



Charles County Public Schools

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Students see STEM in action at Youth Technology Summit

More than 470 Charles County public middle and high school students boarded a school bus Oct. 31 to learn more about careers in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields at the second annual Southern Maryland Youth Technology Summit, held at the College of Southern Maryland. Presenters spoke to students about STEM careers, and discussed internship and scholarship opportunities.

The event also featured hands-on activities for students, such as flight simulation and remote control robots, and afternoon workshop sessions for participants to learn about rocketry, robotics, the college application process and the Maryland Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) program.

Monique Varlas, instructional specialist for STEM programs, said Charles County Public Schools became involved in the event to highlight the system's commitment to exposing students to all career possibilities. "There is a large base of private and public sectors that need our students to be informed and excited about STEM careers," Varlas said.

The school system also provided an attendance incentive for students to foster participation. An attendance contest among middle and high school students was held, and the school with the highest number of students in attendance will be rewarded with additional funds for school materials.

Additionally, nine CCPS teachers were invited to make STEM-related presentations during the workshop sessions and provided hands-on activities for participants. Participants also had the opportunity to learn about STEM college programs available in Southern Maryland. "There were sessions on college programs that our students can participate and earn degrees in without ever leaving Southern Maryland," Varlas said.

The event was open to students and community members in the tri-county area, and featured presenters from the Energetics Technology Center, U.S. Navy Naval Air Command, the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Stump Neck Division, the Sheet Metal Workers, Local 100, the National Security Agency, Mirant Mid Atlantic, LLC, the College of Southern Maryland, the Department of Defense and Lockheed Martin.

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Patricia Vaira, Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Keith Hettel, Section 504 Coordinator (employees/adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, Maryland 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.