



# School News

## Board meeting June 10

The Board of Education of Charles County will meet for its regular meeting Tuesday, June 10, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. To view an agenda, [click here](#). The Board does not meet in July.

## Last day of school

The last day of school for students is Friday, June 13, with the last day for teachers set for Tuesday, June 16. The last week of school schedule is as follows:

- Two-hour early dismissal for students: Wednesday, June 11.
- Two-hour early dismissal for students: Thursday, June 12.
- Two-hour early dismissal, last day of school for students: Friday, June 13.
- Last day of school for teachers: Tuesday, June 17.

## Juneteenth is June 19

CCPS schools and offices will be closed Thursday, June 19, for Juneteenth.

## Work session June 23

The Board of Education will hold a work session starting at 4 p.m., Monday, June 23, at St. Charles High School. During the meeting, Munachi Obinali, newly elected Student Member of the Board, will be sworn in. Obinali will be a junior at La Plata High School in the 2025-2026 school year.

## SECAC awards

The Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee, known as SECAC, recently honored CCPS staff members who work with students with special needs. To read more, [click here](#).

## Be the Difference awards

The Board of Education of Charles County on June 2 honored several CCPS volunteers as part of the 2025 Be the Difference Awards program. To read more, [click here](#).



## Love, the Class of 2025

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) staff celebrated the Class of 2025 with commencement exercises May 27-30. With rain forcing a change of venue to the Convocation Center at North Point High School for the school's May 28 ceremony, CCPS staff members worked to prepare the grounds of Regency Furniture Stadium for ceremonies set for May 29 and 30.

Clockwise from top left, Westlake High School graduate Noah Harrison sends love to his family in the stands as he enters the stadium. Superintendent Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., left, congratulates a graduate



of Maurice J. McDonough School. Jennifer Hoiler, center, a math teacher at Henry E. Lackey High School catches up with graduates Shanise Justin, left, and Samantha Kindall, the school's valedictorian. To view more photos from all this year's graduations and from select Parades of Success, [click here](#).

## CCPS, Board celebrates retirees

The Board of Education of Charles County honored employees June 5 who have retired during the past school year or who have notified Superintendent Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., that they plan to retire at the end of this school year. A retirement ceremony was held at North Point High School with entertainment provided by a group of orchestra students playing string instruments.

"I have to say, the longer that I'm here, the more that this is a bittersweet reception and celebration. Sometimes I don't want to celebrate," Superintendent of Schools Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., said. "There are some of you around here that I'm supposed to say I'm happy you're leaving and retiring. And I have to say — I don't want you to go. I'm excited for you to spend more time with your loved ones and do the things you

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## Notebook

### On the cover

The Board of Education of Charles County honored outstanding employees at its May meeting. On the front cover are Chelsey Short, third-grade teacher, William A. Wade Elementary School; Christopher Smith, administrative instructional assistant, Billingsley Elementary School; and Christine Turner, reading resource teacher, Theodore G. Davis Middle School. To read more, click [here](http://www.ccboe.com). Read more at [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com).

### Green schools

Three Charles County Public schools recently earned the Maryland Green Schools designation from a state organization, while six others achieved Sustainable Schools status. Berry Elementary School, Henry E. Lackey and Thomas Stone high schools were certified as Maryland Green Schools by the [Maryland Association for Environmental & Outdoor Education \(MAEOE\)](http://www.maeoe.org). Other schools earning Sustainable Status include Dr. James Craik, Arthur Middleton and J.C. Parks elementary schools, Piccowaxen Middle School and Westlake High School. To read more, [click here](#).

### Summer workshop series

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will hold a Bridging the Bay: Connecting Ideas for Professional Growth virtual summer workshop series next month.

The MSDE's Office of Teaching and Learning will hold the virtual professional learning sessions to foster collaboration and share practices.

Sessions are 90 minutes long and are offered Monday, July 21-Friday, July 25. For times, session themes and more information, [click here](#).



Indian Head Elementary School was named a Purple Star School by the Maryland State Department of Education for supporting military-connected students and families.

## Indian Head ES earns Purple Star School title

Indian Head Elementary School was recognized as a Purple Star School by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in April.

The recognition is a mark of distinction for schools that are dedicated to serving military-connected students and their families. The school was the first in Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) to receive it.

According to the MSDE website, Purple Star Schools foster a sense of belonging and stability, furthering Maryland's goal of "providing an excellent and equitable education for all students."

Indian Head did not hesitate to apply for the distinction due to the growing military-connected student population at the school and being

located near the Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Division (NSWC IHD).

"Applying for the Purple Star designation was a natural and meaningful step," Marissa Ackerman, Indian Head's community school coordinator and school military liaison, said. "We wanted to ensure our families feel recognized, supported and valued as an integral part of our school community." As the military liaison at the school, Ackerman focuses on supporting and advocating for the military-connected students and their families.

The military-connected families at the school are engaged and supportive, volunteering regularly and participating in family en

To learn more about the recognition visit <https://bit.ly/4dKHruj>.



### Diggs says 'Hakuna Matata'

William A. Diggs Elementary School students and staff — with the help of Calvert Theatrics — staged Disney's "The Lion King Jr.," this month following five months of rehearsal and learning about the ins and outs of putting on a live show. Right, fifth graders Marc Kaptoum and A.J. Reeder as Pumbaa and Timon, respectively, "dance the hula" to get out of a jam with some hyenas.





# Retirees

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want to do. But there is always an immense amount of knowledge and wisdom that leaves us, as well."

Yonelle Moore Lee, Esq., Board chairperson, said the evening was about legacy. "Each of you has contributed more than just hours and effort. You've shaped minds, lifted spirits, built futures and left a lasting mark on generations of children, families and us," she said. "I want to say thank you. Not only for your years of dedicated service but for the quiet moments of impact that most people will never see."

Retirees are listed by their name, last position and last location where they served.

- **Clyde Abbey**, building service manager, Eva Turner Elementary School.
- **Mildred Alexander-Moses**, pupil personnel worker (PPW), Matthew Henson Middle School.
- **Brian Ball**, building automation manager, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.
- **James Barnes Sr.**, building service worker, Piccowaxen Middle School.
- **Sharon Bautista**, data technician, La Plata High School.
- **Jack Belle**, instructional resource teacher, Starkey.
- **David Bradshaw**, physical education teacher, Maurice J. McDonough High School.
- **Anne Braun**, food service worker, Berry Elementary School.
- **Cynthia Brown**, instructional assistant (IA), La Plata.
- **Rebecca Bursheim-LaFontant**, instructional assistant, William A. Diggs Elementary School.
- **Dianne Claggett**, instructional assistant, Thomas Stone High School.
- **Maxine Coe**, instructional assistant, Westlake High School.
- **Anecita Connor**, building service worker, Milton M. Somers Middle School.
- **Mary Cook**, human resources generalist, Starkey.
- **Hattie Cummings**, fourth-grade teacher, Indian Head Elementary School.
- **Bethany Cusic**, college and career advisor, McDonough.
- **Virginia Cusick**, physical therapist, F.B. Gwynn Educational Center.
- **Jennifer DeAtley**, reading resource teacher, Berry.

- **Beverly Deniston**, special education teacher, Theodore G. Davis Middle School.
- **Garcia Dixon**, supervising PPW, Starkey.
- **Ruth "Shannon" Finnegan, Ed.D.**, principal, Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School.
- **Diane Fiorilla**, prekindergarten teacher, Mary H. Matula Elementary School.
- **Cathy Fleming**, instructional assistant, North Point.
- **Alan Freeman**, music teacher, Henry E. Lackey High School.
- **Patrick Ganter**, physical education teacher, Piccowaxen.
- **Teresa Getgen**, physical education teacher, La Plata.
- **Judith Gordon**, instructional specialist, William B. Wade Elementary School.
- **Beverly Gunn**, kindergarten instructional assistant, Higdon.
- **Hollis Hay**, family and consumer science teacher, Thomas Stone.
- **Richard Hicks**, HVAC mechanic, maintenance shop.
- **Deborah Holder**, reading resource teacher, Matthew Henson Middle School.
- **Jennifer Jenkins**, instructional assistant, Matula.
- **Cornelia Jerman-Webb**, special education IA, Gale-Bailey Elementary School.
- **Marvin Jones, Ed.D.**, chief of schools, Starkey.
- **Charles Kelly**, foreman, maintenance shop.
- **William Kreuter**, supervisor of food service, Starkey.
- **Mary Long**, instructional assistant, Piccowaxen.
- **Susan Lucas**, secretary to the principal, Thomas Stone.
- **Michael Meiser**, school safety administrator, Starkey.
- **Donna Mitchell**, mathematics teacher, North Point.
- **Anne Morgan**, instructional assistant, J.C. Parks Elementary School.
- **Vicki Opiekun**, fourth-grade teacher, Daniel of St. Thomas Jennifer Elementary School.
- **Norman Patterson**, building service assistant manager, Wade.

- **Clifton Posey**, building service manager, Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School.
- **Denise Pratt**, music teacher, Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School.
- **Carroll Proctor**, building service assistant manager, Diggs.
- **William Reamy**, English language development (ELD) teacher, Thomas Stone.
- **Carolyn "Carrie" Richardson**, principal, Matula.
- **Mary Beth Ritchie**, prekindergarten teacher, Brown.
- **Michelle Sains**, third-grade teacher, Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy.
- **Paula Schiller**, teacher with Infants and Toddlers program, Gwynn.
- **Teresa Schinasi**, fourth-grade teacher, Dr. James Craik Elementary School.
- **Stephanie Shanholtz**, second-grade teacher, Wade.
- **Deborah Simmons**, mathematics teacher, Piccowaxen.
- **Maurice Smith**, mathematics teacher, Mattawoman Middle School.
- **Kim Smoot**, food service worker, Brown.
- **James "Earl" Swann**, building service manager, La Plata.
- **Jack Tuttle**, content specialist for social studies, Starkey.
- **Maria Unzicker**, special education IA, St. Charles High School.
- **Laura Verga**, English language development (ELD) teacher, Jennifer.
- **Ivy Wade**, instructional assistant, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School.
- **Troy Wade**, building service worker, Wade.
- **Corey Watson**, building service assistant manager, Eva Turner.
- **Jennifer Weaver**, psychologist, Berry.
- **Richard Weis**, special education teacher, Piccowaxen.
- **Judith Welch**, instructional assistant, Craik.

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## Board of Education Members

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## Stoddert's Williams is inaugural CCPS Nurse of the Year

Natasha Williams, school nurse at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, was recently named the inaugural Nurse of the Year for Charles County Public Schools (CCPS).

She has worked for CCPS since the early 2000s, spending her 23-year career at Stoddert.

"More than just a nurse, she is a counselor, advocate, problem-solver and team player—wearing many hats with grace and heart," Tami Dahm, administrative intern at Stoddert, said. "Her ability to build trusting relationships creates a safe and supportive environment where students feel seen and valued, and staff feel reassured knowing she's always there to help."

Nursing services in CCPS are provided through a partnership between the school system and the county's department of health. Desiree Colvin, school health nurse supervisor, said the office solicited nominations from CCPS staff and others to name the CCPS Nurse of the Year.

A committee made up of staff in the CCPS Student Services department sifted through the nominations to name Williams this year's recipient.

"I was pretty excited that she won," Colvin said. "Nurse Williams has been with the program for over two decades giving dedicated service to students."

Reading the nominations showcased how



Natasha Williams, left, has worked at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School for more than 20 years. She is pictured with Marquelle Peavy, Stoddert's principal.

much Williams means to the Stoddert community. "Reading the nominations was so much fun. You can just tell how loved she is, how valued she is," Colvin said. "That speaks to the kind of person she is, the kind of nurse she is and the care she gives."

Growing up in Ohio, Williams had a role model in her mother, who is a retired nurse. Her mother would take her to work sometimes. "I would think I was the nurse," Williams joked.

To read more about Williams career with CCPS, [click here](#).

## Personnel

### Job fairs, info session

- A food service job fair is 9 a.m.-noon, June 18, at the Starkey building. [Click here to register for the fair](#).
- Special education job fair is 10 a.m.-noon, June 23, at the F.B. Gwynn Educational Center. [Click here to register](#).
- A virtual session for those interested in becoming a teacher will be held and noon to 1 p.m., June 25. [Click here to register](#).

Apply for positions online at <https://www.ccboe.com/careers>. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

### Job openings

**Technology Network Engineer** — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Bachelor's degree is preferred; associate's is desirable in computer science or related field. Apply by June 11.

**Special Education Coordinator** — Starkey, 12-month position. Master's degree preferred with an Advanced Professional Certificate with endorsement in Special Education or Dual Certification strongly preferred. Apply by June 12.

**Food Service Manager** — J.P. Ryon Elementary School, 10-month position. High school diploma or equivalent required, along with at

least three years of experience in food service management. Apply by June 14.

**Building Service Worker** — St. Charles High School, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED required. Apply by June 16.

**Special Education Prekindergarten Teacher** — William B. Wade Elementary School, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree and meets certification requirements as established by the state. Apply by June 16.

**Building Service Assistant Manager** — Henry E. Lackey High School, 12-month position. High school diploma with more than a year's experience. Apply by June 17.

**Accounting Manager** — Starkey, 12-month position. Bachelor's from an accredited college or university with specialization in accounting, finance or a related field. Master's degree or Certified Public Accountant (CPA), preferred. Position open until filled.