

School News



Board, employees agree on raises, benefit changes

The Board of Education and representatives of the school system's two employee groups signed contracts May 8 that provide for pay raises, and salary scale and benefit changes.

The agreements provide for a 5 percent increase for all classified employees as well as for administrators and supervisors and ROTC instructors. The cost-of-living increase for all teachers is 4 percent. The Education Association of Charles County (EACC) negotiated another percent increase to reduce the number of years it takes a teacher to get to the top of the pay scale. Teachers will reach the top of their scale in 20 years.

The EACC and the Board agreed to a three-year contract in which only salary and workload issues are open for renegotiation during that time. The two groups agreed that

guidance counselors who attain advanced certification, as National Board of Certified Counselors, will receive an additional \$2,500. Additionally, newly hired teachers who do not join the EACC, beginning July 1, 2007, will pay a fair share fee that covers services rendered through contract negotiations, enforcement and grievances. Current employees are exempt from the fee. Several changes were made to leave provisions including an increase in the payout of unused sick leave upon retirement from \$55 to \$85 up to 90 days; wording that allows eight weeks of sick leave to be used for parental leave; and the conversion of annual leave in excess of the 50-day limit to be converted to sick leave as of Sept. 1 each year instead of being forfeited.

Extra pay for extra duty rates increase 5
See Contracts, Page 2

Board passes redistricting

The Board of Education on May 8 voted on final redistricting plans that will redistribute elementary student populations and establish an attendance zone for Mary B. Neal Elementary School, which is under construction on Piney Church Road in Waldorf. The redistricting does not take effect until August 2008.

The Board voted 6 to 1 to approve Redistricting Alternative A. The plan changes attendance zones for T.C. Martin, Walter J. Mitchell, Mary H. Matula, Eva Turner and J.P. Ryon elementary schools and creates the zone for Neal while relieving overcrowding at other schools. Rezoning at elementary schools is deferred until August 2008 when Neal is opened.

The Board approval ended a six-month process that included development by a committee of two alternatives, two public hearings and a review by the Superintendent and the Board of Education.

Board to meet

The next meeting of the Board of Education is Monday, May 21. The Board will hold a student recognition ceremony at 6 p.m. at North Point High School. A work session will follow the student recognition at 7 p.m. Agenda items include an update on the budget and an information session on testing.

Last day of school

The last day for Charles County Public Schools students is set for Wednesday, June 13. The last day for teachers is June 14. June 8, 11, 12, 13 are two-hour early dismissal days.

The last day for the 3's program and pre-kindergarten is June 6.

Smallwood's Habash is 2007 Teacher of the Year

Julia Habash feels her greatest contribution as a teacher has been being part of changing the attitudes of students' towards mathematics. She wants to teach students how to embrace the "journey of education" by showing them learning about math is enjoyable and relevant to their everyday lives.

To do this, she said she must have an understanding of what inspires students and recognizes their inner strengths to create an environment where they can realize their potential and enjoy learning about math. Habash uses her passion to help not only students, but fellow teachers and community members, to excel in the area of education. For the past two years, all of Habash's students have passed the math portion of the High Schools Assessment exams.

For these accomplishments, Habash has been named as the 2007 Charles County Teacher of the Year and the county's nominee for consideration for the Maryland State



Julia Habash

Teacher of the Year

Teacher of the Year award. The Maryland State Board of Education on May 31 will recognize Habash for her many contributions to Charles County Public Schools and

See Teacher, Page 2



Insurance enrollment, rates

Open enrollment for hospitalization ends on May 18. New biweekly rates are:

	Family	Individual
HMO	\$115.50	\$40.00
PPN	\$178.00	\$64.00
C. Comp	\$187.50	\$67.00

New rates are effective on July 1, and will be reflected on the July 6 paycheck. Employees who want to enroll for hospitalization must go to <http://www.ccboe.benelogic.com> and sign up for the plan they want. Only HMO and PPN plans are available for new enrollment. Comparison information on the two plans is available at all buildings. Contact Heather Huff, hhuff@ccboe.com, with questions.

Aspiring leaders

Charles County Public Schools is opening registration for the 2007 CCPS Leadership Institute. The Leadership Institute is the week of June 25 –29 from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at North Point High School in Waldorf. Participants can receive three MSDE credits or three graduate credits from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland. Contact the Office of Staff Development at ext. 7332 or email staffdevelopment@ccboe.com to register.

On the cover

Pictured on the front page are exemplary employees honored by the Board of Education in April. Pictured from left to right are: Deidra L. Fuller, secretary to the Principal at Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary School; Elvear A. Johnson, vice principal at Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School; Marcellus A. Pailen, instructional music teacher at Matthew Henson Middle School; and Deborah A. Williams, guidance counselor at William B. Wade Elementary School.

Teacher

Continued from page 1

General Smallwood Middle School, where she has been teaching for 31 years.

Habash has been teaching since 1961 when she began teaching geometry and statistics at an all girls' school in Beirreh, Palestine. Her teaching career in Charles County began in 1969 at Thomas Stone High School, where she taught math for three years. She transferred to Smallwood in 1976 to teach Algebra, Algebra I and Algebra II classes. Today, she has more than 70 students and is the mathematics department chairperson. She said she is honored to receive this award.

"I am very well aware of all the talented and hard working teachers through the county. It is humbling to be recognized for what I love doing; to teach. To be recognized at this time is the highlight of my career," Habash said.

She believes a key factor in the learning process is allowing students, teachers and parents to work together to create educational goals and encouraging children to actively participate in shaping their education. In a letter of recommendation, Smallwood Principal Cynthia Douglass-Baker wrote that Habash "understands the individual needs of students and encourages their talents."

Baker also said Habash is truly deserving of the award because she assesses each student and creates strategies to help them reach the next level. "She is a master teacher and her rapport with students, staff and community is to be applauded."

Director of Instructional Programs Drew Jepsky also wrote a letter of recommendation and said Habash is a motivator and has fused technology with mathematics by introducing the use of the TI 83 Plus calculator, used for equations and graphs. "She has taken all of her students to an understanding of mathematics that far exceeds what is expected."

Beyond the classroom, Habash participates in many school-related committees and programs, such as the Mathcounts team, the School Improvement Planning Committee and the Saturday School Tutoring Program. She is involved in the University of Maryland Tutoring Program and works part-time at Prince George's Community College as a math instructor. She also recently helped a parent of one of her former students to pass two math classes at the College of Southern Maryland.

"She made learning fun and I looked forward to our tutoring sessions. The school system needs more honest, committed, dedicated and caring teachers like Julia Habash....because of Mrs. Habash's help, I graduated May 2003 with my Associates of Applied Science," parent Shera Cobey wrote.

Habash earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics Education from Bowie State University in Maryland in 1976 and her Master of Arts degree in Education and Human Development from George Washington University in 1982.

Contracts

Continued from page 1

percent and tuition reimbursement maximums were raised to \$2,225 from \$1,800 and are no longer credit-based. The Board is also instituting a prepaid program for reimbursement with participating colleges.

Major changes negotiated with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union for non-certificated employees include an across the board 5 percent cost of living increase; a cap placed to 50 days the amount of annual leave that a 12-month employee can accumulate (excess leave will be transferred to sick leave on Sept. 1 of each year); and changes to funeral leave benefits. Additionally, there are changes to the retirement.

The two contracts also call for the formation of several study committees. The

EACC, AFSCME and the Board agreed to review plans related to health insurance and to look at job rehabilitation and retention programs for employees on personal injury leave and workman's compensation. The EACC and Board also plan to study a testing procedure program to address concerns when there is a reasonable suspicion that an employee may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. All extra pay positions, the number of positions, changes, categories and procedural language will also be reviewed. AFSCME agreed to help form a committee to look at salary scales and to discuss ways to eliminate the need for the current number of scales.

Salary scales and revised contracts will be posted on the school system website by July 1.

Diggs dedicates school

Staff, students and community members celebrated the opening of William A. Diggs Elementary School in a formal ceremony held Friday, May 4, at the school.

William Diggs Elementary School opened on August 28, 2006. It is 86,000 square feet, and designed as a one-story building. The \$23 million cost of the school was forward funded by the Charles County Commissioners and was built entirely with local money. Kristin Shields is the first principal of the school and Sandra McDuffie is the first vice principal.

The school was named after William A. Diggs, who was a Charles County Public Schools student who later became a teacher.



Diggs kindergarten students Jeremy Harley, Kendel Hammock, Teagan Rohrbaugh, Nia Goss, Sean Joseph and Nicholas Sagun say the Pledge of Allegiance at the dedication along with Board Vice Chairman Roberta Wise, Superintendent James Richmond and Board Chairman Donald Wade.



Top photo, from left, Shawnee Zanca, Patricia Williams and JoAnne Shelak hold items that were put into a time capsule. Bottom photo, from left, Diggs Vice-Principal Sandra McDuffie, Principal Kristin Shields, Superintendent of Schools James Richmond and Board Chairman Donald Wade pass the ceremonial key.



Students and employees passed the ceremonial key at the dedication. Pictured from left to right, back row are: Diggs employees Bruce Washington, Dana Freundel, JoAnne Shelak, Jennifer Gandee and Charna Brooks and left to right, front row are: Diggs students Mychael Warren, Julian Jackson, Samantha Williams and Elaina Soriano.

Personnel

Apply for positions at www.ccboe.com/hur, or in writing to the personnel office. Positions are open until filled unless otherwise noted. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job openings

Adult Education Teacher – Lifelong Learning Center; part-time, six-hour position. Apply by May 15.

Building Service Manager – T.C. Martin Elementary School; 12-month position. Apply by May 16.

Special Education Instructional Assistant – Eva Turner Elementary School; Life Skills class; 7.5-hour day, 10-month position. Apply by May 18.

Building Service Worker – Two openings; Piccowaxen Middle School and J.P. Ryon Elementary School; 12-month positions. Apply by May 18.

Secretary – Special education; F.B. Gwynn Educational Center; 12-month position. Apply by May 22.

Special Education Instructional Assistant – Theodore G. Davis Middle School; Life Skills class; 7.5-hour, 10-month position. Apply by May 23.

In-School Retention Instructional Assistant – Theodore G. Davis Middle School; 7.5-hour, 10-month position. Apply by May 23.

Senior Project Manager – Jesse L. Starkey

Administration Building; bachelor's degree in construction management; 12-month position.

Food Service Workers – Openings at North Point High School, William A. Diggs Elementary School and William B. Wade Elementary School; three-hour, 10-month positions.

RPG/JAVA Programmer Analyst – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; bachelor's degree in computer science or related discipline; 12-month position.

HVAC Mechanic II – Maintenance shop; 12-month position.

Mathematics Teachers – Openings at all middle schools.

Mathematics Teachers – Openings at all high schools.

Occupational Therapist – All age levels

Family & Consumer Science Teachers – Openings at the middle school level.

Kindergarten Teacher – Indian Head Elementary School.

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher – Indian Head Elementary School.

Speech Language Pathologists – Openings at elementary schools.

Reading Resource Teachers – Openings at all elementary schools.

Reading Recovery Teacher – Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary.

Business Teachers – Openings at all high schools.

English Teachers – Openings at all high schools.

English Teachers – Openings at all middle schools.

Library & Media Specialists – Openings at all elementary, middle and high schools.

Spanish Teachers – Openings at all high schools.

Chemistry Teacher – Openings at all high schools.

French Teachers – Openings at all high schools.

Biology Teachers – Openings at all high schools.

Science Teachers – Openings at all high schools.

Science Teachers – Openings at all middle schools.

Extra pay position

Thomas Stone High School has the following opening:

• Head varsity girls' basketball coach
Contact Principal L.C. Martin, 301-753-1756, to apply.

Staff notes

Teacher honored for MESA contributions
Andrea Mertel, a science teacher at Dr. James Craik Elementary School, is the 2007 Outstanding Maryland MESA Teacher of the Year. She is being awarded a certificate and a \$500 check.

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