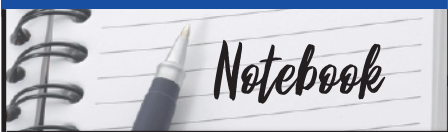




School News



Nominations sought

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is accepting nominations for 2026 [Outstanding Assistant Principal](#) and [Outstanding Non-Certificated Staff](#). Non-certificated staff, also known as support staff, includes building service, food service, instructional support, secretary, maintenance, information technology, operations and central office support staff in Annex I and II. Nominations may be submitted by school system employees, students and parents. Staff members cannot nominate themselves. Nomination materials must be submitted online no later than 2 p.m., Friday, April 10, to ce-hill@ccboe.com. Late submissions will not be accepted. For more information about the nomination process, visit www.ccboe.com.

Last day of school reminder

CCPS revised the 2025-2026 calendar to reflect the use of an inclement weather day for students and teachers. As of March 13, CCPS has used five inclement weather days. This moves the last day of school for students to Wednesday, June 17.

The updated schedule is below and is subject to change if additional inclement weather impacts the CCPS operating schedule.

- Monday, June 15: Full day of school for students.
- Tuesday, June 16: Two-hour early dismissal for students.
- Wednesday, June 17: Two-hour early dismissal for students.
- Wednesday, June 17: Last day of school for students (was previously June 16).
- Thursday, June 18: Last day of school for teachers (was previously June 17). The online CCPS calendar has been updated to reflect these changes at www.ccboe.com.



Read awhile

Students at Arthur Middleton Elementary School recently welcomed guest readers. Pictured clockwise from top left are Jenny Herrera, Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) bilingual family and community outreach facilitator, Pilar Lepe, CCPS international registration coordinator, Superintendent of Schools Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D., and Larry Johnson, director of special education for CCPS, reading to and visiting students in Middleton's dual-language program. Guest readers visited the students of kindergarten teacher Tania Saguid, and first-grade teachers Christina Broglie, Jocelyn Casarrubias and Tara Crocker.



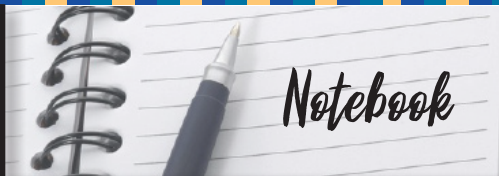
CCPS teachers earn NBCT designation

Several Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) teachers recently earned National Board Certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). The 14 educators who earned the designation have shown they are effective and accomplished teachers.

The following CCPS teachers achieved National Board Certification in December 2025. Teachers are listed by certification area, position and school/work location.

- **Julie Andrews**, adolescence and young adulthood/chemistry, science teacher, La Plata High School.
- **Jennifer Benson**, early adolescence through young adulthood, art teacher, Thomas Stone High School.
- **Jessi Blevins**, early childhood, kindergarten teacher, Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School.
- **Amanda Dominelli**, early childhood through young adulthood/mild and moder-

See NBCT, Page 2



On the cover

The Board of Education of Charles County honored outstanding staff members at its Feb. 10 meeting. Pictured on the cover are Sydney Smith, fifth-grade teacher, Eva Turner Elementary School; Christina Laverty, mathematics teacher, Henry E. Lackey High School; and Victoria Davenport, social studies teacher, John Hanson Middle School. To read more about the staff members honored, visit www.ccboe.com.

Building Possibilities

CCPS will hold Building Possibilities, a special education expo, Saturday, April 18. The event will be held 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at North Point High School and offers parents and families of children who receive special education services resources, tools and strategies for every stage of a child's academic journey with CCPS.

Registration closes March 31. To register, [click here](#). The flier in Spanish is available at www.ccboe.com.

During the expo, CCPS staff and community partners will lead sessions focusing on learning, behavior, executive functioning and postsecondary planning. Families can connect with representatives of local organizations ready to support their child's growth and success. North Point is at 2500 Davis Road in Waldorf.

Bird Festival April 18

Westlake High School Environmental Club will hold a Bird Festival 10 a.m.- 2 p.m., April 18. The free event will celebrate owls, and there will be arts and craft stations, an opportunity to see live birds up close, activities for children, guest speakers, a birding field trip and food vendors. Westlake is at 3300 Middletown Road in Waldorf.

Lackey heads to championship

The Henry E. Lackey High School basketball team will play Wicomico High School March 17 in the 2026 MPSSAA State Basketball Championships.

Tip off for the Chargers 2A boys championship game is 7:30 p.m. at the Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena on the campus of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). Tickets are \$11 for adults and children 7 and older, and can be purchased at <https://gofan.co/app/school/MPSSAA>. Parking is free. To view arena policies for spectators, [visit the venue's website here](#).



Senior Malik Gibson, right, was named Lackey's Player of the Year for boys basketball.

NBCT



ate disabilities, special education teacher, Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School.

- **Maria Farnham**, early childhood, kindergarten teacher, Mary H. Matula Elementary School.
- **Patrice Fenwick**, early childhood through young adulthood/mild and moderate disabilities, special education teacher, J.P. Ryon Elementary School.
- **Natalie Finch-Howard**, adolescence and young adulthood, social studies teacher, Westlake High School.
- **Antonia Gibbs**, early childhood, prekindergarten teacher, Eva Turner Elementary School.
- **Jennifer Pruckner**, middle childhood, fifth-grade teacher, William A. Diggs Elementary School.
- **Milinda Ruehl**, early childhood, English language development (ELD) teacher, Westlake.

continued from Page 1

- **Tessa Thomas**, early adolescence, social studies teacher, Mattawoman Middle School.
- **April Thompson**, early adolescence, social studies teacher, Milton M. Somers Middle School.
- **Brittany Thorne**, middle childhood, third-grade teacher, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School.
- **Leah Whetzel**, adolescence and young adulthood, science teacher, North Point High School.

To earn the NBCT designation teacher must be well versed in four components including content knowledge, differentiation in instruction, teaching practices and learning environment, and be an effective and reflective practitioner.

The components showcase real-world teaching through classroom videos, as well as student work and reflections, highlighting a teacher's planning, instruction and professional contributions.

Teachers must complete three written portfolios and a computer-based assessment evaluating deep content knowledge, while ensuring teachers have the subject mastery needed to impact student learning.

National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) are viewed as experts in their field and are sought out for leadership positions within their respective schools. They also earn an additional annual salary stipend to reflect the certification. CCPS has 75 teachers who are currently nationally board certified.

Sweet victory — Henson eighth grader wins county Spelling Bee

Knees were bouncing with anxious jitters and hearts were racing as students waited for their turn to approach the microphone in the middle of Piccowaxen Middle School's gym the evening of March 4 for the 48th annual Charles County Spelling Bee.

The top spellers from eight Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) middle schools were represented by a team of no more than three students. Students from county private schools and a home school co-op also participated.

In the end, the Final 4 spellers were seventh graders returning 2025 Spelling Bee champion Aruuke Rayeva of Archbishop Neale School (ANS), Sebastian Miciano of Milton M. Somers Middle School, Ava Warburton of Southern Maryland Christian Academy (SMCA) and eighth grader Ethan Atanga of Matthew Henson Middle School.

Atanga clenched the number one spot in this year's competition. With this being his first year doing the Spelling Bee his confidence was even higher when he took home



Ethan Atanga, a Matthew Henson Middle School eighth-grade student, recently won the 48th annual Charles County Spelling Bee.

first place. "It feels great," he said. "I was confident the whole time. I just had to give it my all."

"I thank everyone who has helped me and my coaches who have helped me to be great off the court as well," Atanga said.

"I am incredibly proud of Ethan, it's just the beginning of what he can accomplish," Claudia Bellony-Atanga, his mom, said. "I know he will represent his school [and county] well."

Atanga will represent Charles County in the 2026 Scripps National Spelling Bee. The competition takes place in late May near Washington, D.C.

At the local level, ANS, coached by Laura Schreyer, took home a plaque for earning the most points in the March 4 competition with Atanga receiving a \$1,000 check from Bee sponsor Educational Systems Federal Credit Union and a trophy for being the top speller. The remaining finalists — Miciano, Rayeva and Warburton — each received a trophy. The Charles County Spelling Bee is sponsored by CCPS, the credit union and SMECO.

Read more about the Spelling Bee at www.cbcoe.com.

HITS Expo celebrates 10th anniversary March 21 at St. Charles HS

The HITS Expo is set for Saturday, March 21, at St. Charles High School.

From 1 to 5 p.m., the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) History, Industry, Technology and Science Expo will showcase history and science fair projects completed by CCPS students and feature presentations and hands-on activities designed to stoke interest in STEAM-related topics.

"Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education encourages students to think critically and creatively," Ian Buter, CCPS content specialist for science, said. "The HITS Expo not only introduces visitors to interesting and thought-provoking topics, it allows CCPS staff and secondary students an opportunity to share what they are teaching and learning in their math, social studies, fine arts, science and technology classes."

The presentations planned for the HITS Expo run the gamut from cosmetology demonstrations to why investigators collect fingerprints, from how pharmacists prepare drug compounds for patients to how archeologists use history and science in the field.

Also taking place during the HITS Expo



At last year's HITS Expo, a student learns about what items can be found in sand at the beach.

will be the Polyglot Games, a competition testing students' language skills, and the SeaPerch Robotics event, which demonstrates remotely operated underwater vehicles built and controlled by students.

The history fair and science fair projects will be on display in the gymnasium with an awards ceremony at 5:30 p.m. St. Charles is at 5305 Piney Church Road in Waldorf.

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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).



Barber, auto appointments

Two career and technical (CTE) programs are open for business at the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center. Students in the center's barbering program are accepting appointments for haircuts on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as select Wednesdays. To book an appointment, [click here](#).

Students in the automotive technology program are overseen by instructors while available to conduct engine diagnostics and repairs, inspecting brakes, taking care of oil changes and other services. Parts are not provided and the shop takes cash only.

For more information, visit www.ccboe.com.

Space in the Community

The Space Foundation and the James E. Richmond Science Center will host "Exploring the Artemis Missions — Space in the Community" on March 27 at the center.

Kathryn Thornton, Ph.D., a NASA astronaut, will be the guest and hands-on STEM activities will be available for guests to try out. The free event is 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the science center, but registration is required. [To register, visit the science center's site](#). The center is at St. Charles High School at 5305 Pinney Church Road in Waldorf.

Job fair prep

A CCPS Teacher Job Fair Preparation Session is 4-6 p.m., **April 9**, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. Current support staff employees, substitute teachers and temporary workers with a conferred bachelor's degree who are interested in teaching can register to prepare for interviews.

CCPS staff will review resumes, ask mock questions and share feedback for staff members interested in becoming teachers. [To register, visit the Staff page of 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.

Interview Day April 18

Teacher, Counselor and Related Services Interview Day is 9 a.m.-noon, **April 18**, at Theodore G. Davis Middle School, 2495 Davis Road, Waldorf.

CCPS is hiring teachers, school counselors, psychologists, speech language pathologists, IEP facilitators, social workers, occupational therapists and physical therapists. [Register online at www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com).

Job Openings

Budget Position Control Specialist — Jesse L. Starkey Administration 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. Apply by March 16.

Spanish Teacher — Glymont Middle School, 10-month position. Apply by March 18.

Building Service Manager — C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED required, along with supervisory experience. Apply by March 18.

Planning and Construction Manager — Starkey, 12-month position. Bachelor's degree in construction or related field and a minimum of three years of experience in the

construction industry or the equivalent training and eight years of experience in construction and trades in lieu of a bachelor's degree. Apply by March 18.

Building Service Worker — Starkey, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED required. Apply by March 18.

Language Arts Teacher — Glymont, 10-month position. Apply by March 19.

IEP Facilitator — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 11-month position. Bachelor's degree required, master's preferred. Apply by April 21.

Electronics Technician — Starkey, 12-month position. High school diploma required, a degree from technical school preferred along with at least two years of experience in installation and maintenance of life safety systems, public address systems and intrusion systems. Position open until filled.