

School News



Childers is Charles County's Teacher of the Year

A special moment in Sue Childers teaching career is a comment from one of her second-grade students. The T.C. Martin Elementary School teacher said she was saying goodbye to her students on the last day of school, when one of her special needs students stopped and told her, "I learned something this year. Thank you."

Childers said when children recognize what they have learned and what they have the ability to do, it makes teaching rewarding. "I truly believe there is a calling for teachers, for those who really care about making a difference in the lives of children," she said. These beliefs made Childers become a teacher; and helped her earn the 2008 Charles County Teacher of the Year award.

Childers, a third-grade teacher at Martin, received her "calling" in 1990 when she took her first educational position as a special education assistant for the Department of Defense Dependents' Schools in Germany. Being a



T.C. Martin third-grade teacher Sue Childers, center, helps students Elliot Weschler, left front, and Jasmin Shingles, right front, locate Iraq on a classroom map while students Jacob Canter, left back, and Alexia DeHetre, right back, look on. Childers was recently named the 2008 Charles County Teacher of the Year.

award and was, and still is, overwhelmed that she was chosen. "I was very, very honored to be considered for this award. When it was announced, I was truly overwhelmed and thought it was incredible that I had been chosen," she said.

Childers was nominated by Martin Principal Sabrina Robinson-Taylor and Caroline Timmons, Martin's vice principal. "Mrs. Childers creates a climate in which students are not afraid to ask questions, not afraid

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military spouse brought her to Maryland, where she became dual certified to teach early childhood and special education.

Childers will be recognized by the Maryland State Board of Education May 29 for her contributions to CCPS and the Martin school community, where she has been teaching since 1997.

She said she was honored to even be nominated for the

County budget allocation is \$3.2 million less than requested

The Charles County Commissioners on Tuesday announced that the school system would receive a \$9.5 million local increase, or a 7 percent increase in county funding over the fiscal year 2008 base.

The allocation is \$3.2 million less than the \$12.6 million the Board of Education requested from the county. The school system is still waiting on final funding numbers from the state, which is also expected to be about

\$150,000 less than expected.

The preliminary changes in state and local revenues change the school system's fiscal year 2009 operating budget total to \$299.4 million, which is a 6.1 percent increase.

Superintendent James E. Richmond said his first priority remains compensation for employees. "We will begin to look at our budget and cut things that do not affect students and the classroom," he said.

June 10 last day for students

The last day of school for students is Tuesday, June 10. The last day for teachers is Wednesday, June 11.

Maryland State Superintendent of Schools Nancy Grasmick approved a one-day waiver to the 180-day attendance rule for Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) this school year. Schools were closed on Monday, May 12, due to flooding and road closures caused by a two-day rainstorm.

Retirement contributions

Contributions to the State Teacher's Pension System will increase to 5 percent, beginning in July. Deductions will be made over 26 pay periods. These changes will begin with the July 2 pay check.

Open enrollment changes

CCPS has made a change to the existing health plans for overage dependents. Beginning July 1, dependent children up to age 25 can be covered under employee insurance plans.

There are requirements to ensure dependent children are eligible. Contact Heather Huff, 301-934-7341, for a list of requirements. Today is the last day for open enrollment.

2009-10 calendar survey

The Board of Education would like input on the 2009-10 calendar. A brief, five-question survey is located on the home page of the CCPS web site, www.ccboe.com. Take a moment to fill out the survey.



Notebook

Piccowaxen goes green

Piccowaxen Middle School was recently named a Maryland Green School by The Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education Maryland Green School Awards Program.

The process includes documented classroom integration of environmental issues, a demonstration of conservation management practices and evidence of existing community partnerships that help enhance environmental learning.

Kleyle wins theatre award

James Kleyle, an English and performing arts teacher at Henry E. Lackey High School, won the outstanding director award for the Port Tobacco Players production "Never Swim Alone" at the Liverpool International Theatre Festival held in May in Canada.

EACC to hold crab feast

The Education Association of Charles County (EACC) plans to hold its annual crab feast Friday, Aug. 22, at the Charles County Fairgrounds. The event is open to all employees. For more information, visit the EACC website at www.eaccmsta.com. Click on activities.

On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are exemplary employees recognized by the Board of Education at its May 13 meeting. Pictured, from left, are: Kimberly Dent, social studies teacher, Westlake High School; Linda Hayden, kindergarten instructional assistant, T.C. Martin Elementary School; Susan Ebbitt, special education teacher, North Point High School; Melissa Pascarella, instructional specialist, Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School; and Nancy Blizzard, Mattawoman Middle School.

Barnhart, Matula and Parks to welcome new principals

Superintendent James E. Richmond has announced the appointment of two principals and one transfer in the first round of administrative changes for the next school year.

C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School Principal Timothy Rosin has been named as principal of Mary H. Matula Elementary School for the 2008-09 school year.

He will replace Carol Leveillee, who was previously appointed as the principal of Mary B. Neal Elementary School, which opens in August.

Replacing Rosin as principal at Barnhart is Kimberly Hairston, who is the vice principal at the school.

Kristin Shields, former principal at William A. Diggs Elementary School, has been named as principal of J.C. Parks Elementary School. She replaces Cassandra Blacktree, who announced she is retiring at the end of this school year.

Rosin brings 10 years of experience as a



Kimberly Hairston

principal to Matula. He started with Charles County Public Schools in 1997 as vice principal at Barnhart and moved up to the principal spot the next year.

Hairston started her education career in 1988 as a teacher in West Virginia. She came to Charles County Public Schools in 1997 where

she served as a middle school language arts teacher until 2003 when she was named as vice principal at Barnhart. She has a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Concord University in West Virginia and a master's degree in education curriculum and instruction from McDaniel University.

Shields returns to Charles County Public Schools after a one-year absence. She was principal of Diggs in the 2006-07 school year, and recently served as principal of an elementary school in Pennsylvania. All assignments begin July 1.

Childers

to be wrong, and more importantly not afraid to be right. She has a true love for the profession," Robinson-Taylor said in her nomination letter.

Childers, whose students said it was "awesome" and "cool" that their teacher won such an award, said the nomination process helped her reflect on her career. "The process really made me reflect on why I do what I do each day. I really love working in early childhood education and care about being able to make a difference," she said.

The love and passion Childers has for education and her students was clear to Crystal Wedding, a T. C. Martin parent. Wedding said Childers taught both of her daughters and helped them learn to strive to do their best.

"The skills she instilled are still being used by my children. She has truly been one of the very best educators in Charles County. She is an exceptional educator and her teaching skills are outstanding," Wedding wrote in a nomination letter.

Beyond the classroom, Childers has par-

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ticipated in many school-related programs, such as the new teacher mentor program and the school improvement committee, and has been the third-grade team leader for the past six years. She has also written curriculum for science and language arts programs in CCPS. Childers said a highlight of her career has been working with new teachers.

"Being there to witness a new teacher evolve from frightened fledgling to confident educator is an extraordinary experience. The responsibility I felt was often overwhelming, but the rewards were beyond compare. I count it a privilege to have guided these teachers through their first trying years," Childers said.

Childers earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education, with a concentration in Special Education, from Bowie State University in 1997 and her Master of Science degree in Curriculum and Instruction from McDaniel College in 2000.

As Charles County's Teacher of the Year, Childers will compete for the Maryland Teacher of the Year award, which will be announced in October.

School system changes Tax Sheltered Annuity (TSA) plan, procedures

Beginning Sept. 12, Charles County Public Schools is moving to a single vendor for its Tax Sheltered Annuity (TSA) 403(b) plans. After a lengthy process, including an employee survey and review of proposals by numerous companies, the school system has chosen MetLife as its single plan provider.

Why do we have to change?

Federal regulations have changed, and the new Treasury Department requirements increase the amount of employer oversight required in monitoring and reviewing compliance, developing and maintaining plan documents and performance. There is not requirement to go to a single vendor, but service fees charged to employees are significantly lower when using a single vendor.

What did employees want?

In a survey conducted in January, employees ranked their top priorities for a 403(b). Employees ranked variety of investment options, low fees and no surrender penalties as the three most important features. The contract with MetLife addresses all three issues.

What improvements are offered?

Some of the improvements include:

- Lower fees for participants
- No surrender penalties upon separation or transfer
- A prescreened core group of

mutual funds and ongoing investment review

- Online account access for enrollment and fund allocation.
- Dedicated agents to service CCPS employees
- Mutual fund investments instead of annuity contracts

Has anything been discontinued?

Employees will no longer be able to take loans against their TSA account. Hardship withdraws, consistent with IRS rules, will be allowed.

What is next?

The change in payroll deduction begins Aug. 15 and takes effect in the Sept. 12 paycheck. Employees may not contribute to any TSA account other than the new MetLife account through payroll deduction.

All employees who contribute to a TSA will automatically be set up in a new MetLife account unless you notify the payroll department prior to Aug. 15. Kelli Scherer is the contact, and can be reached at kscherer@ccboe.com or 301-392-7564. Otherwise, your account will automatically be set up in a new MetLife account. Future contributions automatically default into a portfolio based on your estimated retirement date, unless you decide to select a different portfolio.

MetLife representatives will be available throughout August and early

September if employees want to make changes.

Employees can make changes to their portfolio by completing paperwork with a MetLife financial service representative, going on the Voice Response Unit (VRU) or through the MetLife website. In early August, MetLife will provide each employee with a personalized PIN number for the VRU and the website and agents will be available to meet with employees.

Former account balances may be transferred penalty free into your new MetLife account from Oct. 1, 2008, to March 31, 2009. After that time, there may be surrender penalties or fees.

Who made the decision?

CCPS used an independent third party consultant who manages the system's \$40 million classified pension plan to help with the process. The selection committee included senior staff from human resources, finance, and purchasing who have expertise in these matters.

Learn more about it

Charles County Public Schools plans to offer a series of informational and enrollment meetings to provide more details. The first informational meeting is scheduled for June 5, 3 p.m., at North Point High School in the auditorium. All system employees are invited. Additional meetings will be scheduled in June and August.

Summer hours changed for energy savings; schedules announced for schools, centers

Charles County Public Schools has approved a change in summer hours, beginning June 16, for offices in centers and schools that do not have extended day or community services programs. These locations are being placed on a 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. schedule. The schedule remains in effect until August 18, when returning teachers start.

C. Paul Barnhart, Berry, Dr. James Craik, William A. Diggs, Dr. Thomas L. Higdon, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, Malcolm, Walter J. Mitchell, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy, J.C. Parks and Eva Turner elementary schools will follow the summer schedule.

Mattawoman and Milton M. Somers middle schools, La Plata and North Point high schools, the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, the F.B. Gwynn Center and the Adult Services Center will also follow the 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. schedule.

Three county schools, Piccowaxen Middle School and Thomas Stone and Maurice J. McDonough high schools, have been designated as centralized meeting sites to accommodate evening meetings this summer.

Schools that have extended-day programs will operate to accommodate program schedules. J.P. Ryon Elementary School will begin to operate on the summer schedule June 27. Gale-Bailey Elementary School will operate on the summer schedule starting July 11.

Henry E. Lackey High School will begin to operate on the summer schedule July 14.

Community centers' camps and programs and day camp programs end on Aug. 1.

The change is expected to generate anywhere from \$100,000 to \$150,000 in energy savings for Charles County Public Schools.

Personnel

Apply for positions at www.cbboe.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

Secretary to Director of Program Support – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Apply by May 27.

Building Service Manager – Mary H. Matula Elementary School, 12-month position. Apply by May 28.

Special Education Instructional Assistant, Life Skills – Dr. James Craik Elementary School, 10-month position. Apply by June 3.

Food Service Worker – Openings at county schools, three- and four-hour, 10-month positions available.

Summer Academy Coordinator, elementary level – Master's degree or Advanced Professional Certificate and a minimum of three years experience in the classroom required. Apply by May 27.

Gifted Education Resource Teacher – Openings at county elementary and middle schools, 10-month positions. Apply by May 27.

Speech Language Therapist – Openings at all age levels.

IEP Facilitators – Openings at all levels, 10-month positions.

NJROTC instructor – Westlake and La Plata high schools, 10-month position.

ESOL teacher – Openings at all levels, 10-month position.

Special Education – Openings at all levels, 10-month position.

Drafting and Design – North Point High School, 10-month position.

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

- Spanish, high-school level
- Mathematics, secondary levels
- Science, secondary levels
- Library and media specialists, all levels
- Vocal and instrumental music, all levels

Extra pay positions

Maurice J. McDonough High School has the following opening:

- Guard/flag instructor, 2008 marching band
- Contact Principal Jervie Petty, 301-753-1755, to apply.

Thomas Stone High School has the following opening:

- Golf coach
- Contact Principal L.C. Martin, 301-753-1756, to apply.

Westlake High School has the following openings:

- Head junior varsity cheerleading coach
 - Head varsity girls' soccer coach
 - Head junior varsity girls' soccer coach
 - Head varsity field hockey coach
 - Head junior varsity field hockey coach
 - Head girls' cross country coach
- Contact Principal Chrystal Benson, 301-753-1758, to apply.

Staff notes

Principals announce retirements

Two longtime principals have announced that they will retire at the end of this school year.

Cassandra Blacktree of J.C. Parks Elementary School and Garth Bowling of La Plata High School are retiring as of June 30.

Bowling has been named as the new principal at Chopticon High School in St. Mary's County for the next school year.

School News is published by
Charles County Public Schools
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