

School News



Nearly 260 teachers hired; orientation begins

Superintendent James E. Richmond delivered opening remarks Aug. 13 to 260 new teachers, encouraging them to work to inspire students and to create opportunities for children to succeed.

Julia Habash, Charles County Public Schools 2007 Teacher of the Year, said she is proud to be a math teacher who does what is right for her students. While telling a story of a teacher who was asked what she “makes,” Habash said teachers “make a difference in the lives of children.”

“Be the Difference” is the theme of the Charles County Public Schools New Teacher Orientation that opened Aug. 13 at La Plata High School and continues through Aug. 17. The weeklong induction to Charles County Public Schools provides newly hired teachers an opportunity to learn about the county, the school system and to gather classroom management and instruction tips from veteran teachers.

Student performances highlighted the opening ceremony. Following a routine by the Benjamin Stoddert Middle School step team, Deputy Superintendent Ronald Cunningham told teachers the performance

was an example of the energy students would bring to their classrooms and of the many extracurricular activities Charles County Public Schools offers. Other student performances included musical selections by members of the Maurice J. McDonough High School Madrigals, the Westlake High School jazz band and a violin solo by Sydney Christley of Dr. James Craik Elementary School.

John Brooks, the 2007 Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher recipient, gave new teachers “P” principles to successful teaching, including professionalism, possessing a sense of humor, providing encouragement and the power of relationships.

“The main ingredient to a child’s success is the magic of interaction between a teacher and students. You need to create opportunities for students to succeed. In my 42 years in education, I have never met a child who did not want to succeed,” Richmond said.

“This morning is about the why,” Cunningham said at the end of the ceremony. The rest of the week is about the how, what, when and where, Cunningham said.

Veteran teachers return Aug. 20.

Three pay dates in August

There are three pay dates in August. This year is the third pay-check is the first check of the new contract for 10-month teachers. On all third pay dates, the only deductions that come out of the check are taxes and classified retirement. Other deductions, such as insurance premiums, are not taken out in a three-pay-check month. The first check in September will have all deductions coming out of checks, which will make the take-home amount less than the Aug. 31 check.

Health insurance

New teachers and other new 10-month employees should make their selection for health insurance on the Benelogic system by Aug. 31. For more information, contact Heather Huff, hhuff@ccboe.com.

Welcome back

Welcome back to teachers and other 10-month employees. Veteran teachers return Aug. 20. Students begin Aug. 27.

Most elementary, middle schools meet AYP; no county schools on state watch list

Improvements in reading and math scores on the Maryland School Assessments (MSA) resulted in most Charles County schools meeting state progress targets for 2007.

Twenty Charles County elementary and middle schools met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), according to Maryland State Department of Education data released today. No county schools are on the state school improvement list. Charles County Public Schools has never had a school on the state’s watch list.

AYP is determined by student results on the Maryland School Assessments (MSA)

taken by students in grades 3-8 in March. Elementary and middle schools met the standards in 497 of 513 categories.

If a school is unable to make progress in all areas, including attendance, for two consecutive years, it is identified for School Improvement status and faces a variety of state requirements. School systems are notified of any school not making progress in all areas for one year, but these schools do not face any state mandates, requirements or intervention.

Seven schools missed achieving a target in one or more subgroups for the first time this year. These schools achieved their

Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) last year, but fell short this year. Schools not meeting AYP in one or more subgroups in 2007 are Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School, Gale-Bailey Elementary School, T.C. Martin Elementary School, John Hanson Middle School, Matthew Henson Middle School, Piccowaxen Middle School and General Smallwood Middle School.

The Maryland State Department of Education has not yet released High School Assessment scores and graduation numbers. High school scores will be released at the end of August. AYP information for high schools will be released in the fall.



Notebook

Self-service portal

The employee self service portal can be accessed from any computer with web access. To access the employee self-service portal:

- Go to www.ccboe.com.
- Click on Staff Services.
- The first item in the middle of the Staff Services page is the Employee Self Service Portal. Click on Employee Self Service to access the portal directly or click on the underlined words (more information) to find out what information you can access and how to make any changes.

- There is a security alert; click the box marked 'OK'.
- Enter your employee ID number.
- Your pin is the last four digits of your Social Security number.

Direct deposit

Charles County Public Schools encourages employees to use direct deposit for pay checks. Use of direct deposit eliminates concerns about receiving checks in a timely manner on snow days and during the summer. To sign up for direct deposit, fill out the Authorization Agreement for Automatic Deposits – Credits which is available at your school office or on the school system's website. Attach a voided or cancelled check to the form and forward to the payroll office. Allow one payroll cycle for information verification and checks will be deposited on the second payroll cycle, pending bank approval of your information.

On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are four of Charles County Public Schools newest teachers. Pictured from left, are Chad Cavendar, English teacher, Westlake High School; Corinne Dockery, science teacher, Mattawoman Middle School; Amy Rogers, Theodore G. Davis Middle School; and Kenneth Brown, family and consumer science teacher, Westlake High School.

In memoriam

Barbara Ann Johnson

Barbara Ann Johnson, a special education instructional assistant at General Smallwood Middle School, passed away August 5, 2007.

Mrs. Johnson began her 35-year career in Charles County Public Schools in August 1972 at Gale-Bailey Elementary School. She worked at Gale-Bailey for more than 34 years and transferred to Smallwood last year.

Mrs. Johnson's career working with children began in the early 1960's when she was employed at Abel's Nursery in Marbury. From there, Mrs. Johnson worked at Physicians Memorial Hospital, now Civista Medical Center, in La Plata, before coming to work for CCPS.

Mrs. Johnson lived in Pisgah with her husband Wesley Johnson, and was the mother of Jasper Johnson.

Services were held Friday, Aug. 10, at Metropolitan United Methodist Church in Indian Head. Burial followed at Resurrection Cemetery, Clinton.



Barbara Johnson

Donna Lee DeVitis

Donna Lee DeVitis, a secretary in the transportation office, passed away on Aug. 2, 2007. Mrs. DeVitis worked in the transportation department from January 2001 to the present. She had been employed with Charles County Public Schools since May 1981.

Previously, Mrs. DeVitis worked at the Pomonkey Annex, Henry E. Lackey High School, Benjamin Stoddert Middle School and Thomas Stone High School.

Mrs. DeVitis lived in Waldorf with her husband, Daniel DeVitis, and was the mother of two sons, Dexter and Derek DeVitis.

Services were held at St. Michael Byzantine Catholic Church, Canonsburg, Pa. Burial followed in Queen of Heaven Cemetery, McMurray, Pa. A memorial gathering was held Aug. 15 at Raymond Funeral Home in La Plata.



Donna DeVitis

Board approves six vice principal appointments

The Board of Education on Aug. 14 approved six vice principal appointments. Appointed were: Tammika Little, Douglass Dolan, Kim Barnes, Danny Henry, Melissa Williams and Kimberly Holmes.

Little was appointed as a vice principal at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School. She previously served as a gifted education resource teacher at General Smallwood Middle School and has also worked as a language arts teacher and communications skills teacher.

Dolan was selected as a vice principal for Theodore G. Davis Middle School. Dolan is new to Charles County Public Schools and most recently served as an assistant principal at Friendly High School in Prince George's County. He started his career in education in 1995 as a social studies teacher.

Barnes will work at North Point High School for Science, Technology and Industry. Barnes is new to Charles County Public Schools and most recently worked as a lan-

guage arts teacher at an Alexandria, VA middle school.

Henry is assigned to La Plata High School. He most recently worked as an educational consultant for M and J Charter School Management in Trenton, MI. He has served as a principal, teacher and coach since beginning his career in 1973.

Williams is assigned to Malcolm Elementary School. She most recently worked as a reading specialist at a Prince George's County elementary school and has also worked as an elementary teacher and summer school principal.

Holmes was selected for Henry E. Lackey High School. She most recently worked as a principal designee/English Teacher at Antioch Freshman Academy in Tennessee and has served as an English and language arts teacher at schools in both Maryland and Tennessee.

All appointments take effect immediately.

CCPS teachers look to the stars and explore space during Space Foundation classes

Charles County Public Schools teachers explored kinesthetic astronomy and earth systems science during two summer institute sessions offered July 30 through Aug. 10 as part of a school system partnership with the Space Foundation.

During the first session, "Earth Systems Science: Our Earth Revealed," held July 30 – Aug. 3 at Maurice J. McDonough High School, participants studied connections between geology, natural resources, lunar phases, ecology and relationships to the history and composition of planets and moons in the solar system.

Participants also took a field trip to Calvert Cliffs State Park to study rock types, geologic laws and time and ecology of the Chesapeake Bay area.

The courses offer educators ways to focus and understand how to integrate science, technology, engineering and math into all content areas and lesson plans.

Erica Strass, a science teacher at Berry Elementary School, chose to participate in both sessions because of the "lure of geology and astronomy." She said the earth system's course was one of the better courses she has taken during her 12-year career with CCPS.

"I teach my students all of these ideas but it is great to learn from the space institute. The more I know, the better I can teach. We are comparing geology, the layers of earth and how they got that way. We can compare our geology to the geology of other planets," Strass added.

Thomas Stone High School chemistry teacher Christopher Rooney also participated in both sessions and said the collaboration with teachers from other counties and grade levels was interesting. "The sessions provide another avenue of teaching. The whole point is to 'wow' students, to show why this is important and how it applies," he said.

Sue Gray, a CCPS science specialist, said this is the first time the school system, along with the Space Foundation, has offered the summer institute to teachers. The sessions were offered to teachers at no cost and were open to all subject and grade-level



Foundation participants perform beaker experiments to observe structural geology and sediments. From left, are Jay Temple, educational consultant for the Space Foundation and teacher of the first session, CCPS teachers Patricia Williams, Pat Kennedy, Deborah Hayes and Charyn Scrivens.

teachers in the tri-county area.

Participants could also sign up for Maryland State Department of Education credit or for graduate credit through the Colorado-based Regis University. During the second session, "Astronomy Principles for the Classroom: Kinesthetic Astronomy," held Aug. 6-10 at McDonough, participants studied moving astronomy, such as orbital movements and similarities between Earth and Mars.

Participants also took a field trip to Goddard Space Flight Center to experience the day-to-day operations and to understand the role the center plays in space exploration.

Gray said participating teachers included science teachers, and social studies, English and resource education teachers. "The sessions focus on content that can fit into all areas of curriculum. Participants are a mixed group of tri-county K-12 teachers," Gray added.

James Mascia, an English teacher from Westlake High School, and Aparna Joshi, a gifted resource teacher at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, participated in both sessions and enjoyed learning aspects of science to incorporate into their lesson plans.

"I have never seen an activity like kinesthetics. I learned hands-on activities that are great to incorporate into my lesson plans," Joshi said. Mascia said he signed up to take the courses to obtain MSDE credit and to learn cross content information that pull aspects from one subject to another.

Two county science teachers, Sandra Hamke and Ian Buter, were selected in July 2006 to participate in Space Foundation courses in Colorado. Based on their experiences and input, Superintendent of Schools James E. Richmond decided to partner with the Space Foundation to bring courses to Charles County. Hamke and Buter both participated in the courses offered this year.

Gray said CCPS and the Space Foundation will attempt to offer up to four courses next summer, including a rocketry course and a biology and outer space course.



Left photo, from left, are: Jay Temple, CCPS teachers Anthony Jones, Brenda Hayes and Margaret McClelland.

Right photo, from left, are: CCPS teachers Jennifer Davis, Jan Steeger and Erica Strass.



Personnel

Apply for positions at www.cchoe.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

Video Production Technician – Annex 101 Building, Office of Communications; full-time position. Bachelor's degree in video production or related field required. Apply by August 23.

Food Service Worker – Theodore G. Davis Middle Schools; three-hour position.

Food Service, Assistant Manager – La Plata High School. Apply by August 29.

Kindergarten Reading Instructional Asst. – Malcolm Elementary School. Apply by August 21.

Environmental Education Assistant – Nanjemoy Creek Environmental Center, full-time position. Bachelor's degree in natural science or related field required.

Media Instructional Asst. – General Smallwood Middle School. Apply by August 21.

Meeting in the Middle Instructional Asst. – Mattawoman Middle School. Apply by August 21.

Secretary – William A. Diggs and Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer elementary schools. Apply by August 21 for Diggs; August 29 for Jenifer.

Instructional Assistant, Secondary –

General Smallwood Middle School.

Apply by August 21.

Culinary Arts Instructional Assistant – North Point High School. Apply by August 21.

Building Service Manager – John Hanson Middle School. Apply by August 27.

Certified School Psychologists – All age levels. Full-time position. Must be eligible for MSDE certification.

Specialist, Library Media – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; Master's Degree required. Open until filled.

Vice Principals – Master's degree and certification required.

Instructional Specialists – Positions open at elementary and middle school levels; 11-month positions. Open until filled.

Specialist in Early Childhood Education – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, Master's degree required. Open until filled.

Title I Instructional Specialist for Early Childhood Education – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; bachelor's degree and five years experience required. Open until filled.

Occupational Therapists – All age levels. Bachelor's degree required.

Speech Language Pathologists – Openings at all age levels.

Reading Resource Teachers – Openings

at county middle schools; Master's degree required.

Guidance Counselors – Openings at all age levels. Master's degree required.

NJROTC Instructor – Westlake High School; 11-month position.

Special Education Teacher of the Emotionally Disturbed – Openings at Theodore G. Davis Middle School, Westlake, North Point and Henry E. Lackey high schools; 10-month positions. Bachelor's degree required.

Reading Recovery Teacher Leader – Openings at county elementary schools.

Teacher, Three-year-old program – Openings at Title I schools.

Charles County Public Schools is seeking teacher candidates who meet the certification requirements established by the MSDE for the following areas:

- Mathematics
- Family & Consumer Science
- Business
- Spanish and French
- Science
- Biology and Chemistry
- Music
- Special education
- Computer science

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The mission of Charles County Public Schools is to provide an opportunity for all school-aged children to receive an academically challenging, quality education that builds character, equips for leadership, and prepares for life, in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.