



School News

Counseling week

National School Counseling Week is Feb. 3-7. This year's theme is School Counseling: Helping Students Thrive. Sponsored by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the week highlights the impact school counselors can have in helping students be successful. To learn more, visit schoolcounselor.org.

Board meeting Feb. 11

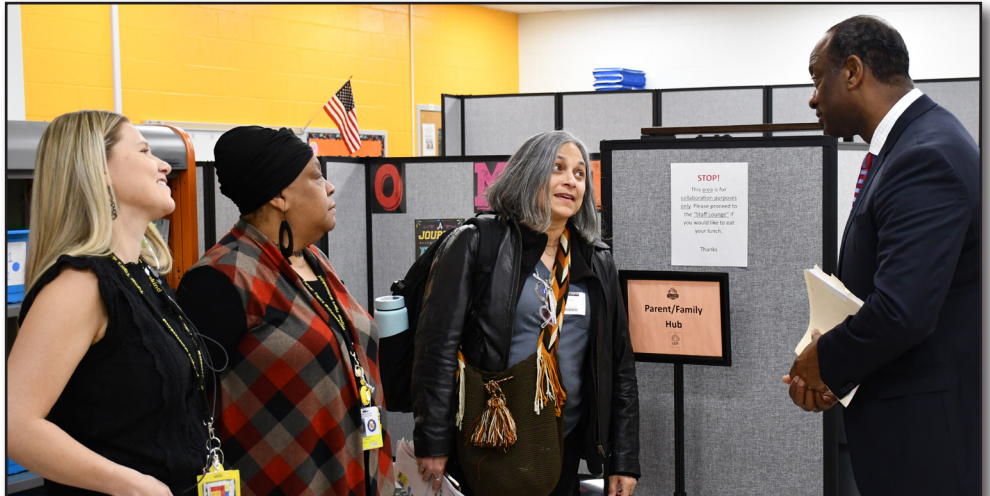
The Board of Education will meet 1 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 11, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. An agenda will be available at www.ccboe.com the week of Feb. 3.

BHM event set Feb. 13

The CCPS Department of Community Engagement and Equity (DCEE) is working with the Charles County government, department of health, public library and sheriff's office to hold a Black History Month event, "Bright Futures: Following the Path Paved by Others." The event is set for 5:30-8 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Waldorf Senior and Recreational Center at 90 Post Office Road in Waldorf. There will be exhibits and activities, interactive workshops, live performances, panel discussions and food. RSVPs are preferred at <https://forms.office.com/r/MtRx3Hq3s6>.

Last day date change

Due to the use of inclement weather days earlier this month, the date for the [last day of school has shifted](#). As of Jan. 31, the school system has used three inclement weather school closure days. The last day of school for students for the 2024-25 school year now moves to June 13. **The last day for teachers moves to June 16.**



Sense of community schools

Representatives of the Maryland Center for Community Schools (MCCS) visited Charles County Wednesday to tour a few Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Community Schools. Jessica Shiller, Ph.D., director of MCCS, and Stephanie Flores-Koulis, Ph.D., professional development fellow with MCCS, stopped by Thomas Stone High School, and Eva Turner and Indian Head elementary schools to get a sense of the communities served. Pictured at top James Blakeney, far right, Community School coordinator at Eva Turner, talks with Flores-Koulis, second from right, about the parent hub the school has set up. Also pictured are Eva Turner Principal Courtney Hrobak, far left, and Saundra Pace, the Title I family liaison at Turner. The MCCS is housed at Towson University and is a state hub to support school systems and community schools. To learn more about community schools in CCPS, visit www.ccboe.com.

Board of Education to hold virtual Town Hall Feb. 4

The Board of Education of Charles County is hosting a virtual Town Hall on Tuesday, Feb. 4, at 7 p.m. through Zoom.

The topic is Rescours for Parent Engagement in Schools. The event is open to the public through Zoom, but attendees must have an active Zoom account in order to join.

The Town Hall will also stream live on the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) website at www.ccboe.com.

Parents, staff, students and community members are encouraged to attend to ask questions or provide comments about the Town Hall topic.

Participants will be able to provide comments and ask questions in the Zoom chat.

A Spanish interpreter will be available in the Zoom.

To access the Town Hall through Zoom, use the link below.

<https://ccboe.zoom.us/j/81715226600?pwd=d3pc94vb0qTiGQv2GKGxR4xBGbZQWn.1>

Questions, comments and/or other ideas shared at the Town Hall should reference education-related topics.

Questions or comments can also be submitted in advance through the form linked below. The form closes at noon, Monday, Feb. 3.

The Board and CCPS staff may address submissions during the Town Hall as time permits.

[Submit a question/comment](#)

Notebook

On the cover

The Board of Education honored outstanding employees Jan. 14 at its monthly meeting. Pictured on the cover are Amanda Hastings, science teacher, Henry E. Lackey High School, left; Elaina Malone, physical education teacher, John Hanson Middle School; and Kathryn Defayette, fifth-grade teacher, Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School. To read about their accomplishments, [click here](#).

Apply to be part of the calendar committee

CCPS is seeking volunteers to serve on its calendar committee. Volunteers must be able to attend in-person meetings on Wednesdays from 3 to 4 p.m. at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. The Starkey building is at 5980 Radio Station Road in La Plata. Applications are due by noon, Friday, Feb. 14. To learn more and to apply, [click here](#).

Rental help available

CCPS keeps a list of available houses, apartments and rooms for rent by school system employees. To learn more, contact Louise Evans at levans@ccboe.com or 301-932-7462.

Hazel Health

CCPS continues its partnership with [Hazel Health's online therapy program](#). Students in kindergarten through 12th grade are matched with a licensed therapist for up to 10 free sessions. In-home and in-school visits are available to students in third through 12th grades while students in kindergarten through Grade 2 can sign up for in-home telemental health sessions. Services are available at school during school hours, and at home Monday to Friday between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. local time. During breaks in the school schedule — such as summer break — students can continue their sessions at home. Students typically receive six-to-10 visits. If parents wish to continue therapy, Hazel Health will assist in finding a local mental health specialist to work with the family. Parents and specific school staff members can refer students for the service.

[Learn more about Hazel Health.](#)



Martin holds rededication ceremony

T.C. Martin Elementary School students, staff and community members celebrated the recent building renovation and expansion of the school in a ceremony held Nov. 14. Featured during the ceremony were a project overview, a performance from the Martin choir, presentations from elected officials and a symbolic key passing. The school first opened its doors to students in 1967 in a 44,346 square foot building. The renovation and expansion work began in 2022. During the renovation, students and staff moved to the Transition School in Waldorf. The renovation was completed in July 2024 and created a more modern feel to the building. The school that once had little to no sunlight in the classroom was transformed into a building full of windows and natural light. “As you know bricks and mortar are not enough to make an educational program excellent. It is the teachers, staff and the students,” Superintendent Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D. said during the ceremony. To watch the full ceremony visit <https://martin.ccboe.com/>. Pictured clockwise from top, members of Martin’s chorus prepare to perform, Martin Principal Ethel Hosendorf, back left, and students Sophia Brenner, front left, and Mia Hernandez, front right, accept a citation from Del. Edith J. Patterson, back right, Martin’s construction and renovation was completed in time to welcome staff and students back to the building at the start of the 2024-2025 school year, and Kerry Wilt, third-grade teacher and Martin’s nominee for the 2025 Charles County Public Schools Teacher of the Year, represents staff during a key passing at the ceremony.

La Plata girls wrestling team places first in holiday showcase

■ Wrestling's popularity growing among female athletes in high school

Wrestling takes more than physical strength. "It's a lot of mental stuff," Oriana Boling, a La Plata High School senior, said. "I'd say it's more mental than physical."

Boling is among the girls who are making high school wrestling one of — if not the No. 1 — fastest growing sport among their peers. The La Plata girls wrestling team started out two years ago with five members and now has 16 members. The team recently placed first with 143.5 points at the Francis Scott Key Girl's Wrestling Holiday Showcase in Union Bridge.

Held Dec. 28 at Francis Scott Key High School, 20 teams were invited to the showcase to compete. La Plata seniors Daisy Rojas and Boling placed first in their weight classes, 155 and 130, respectively, with senior Madison Rich taking second in the 130 weight class. Adriana Hernandez, a junior, took the title in the 145 division while freshmen Grace Immler in the 100 class and Kenadi Reeder in the 235 division took home third-place accolades.

Boling, Rojas and Rich are three of the "founding" members of the girls wrestling team at La Plata. All played or participated in sports before taking a leap of faith to try grappling. Boling was the statistician for the boys wrestling team, Rojas was a competitive cheerleader and ran track while Rich was a lacrosse player.

John Pankhurst, La Plata's head wrestling coach, started looking around for students who might want to try a new sport or at least were looking for one to do in the winter. Boling, familiar with wrestling thanks to her role keeping stats, figured trying it out wouldn't hurt. It was the same for Rojas. She was ready to try something different and Rich was joking around members of the boys wrestling team during a break at a mulch sale fundraiser when Pankhurst suggested she try out the sport.

"It's something a few girls were doing," Pankhurst said of wrestling. "Almost all the



Maliyah Cropper, right, a sophomore at La Plata High School, competes in a match hosted at the school against a wrestler from Frederick Douglass High School.

kids on the team play a different sport. We promoted it to kids who play sports but want to try something different."

"It's a male dominated sport, but girls can wrestle too," Rojas said. At first the girls learned the basics and wrestled with members of the boys team as female competitors were in short supply. La Plata has the largest girls wrestling team in Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), but they aren't alone anymore. There are 38 female wrestlers throughout CCPS high schools. With any start up, participation might be slow at the beginning — it just takes a few to break through and pique the interest of others.

"Over the years, we have tried to recruit girls to try it and see if they like it," Rich said. "And it's also about people just encouraging girls to just do it."

Boling agreed. She said sometimes it just comes down to having an option. "We were given the opportunity," she said.

Gaining popularity

Hawaii was the first state — in 1998 — to recognize high school girls wrestling as an official sport, according to USA Wrestling, the country's governing organization for freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling.

Girls wrestling in high schools across the country has been gaining popularity since the

start of the 2000s, picking up momentum following the introduction of female wrestling in the 2004 Olympic games.

Maryland girls don't have to look too far to find role models in the sport. Helen Maroulis, a native of Rockville, was a member of the U.S. Women's Wrestling Olympic team for the 2016, 2020 and 2024 games. She earned a gold medal in the 2016 games and bronze medals during the 2020 and 2024 events. Nebi Tsarni, a 2024 graduate of Montgomery County Public Schools and three-time state wrestling champ, was honored with the 2024 [Tricia Saunders High School Excellence Award](#) given by the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

Rojas, who won a state championship in 2024 and plans to continue wrestling at Alvernia University where she plans to major in biology, said sports are a positive way to give students an outlet. She's found that in wrestling. "It's a really good way to help with mental toughness, discipline and strategy," Rojas said, reiterating Boling's assertion that wrestling takes just as much mental as physical strength.

On the brink of graduation — Boling has committed to wrestle at Frostburg State University where she'll major in criminal justice, while Rich will attend McDaniel College to major in nursing and wrestle — the senior members of La Plata's team are leaving what they helped build in the hands of their younger teammates.

Immler, who has played softball and volleyball, was encouraged to look into different sports at her father's suggestion. Coming from middle school, Immler would be introduced to new athletic opportunities in high school like field hockey and wrestling. Since he wrestled in his youth, Immler's dad floated the idea to her. He heard that Pankhurst was a top-notch coach and the program at La Plata was growing.

"It's a lot harder than it looks," Immler said of wrestling. But she's found that she enjoys the competition and camaraderie with her teammates. "It's a team sport, but it's also an independent sport," she said. "I think that's my favorite part about it."

Seven-Up+ Art Show

The Seven-Up+ Art Show is on display through Sunday, Feb. 9, at the [Mattawoman Creek Art Center in Marbury](#). The show features work by high school students who attend Charles County Public Schools. An awards ceremony is 1-3 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 2.

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

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Shelley Mackey
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FEV Tutor halts operations, services no longer available

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) was recently notified that FEV Tutor shut down its business operations. The closure was effective Jan. 25.

CCPS has contracted with FEV Tutor since 2023 to offer students additional tutoring opportunities and support.

The school system was notified over the weekend of the company's closure.

As part of the company's shutdown, any scheduled tutoring sessions were canceled.

In the notification provided to CCPS of the closure, FEV cites financial challenges and issues with the company's ability to secure resources to continue operations as reasons for the company shutdown.

CCPS is looking into alternative methods and tutoring options for students, staff and parents.

Through its contract with FEV Tutor, CCPS offered free virtual tutoring opportunities to all grade levels of students.

Parents looking for programs and resources to support their child at home can reach out to their child's teacher for recommendations.

Follow the CCPS website at www.ccboe.com for updates.

Information sessions set for staff interested in becoming teachers

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) staff in the Human Resources office hold virtual sessions for staff interested in becoming teachers.

Sessions are scheduled 4-5 p.m., Feb. 13, noon-1 p.m., March 14, 3-4 p.m., May 15, and noon-1 p.m., June 25.

Staff members will be prompted to select the grade level and the content or subject area they are interested in teaching.

[Click here to register.](#)

Upcoming job fair

A teacher and counselor fair

is 9 a.m. to noon, April 5, at La Plata High School, 6035 Radio Station Road, La Plata.

[Click here to register.](#)



Personnel

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

Job Openings

Assistant Building Service Manager — Eva Turner Elementary School, 12-month position. High school diploma and at least one year of experience. Apply by Feb. 1.

Title I Family Liaison — J.P. Ryon Elementary School, 10-month position. High school diploma or general educational degree (GED) required; associate degree preferred. At least two years of experience working in family support, community outreach or a similar role. Apply by Feb. 4.

Special Education Prekindergarten Teacher — C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree and the meeting of certification requirements as established by the Maryland Department of Education are required. Apply by Feb. 5.

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Special Education Teacher — Phoenix International School of the Arts, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree and the meeting of certification requirements as established by the Maryland Department of Education are required. Apply by Feb. 6.

Science Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree and the meeting of certification requirements as established by the Maryland Department of Education are required. Position opened until filled.

Family and Consumer Science Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree and the meeting of certification requirements as established by the Maryland Department of Education are required. Position opened until filled.

Theater Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree and the meeting of certification requirements as established by the Maryland Department of Education are required. Position opened until filled.

Social Studies Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree and the meeting of certification requirements as established by the Maryland Department of Education are required. Position opened until filled.

Instrumental Music Teacher — All levels, location to be determined, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree and the meeting of certification requirements as established by the Maryland Department of Education are required. Position opened until filled.

School Technology Facilitator — Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School, 10-month position. High school diploma or GED required. Position opened until filled.