

# School News



## Look for the helpers

Amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic gripping the United States, Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) has shifted the way it delivers educational and other services. Clockwise from above, Ruby Smith, food service manager at St. Charles High School hands out meals at the St. Charles meal site; Howard Chase, building service manager of the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building cleans the walls of an office; Angel Clark, a mail room employee with print shop experience, makes copies of optional learning packets that are distributed at the 11 CCPS meal sites. To read more about meal distribution, go to Page 2.

## Maryland school closure extends to April 24, CCPS plans distance learning

Dr. Karen Salmon, state superintendent of Maryland public schools, announced Wednesday that schools will continue to be closed through Friday, April 24.

School systems around the state, including Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), are closed in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan issued an executive order earlier this week closing all nonessential businesses in an effort to slow the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). As Maryland officials report more cases of COVID-19 in the state, schools will remain closed.

"We did not make this decision lightly," Salmon said. "However, with the challenges facing our state and our country, we have a re-

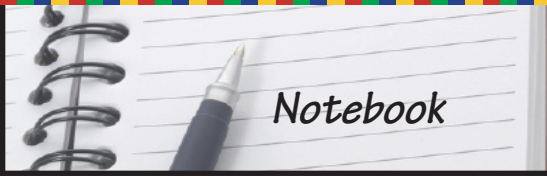
sponsibility to ensure the health and safety of our school communities and the community at large."

Salmon said she has been working closely with school system superintendents around the state to address issues on how to provide educational services to all students, including those who receive additional services. The continuity of education services will resume next week, she added.

"More information will be available in the coming days as we work collaboratively on a state-wide plan that maintains equitable standards and expectations for students," Salmon said.

The original school closure prompted CCPS to plan for distance

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### List of canceled events

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) has canceled several events due to the school closure through April 24. The following is a list of canceled events during the closure. Announcements of any make-up activities or rescheduled events, as well as any newly canceled events, will be made as determined.

**March 26-27**, Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA) events at North Point (state and national competitions canceled by MD MESA organization);

**March 26-28**, Henry E. Lackey High School spring production;

**March 27-29**, St. Charles High School spring production;

**March 27**, Communication Action Meeting at Starkey;

**March 28**, SAT at Westlake;

**March 28**, Westlake Prom (tentative April 25 reschedule date);

**March 28**, CCPS Special Education Parent Conference at St. Charles;

**March 28**, Destination Imagination (DI) state competition at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County;

**March 30-April 9**, Mock HSA exams

**March 31-April 8**, all All-County Band, Chorus, Orchestra rehearsals and concerts;

**April 2-4**, Westlake spring production;

**April 2-4**, Thomas Stone High School spring production;

**April 3**, Equity and Diversity Committee meeting;

**April 4**, McDonough prom;

**April 4**, LEGO Robotics event at the College of Southern Maryland (CSM);

**April 4**, ACT exam (rescheduled to June 13)

**April 4**, Elementary Math Challenge.

CCPS posts the most up-to-date information on its website, [ccboe.com](https://www.ccboe.com). Visit <https://www.ccboe.com/index.php/coronavirus-information> for the latest information.

### Online registration open

Online registration for prekindergarten and kindergarten opens March 30. For more information and requirements about prekindergarten, go to <https://www.ccboe.com/index.php/prekindergarten>. For kindergarten information, go to <https://www.ccboe.com/index.php/kindeergarten-registration>.



**Frederick Bell, food service manager at Thomas Stone High School and veteran of the CCPS summer meals program, said the food distribution feels similar to the summer program. “It’s summer in March,” he said.**

### FNS workers ensure kids are fed during closure

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) food and nutrition workers are handing out free meals to students who stop by 11 designated school sites around the county.

“Our kids need to eat,” said Ruby Smith, food service manager at St. Charles High School, one of the sites where people can drive up to pick up meals for children 18 and younger. Children have to be present in order to receive meals.

Starting Wednesday, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., students can pick up three meals — lunch, dinner and breakfast for the following day.

Breakfast includes cereal, crackers, milk and juice. Lunch and dinner will likely be cold sandwiches, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, milk and juice. A snack will be included. Also starting on Wednesday, parents and guardians can pick up instruction packets to keep children connected to school and their minds engaged with grade-level educational activities. The materials are also available online at [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com).

The meal program started earlier this week with breakfast and lunch being offered in the wake of Maryland public schools shutting down March 16 to 27. The program expanded after Gov. Larry Hogan on Monday ordered state restaurants, movie theaters and gyms to close in an effort to slow the spread of Novel Coro-

navirus (COVID-19).

Charles County meal sites include Henry E. Lackey, Maurice J. McDonough, St. Charles and Westlake high schools, Milton M. Somers Middle School and Dr. Thomas L. Higdon, Indian Head, Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, J.C. Parks and J.P. Ryon elementary school.

The sites are staffed by CCPS food and nutrition service (FNS) workers, many who messaged Crystal Richardson, supervisor of food service, pledging to help where they were needed.

“They do it for the kids,” Richardson said of her staff. “They’re going to go wherever the kids need them.”

While the summer meal program has been in place for at least 15 years, this is the first time FNS workers have set up for an emergency closure like the one announced March 12 calling for public school systems around the state to be shuttered for two weeks. On March 25, Dr. Karen Salmon, state superintendent of schools, announced that the school closure was extended to April 24.

“It’s summer in March,” said Frederick Bell, food service manager at Thomas Stone High School and veteran of the CCPS summer meals program. “When Crystal emailed me, I said, ‘I’m all in. If you’re doing it, I’m doing it.’”



## CLOSURE

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learning options for students.

The March 25 announcement of an extended closure affirms the need to continue student learning through online and paper packet learning activities.

CCPS will work with teachers later this week to assist them in reconnecting with their students and helping them become acquainted with the new learning activities. CCPS will work with teachers and students who do not have access to the internet or a device at home to ensure instruction continues. Paper packets will be available next week at meal distribution sites. CCPS staff is working this week on plans for students who need additional supports.

CCPS technology staff spent the first week of the closure readying laptops for staff. Work continues to provide technology to students with access to the Internet, but who do not have a laptop or tablet to work on at home.

Through distance learning, students will be able to complete assignments and communicate with their teachers. More information will be provided to parents and students throughout the week regarding distance learning.

“Teaching and learning is our core mission, and it’s time to re-engage teachers with what they love to do. We will begin our continuation of learning plan with four subjects — math, social studies, English and sci-

ence for all grade levels,” Hill said. “We hope to layer on additional subjects as we move through this new way of providing educational services to our community.”

CCPS students continue to have access to optional online learning resources they can use as an enrichment tool and to stay connected to school. To connect to the online resources, go to [ccboe.com](http://ccboe.com) and click the ‘Online learning resources’ slide on the front of the website. Paper packets of the online materials are available at meal sites. These optional materials will be available until the roll out of the distance learning materials later next week.

Free meals are being offered at school sites around the county, including three additional sites — Dr. Thomas L. Higdon, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd and J.C. Parks elementary schools.

The sites operate from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, rain or shine. Students receive three meals, including a lunch and dinner meal, and a breakfast pack. They must be present to receive the meals. The sites are:

- Henry E. Lackey High School;
- Maurice J. McDonough High School;
- St. Charles High School;
- Westlake High School
- Milton M. Somers Middle School;
- Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary

School;

- Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School;
- J.C. Parks Elementary School;
- Indian Head Elementary School;
- Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School; and
- J.P. Ryon Elementary School.

CCPS school psychologists are available by phone 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Parents and guardians can call 240-776-5802 to talk to school psychologists about their children’s social, emotional and behavioral development.

During the closure, most CCPS staff members are teleworking, but are still available to assist parents, guardians and staff.

AskCCPS is an online help desk that connects users with answers to technology and general questions. Go to [ccboe.com](http://ccboe.com) and click the AskCCPS button under the slideshow.

Users can fill out a ticket and receive an answer within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. For a quick answer, click Frequently Asked Questions under What’s New section of the website or on the AskCCPS page.

The state school closure has resulted in the cancellation or postponements of many CCPS events and activities. An updated list of cancellations and postponements can be found at <https://www.ccboe.com/pr/ccps-events-canceled-due-to-school-system-closure/>.

## Free, temporary internet hotspots at school locations during school closure

Cellular hotspots are now available to the public in parking lots at four Charles County public schools.

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), in partnership with AT&T FirstNet, has purchased and placed public access WiFi cellular hotspots at Piccowaxen Middle School, Matthew Henson Middle School, Mt. Hope Nanjemoy Elementary School and T.C. Martin Elementary School. CCPS chose the hotspot locations using information from its recent student technology survey, Comcast and Verizon hotspot maps, and a recent broadband survey county government conducted to determine the areas in highest need.

“CCPS created the hotspots to support both the needs of our students and staff as well as members of the community. Service is free to the public and CCPS will keep the hotspots active throughout the public health crisis,” Superintendent Kimberly Hill said.

Internet users can park in the front parking lot of the schools, re-

main in their cars, and complete essential work on the internet, Jason Stoddard, director of school safety and security, said. The hotspots will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Stoddard said the school system is asking that users do not use the hotspots to stream videos.

CCPS uses video surveillance to monitor parking lots and the exteriors of all school buildings.

The Charles County Sheriff’s Office will also regularly patrol the areas around schools. Schools are closed to the public, but critical staff members are still working.

CCPS is using grant funds provided by the Maryland Center for School Safety to cover the initial costs of the project.

The CCPS offices of instructional technology, transportation, and school safety and security worked to complete the project within a week.

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School News is published by  
Charles County Public Schools  
301-932-6610  
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Fax: 301-932-6651

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## Ask CCPS available during office closure

To limit the possible spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is moving to a modified telework schedule through March 27 for eligible support staff.

Some 12-month employees will be required to report to work on site to conduct business operations. Supervisors and principals will notify those employees and ensure workspaces meet social distancing guidelines.

All employees should continue to monitor their CCPS email for updates on their work schedule and the school system's operating status.

The CCPS Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building switchboard, 301-932-6610 and 301-870-3814, is closed to the public beginning Friday, March 20. The switchboard remains closed.

Parents, staff and community members in need of assistance can log on to CCPS website at [ccboe.com](http://ccboe.com) and look for the Ask CCPS menu button located under the photo slideshow.

Ask CCPS is a help desk for students, staff, parents and the community. The system features two areas for questions – general questions and technology requests.

CCPS staff are monitoring the system and will respond within 24 hours to inquiries as they are received, Monday through Friday. During the closure, CCPS is communicating with parents and staff via email, text notifications for text message subscribers, [ccboe.com](http://ccboe.com), the 24-hour information line at 301-934-7410, and CCPS social media outlets.

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“This is a temporary solution to provide access to our communities who don't have internet access capabilities or a large amount of nearby public access hotspots,” Hill said. CCPS is continuing to work with AT&T FirstNet to increase signal strength and bandwidth throughout the deployment.

The CCPS instructional technology team is working on a more permanent solution for public access WiFi at schools located in or near school communities with the most need.

### Directions to access the hotspot

Pull into the front parking lot

Open your WiFi connection or Network connection screen

Look for the network name “Public Access”

The network password is Charles County (one word, the letter C is capitalized both times). A password is necessary so Apple devices can connect.

## Personnel

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

### Job Openings

**Bus Driver** — Annex 1, 10-month position. Candidates must have a high school diploma and five year of successful work experience as a school bus driver is preferred. Apply by March 31.

**Secretary to the Principal** — C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School, 12-month position. A high school diploma and experience with Quicken or QuickBooks desirable. Apply by April 6.

**Administrative Intern** — Location to be determined, 11-month position. Bachelor's degree and Standard Professional Certificate issued by the Maryland State Department of Education are required. Apply by April 30.

**IEP Facilitator (pool for future openings)**

— All schools, 11-month position. Bachelor's degree required; master's degree preferred. Three years of satisfactory special education classroom teaching experience required. Apply by June 30.

**Business Education Teacher** — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 31.

**Family and Consumer Science Teacher** — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 31.

**French Teacher** — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 31.

**Library Media Specialist** — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 31.

**Physical Education Teacher** — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 31.

**Spanish Teacher** — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 31.

**HVAC Mechanic II** — CCPS Maintenance Shop, 12-month position. A high school diploma and any combination equivalent for four years of journey-level experience in HVAC trade. Position open until filled.

**ESOL Teacher** — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Position open until filled.

**Family and Consumer Science Teacher** — St. Charles High School, 10-month position. Position open until filled.

**Art Teachers** — All elementary schools, 10-month position. Candidates must be able to read and write effectively and be capable of performing manual labor. Position open until filled.

**Building Service Assistant Manager** — All schools, 12-month position. Position open until filled.