a slideshow featuring CCPS staff, visit the [CCPSTV YouTube channel](#).

Character study — ELD holds community night

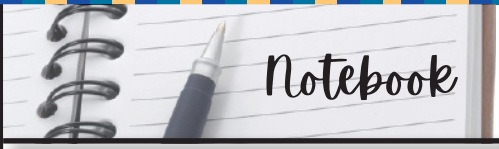
The Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) ELD/ESOL program hosted its bi-annual ELD/ESOL Community Night at John Hanson Middle School last month. ELD stands for English Language Development program, formally known as the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

The theme of the event was Lights, Camera, Education: Celebrating Global Cinema and Creativity. Families of students in the program could dress up as their favorite celebrity or TV/movie character, gather important resources from local community organizations, enjoy family-friendly activities and grab a meal provided by



Jenny Herrera, left, CCPS bilingual family and community outreach facilitator, and Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D. superintendent of schools, right, are pictured with John Hanson Middle School Principal Ben Kolhorst dressed up at Cantinflas, a comedic legend from Mexico.

See ELD, Page 3



On the cover

The Board of Education honored staff members at its October meeting. From left are **Julie Andrews**, science teacher, La Plata High School, and **Jacquelyn Burch**, third-grade teacher, Berry Elementary School. To read more, [click here](#).

Together We Shine

National School Psychology Week (NSPW) is Nov. 11-15 and this year's theme is Together We Shine. Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) school psychologists focus on providing psychoeducational testing, behavior consultation, behavior health assessments, behavior plan development, academic support, intervention recommendations and parent consultation.

November celebrations

National Education Support Professionals Day is Wednesday, Nov. 20. On Thursday, Nov. 21, honor parents on **National Parental Involvement Day**, and celebrate substitute teachers on Friday, Nov. 22, during **Substitute Educators Day**. Visit the [CCPS Celebrations Calendar](#).

Early dismissal

A two-hour **early dismissal** for students is on Wednesday, Nov. 20.

Dec. 23 closure for staff

The Board voted to accept Superintendent Navarro's recommendation to **modify the 2024-2025 calendar** to close CCPS offices on Monday, Dec. 23. The [online calendar reflects this change](#).

EAP benefit

It's known that the **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** provider, ComPsych GuidanceResources, can assist staff who are having issues with stress, depression, anxiety, workplace difficulties, and similar issues, but it can also assist with other situations families face. Visit www.guidanceresources.com.



Rachel Proctor, art teacher at Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School who was Charles County Public Schools' nominee for the 2023 *Washington Post's* Teacher of the Year program, painted a mural on the fence outside of the newly opened Oasis Fresh Food Market. CCPS students helped paint portions of the mural.

An oasis in Indian Head

■ CCPS teacher, students paint mural at grocery store

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) students and staff were recently recognized for their work in the community. Rachel Proctor, the art teacher at Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School, along with several CCPS elementary-aged students contributed to painting a mural on the fence of the Oasis Fresh Food Market in Indian Head, the first grocery store in the town in over 25 years. Proctor led the project by designing, drawing and coordinating the painting.

The store had a soft opening on Oct. 9 opening the building to a limited number of people and a grand opening celebration on Oct. 25.

Students and staff from Indian Head Elementary School, Gov. Maryland Wes Moore, U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer, Charles County commissioners and Maryland delegates and senators recently visited the store. Visitors were able to see the over 40-foot mural and tour the inside of the building.

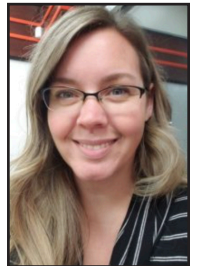
Students from Indian Head helped paint the mural were fourth grader Ava Walker, fifth grader Valentino Castro and fifth grader Larra Carino. "The students were honored to meet our leaders," Marissa Ackerman, community school coordinator at Indian Head,

said.

Proctor and Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy fifth grader Allie Colson were also recently recognized for their work by Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy during a special assembly. Oasis co-owner Mark Steele, Mayor of Indian Head Brandon Paulin, former CCPS Superintendent of Schools and Oasis Advisory Board Member Kimberly Hill, Ed.D., also attended the assembly. Steele made a \$500 donation to the school on behalf of the store in support of its annual Thanksgiving dinner for local senior citizens in November.

Colson was recognized as the only Mt. Hope student who contributed to the mural. Paulin presented Proctor with the Indian Head town seal and Colson with a gift bag for their contributions to the project.

This is not Proctor's first mural to be showcased at a local business. Her work can also be viewed on the wall at Wee Bean Coffee Roasters in La Plata.



Rachel Proctor

Board meeting set

The Board of Education will meet 1 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 12 at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. [View the agenda](#) at www.ccboe.com.

the Smallwood Drive Chick-fil-A.

Among the costumes, Hanson Principal Ben Kohlhorst was dressed as Cantinflas, a popular Mexican comedian, who Charlie Chaplin once said was “the best comedian alive.” Cantinflas, a stage name of actor Mario Moreno, was once the highest paid actor in the world during the height of his popularity in the 1940s and 1950s. Patricia Valle, a CCPS budget analyst, was dressed as icon Frida Kahlo and ESOL teachers, Amanda Gwynn and Jolene Honeycutt-Kreamer, wore the costumes of the “Frozen” sisters, Anna and Elsa.

Over 642 attendees entered Hanson on a red carpet that led them to a night of entertainment and community.

“This is one of the largest international family events in the region,” Jenny Herrera, CCPS bilingual family and community outreach facilitator, said. “Our goal is for families to learn about the diverse resources and services available to them within our community. They also can enjoy time as a family and community and meet local dignitaries and their English Language Development (ELD) teachers.”



At the recent ELD night, CCPS staff and guests could dress up as their favorite characters from TV and movies, or those they admire. Left, Patricia Valle, CCPS budget analyst, dresses like iconic artist Frida Kahlo. Right, ESOL teachers Amanda Gwynn, left, and Jolene Honeycutt-Kremer dressed as Anna and Elsa, the sisters from Disney’s “Frozen.”

Driving away the cold with coat drive

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) pupil personnel workers (PPW), Community School coordinators and staff of the English Language Development (ELD) office and Title I family liaisons sifted through some 300 new winter coats last Wednesday.

They checked tags, calling out sizes to colleagues who were on the hunt for them, swapping jackets and coats to find a match for students on their lists.

Sizes and styles ranged from a marshmallow-colored toddler-sized parka to an inky black XXL men’s puffer jacket.

Staff boxed and bagged coats in sizes that were in demand at their respective schools for students in need of a coat for the upcoming cold weather season.

The coats were donated by the Charles County School Bus Contractors Association through its annual Drive Away the Cold Coat Drive. Held Oct. 7 to 25, new coats were collected from community members dropping by Koch Trucking Inc., H&H Bus Service Inc. and D&J Buses Inc.

The association has been holding coat drives to benefit CCPS students for the past seven or eight years, Bethany Goodwin, CCPS Community Schools, homeless and foster care district coordinator, said.

Linda Stocks, a CCPS PPW, also delivered more than 150 hoodies that were donated by members of The Body of Christ Church in Waldorf.

Headed by co-pastors Kenneth Stewart and his wife, Davita Gaines-Stewart, the church has been holding an annual drive for CCPS students since 2021, during which hoodies and sweatshirts are collected from



Above, Zarina Ameen, left, and Pam Jenkins, pupil personnel workers, look through coats to find correct sizes for their students. Left, Marissa Ackerman, a community school coordinator, looks through piles of the new coats.



parishioners.

Stocks is a longtime friend of the Stewarts, and the church often pitches in to help CCPS students with donations of school supplies and other necessities.

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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 Nikial 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).

Sign up for Thanksgiving Turkey Trot 5k run/walk

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) students in middle and high school can sign up to volunteer at a Turkey Trot 5K run/walk at St. Charles High School on Thanksgiving Day.

Registration is from 8 to 9 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 28, with the run/walk starting at 9 a.m. Following the 5K, there will be light refreshments. Those interested in participating in the event can register on the day.

CCPS is partnering to host the free event which is being organized by the Charles County Sheriff's Office and LifeStyles of Maryland to benefit End Hunger in Charles County, an organization striving to end food insecurity in the county. [Learn more at www.cbcoe.com.](http://www.cbcoe.com)

Open enrollment 2024 open Nov. 5-22

The annual Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) health benefits open enrollment period is now through Nov. 22. During open enrollment, CCPS benefit eligible employees can make changes to their current benefit elections. Employees should review their personal information, benefits offered by CCPS, and the plans that they are enrolled in to determine if they would like to make any changes. Any benefit change made during open enrollment is effective Jan. 1, 2025. If you do not wish to make any changes, your current health plan (CareFirst BlueCross) will continue for the new plan year. Please note, any employee who wishes to waive their benefits is required to sign an [election waiver form](#). Employees can upload this form into the Oracle Portal.

Benefit selections for medical coverage include pharmacy (CVS/Caremark), dental (Preferred Dental), and vision (Blue Vision Plus-Davis) coverage. CCPS does not offer standalone plans. Benefit eligible employees can also sign up for basic life insurance (equal to the employee's annual salary), optional supplemental employee and dependent life insurance, and flexible spending accounts (FSA). For more information about benefit options, click on the tabs at the top of this page.

Employees can also sign up for group term life insurance or group supplemental life insurance. Group supplemental insurance is provided to CCPS through ReliaStar Life Insurance, part of the Voya Company with a guaranteed issue of \$250,000. Insurance above \$250,000 requires the employee to complete the evidence of insurability (EOI) medical questionnaire. Coverage is also available for eligible children of employees who

select the optional coverage.

Two FSA options are available for employees: medical and dependent care through Ameriflex, a third-party administrator. Depending on an employee's tax bracket, an employee can save nearly 30 percent on most medical, health and child or eldercare expenses. FSA accounts do not renew annually, participants must re-enroll during open enrollment annually.

Representatives from Aflac, the contracted vendor that provides optional supplemental policies, will be meeting with employees at each school, center and building location. A list of locations with dates and times is posted under the [Aflac Supplemental Insurance tab](#) at the top of this page.

New this year

Employees now have the option to enroll in the Voya group Short Term Disability policy effective Jan 1, 2025. This benefit will provide up to 60% of your weekly earnings for a qualified disability. Aflac will no longer offer the Short-Term Disability product through payroll deductions. Information about this new option is found under the Short-Term Disability Income Insurance tab above.

Health Insurance Rates 2025

Health plan premium rates for 2025 for all plans will increase by 2% for the Blue Choice opt out Open Access plan and by 5% for the Preferred Provider PPO/PPN plan, including plans for CCPS retirees.

Learn more at <https://www.cbcoe.com/staff/myccps/benefits-pay/employee-benefits>.

Personnel

Temporary Instructional Assistant Job Fair — 4:30-6:30 p.m., Nov. 14, at Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. To RSVP, [click here](#).
Teacher and Counselor Job Fair — 3-6 p.m., Dec. 4, at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School. To RSVP, [click here](#).

Electronic Technician — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month employee. High school diploma and at least two years of experience in installation and maintenance of

life safety systems, public address systems and intrusion systems. Apply by Nov. 19.

Plumber II — Starkey, 12-month employee. High school diploma or equivalent along with a current apprentice plumber license issued by the Baltimore Board of Commissioners of Practical Plumbing. Apply by Nov. 19.

HVAC Mechanic II — Starkey, 12-month employee. High school diploma or equivalent. A valid Maryland State Journeyman license preferred. Position open until filled.