

School News



Where success is measured one student at a time

October 26, 2007

R-279



Thomas Stone High School held a bus driver social Monday, Oct. 22, to thank bus drivers for their hard work. Pictured are Vice Principal Michael Meiser and school bus driver Dolores "Dee" Shelton. October 21-27 is National School Bus Safety Week.

CCPS provides prevention tips, reports MRSA cases

Although not officially confirmed, Charles County Public Schools officials believe there are two students with suspected Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). The students attend school at Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School and the F.B. Gwynn Educational Center.

MRSA, according to the Journal of School Nursing, is a disease-causing organism that has been present in hospital settings since the 1960s, but has emerged in recent years in community settings among healthy individuals. It is less resistant to antibiotics than other types of staph infections. Most bacterial infections, including staph and MRSA, are passed by direct contact. The best prevention is education of proper hygiene practices and regular, thorough washing of hands.

People with staph infections, including MRSA infections, do not need to avoid public settings like schools and offices if skin lesions can be adequately covered, according

to the Maryland State Health Department. Students with suspected cases of MRSA are required to provide documentation of the diagnosis from a physician as well as have a doctor's note stating that they may return to school.

Parents have responded positively to a letter sent home with all students last week and have been getting their children checked if they notice an infection that is not healing. Parents are now notifying the schools, allowing us to better follow the situation. We are working closely with the Charles County Health Department, through school nurses, to monitor the possible cases. If teachers or staff have questions or concerns about MRSA, the symptoms or how it is transferred, ask a school nurse, who can provide the facts and information needed.

Building service workers have daily procedures for cleaning schools and buildings and already use the same cleaning products

Continued on Page 2

MSDE plans new site

Charles County Public Schools has been invited by the Maryland State Department of Education to preview the "infiLearn" system, an internet site that will contain curriculum textbook information. CCPS is one of three Maryland counties invited to provide input on the system.

Staff chosen as presenters

Three Charles County Public Schools employees have been selected to present at the National Staff Development Council's annual conference in December. Alesha Guechati, an instructional specialist at William B. Wade Elementary School, Tara Mattingly, a Title I instructional specialist for technology, and Meighan Hungerford, coordinator of elementary instruction, will present "Don't Break the Ice, Shatter It," which highlights ways to integrate technology into staff development sessions.

AEP students graduate

More than 214 students graduated from the 2007 CCPS Adult Education Program (AEP). A graduation ceremony was held Oct. 18 at Westlake High School and 56 students participated. During the 2006-07 school year, more than 1,314 students participated in the adult education program by taking general education development, English as a second language, family literacy and external diploma program classes.

First marking period ends

The first marking period ends Wednesday, Oct. 31.



Lackey teacher honored

Glenn Jones, a vice principal at Henry E. Lackey High School, will be honored by the National Wrestling Hall of Fame Nov. 18. Jones, along with four other Maryland scholastic wrestling coaches, will receive a "Lifetime Service to Wrestling Award," and will be recognized for serving as a role model for student athletes.

Teacher to address Board

Vera Young, an English teacher at Westlake High School, has been invited by the Maryland State Department of Education to address the State Board of Education on the Maryland High School Assessments.

Stargazers rise early

Students and staff at Westlake High School watched the Orionid meteor shower at 5:30 a.m., Monday, Oct. 22, at the school. Telescopes were provided by the Southern Maryland Astronomy Society and students were able to view the shower, as well as obtain close views of Venus and Saturn.

Two-hour early dismissal

The next two-hour early dismissal for students is Thursday, Nov. 1. Schools are also closed for students on Wednesday, Nov. 7. Schools and offices are closed Monday, Nov. 12, for Veterans' Day.

On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees from J. P. Ryon Elementary School. Pictured, from left, are: Dell Simmons, building service manager; Uranus Hester, instructional assistant; Devon Pacek, teacher; and Frank Carter, a behavior lab specialist.

In Memoriam

John Jeremiah Dugan Jr.

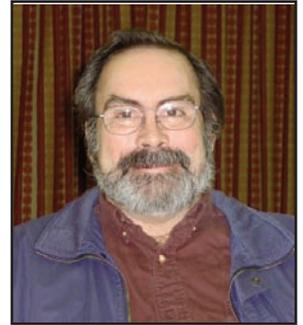
John Dugan, an instructional assistant at the Lifelong Learning Center, passed away Oct. 4, 2007.

Dugan began his 10-year career with Charles County Public Schools at the Lifelong Learning Center, where he tutored adults in basic education and life skills. Dugan also served as a tutor for the Charles County Literacy Council and was the executive director for two years.

Dugan attended the University of Maryland and served in the U.S. Air Force. He retired in 1995 from a 25-year career with the federal government.

Dugan lived in Welcome with his wife, Dawn, and enjoyed woodworking, antique cars and camping.

Services were held Saturday, Oct. 13 in Ironsides.



John Dugan Jr.

Board meeting - November 13, 2007

The Board of Education has released its tentative agenda for Nov. 13. The public portion of the meeting begins at 4:30 p.m. with student recognition. The meeting will air live on the Charles County Public Schools educational channel, Comcast 96.

Executive session - 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Call to order - 4:30 p.m.

- Pledge of Allegiance - North Point High School's JROTC Unit

Recognition

- Employees
- Students

Superintendent's update to the Board

Approval of minutes

Reports of officers/boards/committees

- Correspondence/Board updates
- Education Association update
- Student Board Member update

- Information item: School psychologists
- Information item: Gifted education
- Information item: Audit report
- Information item: Bridge to Excellence funding

Public Forum - 6:30 p.m.

Reports of officers/boards/committees

- Information item: CIP update
- Report item: Schematic report on high school 2011

Action items

- Personnel

Unfinished business

New business and future agenda items

- New business
- Legislative issues
- Future agenda items

Adjournment

Subscribe to receive CCPS press releases

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Subscribers can also submit story ideas and are able to bookmark the release, print the release, or view the release as a pdf file. Visit www.ccboe.com/pr for more information or to subscribe.

MRSA

as hospitals for areas such as restrooms and locker rooms. Building service managers and athletic directors understand the importance of following daily procedures in order to provide the safest environment possible for students and staff.

Phylis Reinard, the supervising school nurse, reminds employees that hand wash-

ing really does prevent the spread of infection. "Please make sure your students wash their hands often. Make sure you are helping children clean their hands before eating lunch or snacks," she said. Flu season is approaching, and the same precautions need to be used year round, Reinard added.

Continued from Page 1

National School Bus Safety Week is October 21-27

Each year in October, National School Bus Safety Week is held across the country to educate students, parents and the general public on school bus procedures to ensure the safety of all student bus riders. School Bus Safety Week was also established to recognize the hard work and dedication of school transportation professionals and school bus drivers, who ensure students have a safe bus ride to and from school each day.

This year's theme is "Be Aware! Cross with Care." According to the National Safety Council, school buses are the safest form of ground transportation in the United States. Charles County's 264 buses travel more than 33,900 miles daily, which amounts to 6.1 million miles per year. Most students ride a school bus at some time, and more than 21,000 students ride daily. There are 28 independent contractors that provide school bus services for Charles County Public Schools. Take time to thank the school bus drivers at each school and center for all of their hard work in ensuring our students arrive safely to school each day.

Meet two Charles County Public Schools bus drivers



Agatha Dorsey

Agatha Dorsey is a school bus driver for two county schools: La Plata High School and Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School. She also transports students to and from La Plata on an afternoon activity bus, new to Charles County Public Schools this school year. Dorsey also transports an Archbishop Neale student, whom she refers to as her "little angel," from La Plata High School to her home each day.

Dorsey, a Waldorf native, has worked for Koch Bus Service for 20 years. She said she likes her job because she enjoys working with kids. "I love being around the kids. You have to love being around kids to do this job," she said.

Dorsey drives one of the newer automatic transmission buses, equipped with a suspension seat and automatic air door. In previous years, school buses were equipped with manual, or stick, transmissions and drivers had to pull a large, heavy handle to operate the bus door. Dorsey said she likes her two-year-old bus, Bus #701, but would prefer to drive a stick. "This bus really shakes around on rough roads," she said.

She is a stickler for gum chewers and has a large, clear sign displayed on the front of her bus, "No chewing gum." Next to this sign, Dorsey proudly displays family photos, including photos of her grandchildren.

Dorsey's normal day begins at around 6:15 a.m. and ends at around 6 p.m.

Overall, Dorsey said she is happy with her job because her student's are always well behaved.



Darlene Aliff

Darlene Aliff is a school bus driver for two county schools: Maurice J. McDonough High School and Matthew Henson Middle School. She also transports students to and from the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, Thomas Stone High School and St. Mary's Star of the Sea, a private school located in Indian Head.

Aliff, a native of North Dakota, has worked for Keller Bus Service for 35 years. She said she enjoys driving a school bus because she enjoys being around the students. She also chose a career as a school bus driver to accommodate her family life. "I decided to drive a school bus because I wanted to be home with my kids. My children are grown and I continue to do this because I enjoy the kids," she said.

Aliff first learned to drive when she was 12-years-old on her family farm in North Dakota. She said she would drive her sister to school each day on a small tractor at 10 miles per hour. "When I was allowed to go 15 miles per hour, I thought I was flying," she added.

Aliff said her neighbor was the one to introduce her to the idea of driving a school bus. "She drove a bus and taught me how to drive it," she said. Being raised on a farm and being able to drive a tractor helped Aliff become used to driving large vehicles on a daily basis. Aliff's normal day on bus #610 begins at around 6:20 a.m. and ends at around 4 p.m.

She is a 30-year resident of Pomfret, where she enjoys raising horses and spending time with her family.

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

Special Education Instructional Assistant – General Smallwood Middle School; 10-month position. Apply by Nov. 2.

Literacy Instructional Assistant – Maurice J. McDonough High School; 10-month position. Apply by Nov. 2.

Instructional Assistant – La Plata High School; 10-month position. Apply by Nov. 2.

Building Service Worker – William A. Diggs Elementary School; full-time position. Apply by Oct. 31.

Food Service Workers – Berry and Dr. Thomas L. Higdon elementary schools; three-hour positions available. Apply by Nov. 2.

Food Service Worker – Theodore G. Davis Middle School; three-hour position. Open until filled.

Food Service Driver – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center. Position is open until filled.

External Diploma Program Advisor/Assessor – Adult Services/Stone

Annex; temporary position. Bachelor's degree required.

RPG/JAVA Programmer Analyst – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; full-time position. Bachelor's degree required.

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

Meeting in the Middle Instructional Assistant – General Smallwood Middle School; 10-month position. Apply by Oct. 29.

Instructional Assistant, Lifelong Learning Center – Part-time position.

Speech Language Pathologists – Openings at all age levels.

NJROTC Instructor – Westlake and North Point high schools.

Life Skills Teacher – Gale-Bailey Elementary School.

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

- Spanish
- Mathematics
- Science
- Computer Science/CISCO teacher
- Special Education

Fall play previews

Comcast Channel 96, Charles County Public School's educational television station, is now featuring fall play previews for all six county high schools.

Henry E. Lackey High School will feature "A Midsummer Night's Dream." La Plata High School is featuring "Alice in Wonderland." Maurice J. McDonough High School will present "Zombie Prom." Students at North Point High School will present "Sleepy Hollow." Thomas Stone High School will host performances of "The Crucible," and students at Westlake High School will feature performances of "The Miracle Worker."

For times, dates and ticket prices, tune into Channel 96 or visit www.ccboe.com/publicinfo/channel96.ftm.

Parent@School launch

The Parent@School interactive system will be available on Thursday, Nov. 1. The system will provide parents access to their child's school activities and achievements.

Parents must register for the service at their child's school or online at www.ccboe.com. The system will be available seven days a week, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

School News is published by Charles County Public Schools
301-932-6610
301-934-7220
Fax: 301-932-6651

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Charles County Public Schools
Post Office Box 2770
La Plata, Maryland 20646
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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.