

# School News



Where success is measured one student at a time • September 12, 2008 • R-302

## Community tells Board of Education 'What Counts'

More than 70 people had the opportunity last week to tell the Board of Education what they think counts in education.

The goal of the forum was simple. Board members wanted to learn what Charles County residents think counts in education and explore how the effectiveness and quality of public schools should be measured.

Participants shared their ideas for safe schools, quality teachers and class sizes in a two-hour, kitchen-table style forum where each group came up with their top eight priorities for education.

Col. Donald Wade, chairman of the Board of Education, said, "The forum allowed us to hear opinions on what people expect of schools, especially in these times of high accountability and state-mandated testing."

Held Thursday, Sept. 4 at Maurice J. McDonough High School, the forum was the first of several efforts the Board of Education



**Joan Withers, coordinator of high school instruction for CCPS, records priorities in education at the What Counts meeting held Thursday, Sept. 4.**

is making to better communicate with the public and gather input. The next open forum the Board plans to hold is Oct. 27, 7-9 p.m., at Mary Burgess Neal Elementary School. The forum at Neal will focus exclusively on the next proposed high school and is open for residents to come and have questions answered about the school, the building process and plans.

The What Counts forum was held in partnership with the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE), which provided the overall facilitator for the evening. The facilitator, Kitty Blumsack, has the information generated from the evening and is compiling a report for the Board of Education on the comments. When complete, a summary report will be provided to each public school and each participant. Additionally, the Board will share the report with local leaders and business owners and post it on the Charles County Public Schools Web site.

## County adds lacrosse to spring sports schedule

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is adding a varsity-level intramural instructional lacrosse program to its spring sports lineup.

Starting this spring, the school system will offer lacrosse at all six high schools. The sport will start as an instructional program and hopefully grow into a Southern Maryland Athletic Conference competitor after two years.

The first year, students in grades 9-12 are eligible to participate in the program, which will be limited to competition with other Charles County high schools. There will be both boys' and girls' lacrosse teams, and each team will have a 14-game schedule to include both home and away games. All games will be

officialiated by certified officials and the league will follow all criteria as set forth by the CCPS athletic handbook as well as the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association. Criteria include eligibility, such as academic requirements, number of contests played and sportsmanship rules.

The second year, CCPS will evaluate the first-year program, and depending upon participation and interest, will divide into a junior varsity and varsity intra-county, instructional program. If needed, the program will continue as a 9-12 varsity intramural program for the second year.

## New teacher reception

The new teacher reception is Wednesday, Sept. 24 at Middleton Hall in Waldorf. It begins at 4:30 p.m. Call 301-934-7318 for more information.

## Somers student recognized

Nathan Radtke, an eighth-grade student at Milton M. Somers Middle School, was recently named as one of 300 semifinalists in the 2008 Society for Science and The Public Middle School Program.

Finalists will be chosen later this month and the 30 selected have the opportunity to compete for more than \$40,000 in scholarships.

## New high school Q & A

The Charles County Board of Education will host a question and answer session about the next new high school, planned for Piney Church Road in Waldorf, on Monday, Oct. 27, from 7 – 9 p.m. at Mary B. Neal Elementary School. Call 301-934-7224 for more information.

## Cox Stadium dedication

Westlake High School plans to dedicate its stadium in memory of its first principal, Dr. John H. Cox. A dedication ceremony for the Dr. John H. Cox Stadium is set for Thursday, Oct. 16, 6 p.m. During his 37-year career with Charles County Public Schools, Cox served as the assistant superintendent of instruction, high school and middle school principal, vice principal, teacher and coach. He was appointed principal at Westlake in 1992 and was essential in the opening of the school. He served as principal until 1997 when he was selected as an assistant superintendent. He passed away on Oct. 1, 2007. The dedication ceremony is open to the public.



## Notebook

### ***Two-hour early dismissal***

The next two-hour early dismissal for students is Wednesday, Sept. 24.

### ***New salary scales online***

The 2008-09 salary scales are posted on the system Web site at [www.cboe.com/employment](http://www.cboe.com/employment).

### ***MetLife TSA information***

Today's pay check will reflect the first 403(b) tax sheltered annuity deduction for MetLife. Employees should have received a pin number in the mail to access their account online at [www.metlife.csplans.com](http://www.metlife.csplans.com). Through this site, members can change the deferral amount for payroll, change investment distributions, and update beneficiary information.

Starting in October, employees with former 403(b) accounts can transfer their balances to MetLife through representatives who will visit schools and centers. If transfers are made between Oct. 1 through March 2009, MetLife will reimburse your account for the surrender charge the former TSA provider may impose on your old account. Transfer forms are available on the CCPS Web site, in the forms database, and employees should bring the forms with them when meeting with MetLife representatives.

### ***On the cover***

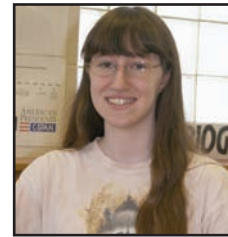
Pictured on the front cover are employees from Maurice J. McDonough High School. Pictured, from left, are Mildred Dixon, assistant food service manager; Thomas Clements, social studies teacher; Sharon Roberts, resource teacher; and Linda Ehman, guidance secretary.

## Two county seniors named Merit Scholar semifinalists

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) recently named Gavin Reen, a senior at La Plata High School, and Mary Fletcher, a senior from Westlake High School, semi-finalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program.



**Gavin Reen**



**Mary Fletcher**

Reen and Fletcher were chosen as semi-finalists out of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2009 National Merit Program. Students are considered for the program when they take the 2008 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMST) as high school juniors.

Both Reen and Fletcher, along with 16,000 other semi-finalists, have the opportunity to advance to the finalist level and compete for one of 8,200 National Merit Scholarships, worth more than \$35 million, that will be offered next spring.

To become a finalist, semi-finalists must have an outstanding academic record

throughout high school, be endorsed and recommended by their high school principal, and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier performance on the qualifying test.

Semi-finalists must also submit a detailed scholarship application, which includes a self-descriptive student essay and information about the semi-finalists participation in leadership and community activities.

Three types of National Merit scholarship awards will be offered in Spring 2009. Finalists compete for one of 2,500 National Merit \$2,500 scholarships that will be awarded on a state representational basis. About 1,100 corporate-sponsored scholarships are provided by corporations and businesses for those finalists that meet specific criteria. Additionally, more than 200 colleges and universities finance about 4,600 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards for finalists who attend the sponsor institution.

## County science teachers lose weight, gravity on flight

Three Charles County Public Schools' science teachers were recently selected to participate in the Northrop Grumman Foundation Weightless Flights of Discovery Program for mathematics and science teachers.

Jennifer L. Davis of Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, Thomas Fawcett of Henry E. Lackey High School, and Charles Newcomb of Westlake High School will participate in one of four scheduled flights offered through the program next month.

Teachers apply for acceptance in the program, which is geared toward middle school mathematics and science teachers. The program is also offered at no cost to participants and a maximum of 60 teachers are chosen per flight.

Program participants experience zero-gravity flights, operated by the Zero Gravity Corporation, which are performed in a specially modified Boeing airplane approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The flights are conducted in dedicated airspace that ranges from 100 miles long by 10

miles wide. Specially trained pilots fly the airplane in a series of maneuvers called parabolas, or arcs, between the altitudes of 24,000 and 32,000 feet.

At the beginning of each parabola, the airplane climbs at a 45-degree angle. At the "top" of the parabola, the aircraft is "pushed over" into a controlled descent that creates a temporary zero-gravity environment. The teacher flights include approximately 15 parabolas ranging from low-gravity environments typical of the moon or Mars to complete weightlessness. At the end of each "weightless" period, which lasts about 30 seconds, the airplane is gradually pulled out of the descent, re-establishing a more normal gravity environment inside the plane.

The program requires selected teachers to attend training workshops before their flight to learn about science and engineering concepts, zero-gravity environments, and science and math curriculum development.

In 2006, Zero Gravity Corporation partnered with Northrop Grumman to offer the weightless flight experience to teachers.

## Stay in touch, learn what's new with Charles County Public Schools

### **Comcast Channel 96**

Charles County Public Schools has an educational channel provided free to the school system by Comcast through a franchise agreement with the Charles County government. Comcast Channel 96 is managed and produced by the CCPS communications department. It features educational programming ranging from an adult education series to high school math help programs to early childhood educational cartoons. Staff also produces local shows featuring our students and staff in action as well as events happening in Charles County Public Schools. Public Board of Education meetings are aired live as well as rebroadcast to keep the public informed. If you have an idea for the television station, e-mail Steven Sprouse at [ssprouse@ccboe.com](mailto:ssprouse@ccboe.com) or Kyle Graves at [kgraves@ccboe.com](mailto:kgraves@ccboe.com).

### **This Week**

This Week in Charles County Public Schools ... is a short news item compiled each Friday and sent via e-mail to employees. This Week provides informational links to news items, school system accomplishments and facts, as well as upcoming events employees might like to attend.

### **@ccboe.com**

Almost all employees have access to a computer and have been assigned e-mail accounts. Your school system e-mail account is for business use only, and all e-mails should be composed and sent as if you were sending a formal business letter.

### **www.ccboe.com**

Make the school system Web site your home page or one of your favorites. The CCPS site has all the facts, forms

and information an employee may need. A staff services page is dedicated to employee information such as contracts and benefits for employees. It's the place where we post just about all public information produced about the school system from news releases to public data on test scores, to suspension rates and policies.



### **Employee Self-Service Portal**

View pay stubs, check annual leave balances and see current tax withholdings from your work or home computer on the employee self-service portal. The link to the portal is located at the top of the staff services page on the CCPS Web site. Information is password protected.

#### **To access the portal**

- Enter your five-digit employee ID (located to the right of your name on pay stub)
- Enter your four-digit pin (last four numbers of your Social Security number)

### **School News**

Charles County Public Schools produces an employee newsletter, for and about CCPS staff, every other Friday. School News is distributed in schools and centers each payday and is also posted on the staff services page on the school system Web site.

### **Keep in touch by phone**

All schools and classrooms are equipped with Cisco IP phones. Employees can check voicemail from their classroom, office or home. Complete instructions for checking voicemail both at work and at home can be found at [www.ccboe.com/staffservices.cfm](http://www.ccboe.com/staffservices.cfm). There is an expectation that voicemail is checked daily and that employees respond to all messages.

### **Find out if school is closed**

Sometimes weather causes school system closings. There are a number of ways to find out if you work or stay home when the weather is bad. While local television and radio stations are notified, they are not the best source of information for employees. A message is placed on each employee's voicemail, which can be accessed from home. The information is also placed on the 24-hour information lines, 301-934-7410 and 301-932-6656, and on the school system Web site. Employees can also receive the information via e-mail by subscribing to receive the school system press releases or signing up for [www.schoolsout.com](http://www.schoolsout.com).

#### **To sign up for CCPS press releases**

- Enter The Press Room located on the right side of the CCPS Web site.
- Follow the instructions to subscribe on the left side of the page.

## Personnel

Apply for positions at [www.ccboe.com/hur](http://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

**Manager of Planning, Department of Planning and Construction** – Maintenance Shop/Annex 101 Building; 12-month position. Bachelor's degree and experience required. Position is open until filled.

**Building Service Worker** – William A. Diggs Elementary School; 12-month position. Apply by Sept. 12.

**Meeting in the Middle Instructional Assistant** – John Hanson Middle School; 10-month position. Apply by Sept. 18.

**Food Service Worker** – John Hanson Middle School; four-hour position. Apply by Sept. 19.

**Building Service Assistant Manager** – Piccowaxen Middle School; 12-month position. Apply by Sept. 19.

**Building Service Worker** – North Point High School; 12-month position. Apply by Sept. 19.

**Instructional Specialist** – Location(s) to be determined; 10-month position.

**Science Teacher** – Theodore G. Davis Middle School; 10-month position.

**Reading Resource Teacher** – Openings in

county schools; 10-month positions.

**Special Education Teacher for Mathematics** – Thomas Stone High School; 10-month position.

**Special Education Teacher for Reading/Language Arts** – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School; 10-month position.

**Special Education Teacher for Science** – La Plata High School; 10-month positions.

**Special Education Teachers for Inclusion and Resource** – William A. Diggs and C. Paul Barnhart elementary schools; 10-month positions.

**Special Education Teachers for English** – Future high-school openings; 10-month positions.

**Special Education Teacher of the Emotionally Disturbed** – Middle- and high-school level; 10-month position.

**Special Education Teacher for Inclusion** – High-school level; 10-month position.

**Literacy Teacher** – Westlake High School; 10-month position.

**English Teacher** – La Plata High School; 10-month position.

**Life Skills Teacher for Severe and Profound** – William A. Diggs Elementary School; 10-month position.

**Life Skills Teacher for Severe and Profound** – Future high school openings; 10-month openings.

**Mathematics Teacher** – Future middle

and high school level openings; 10-month position.

**English Teachers** – Future middle and high school level openings; 10-month positions.

### Extra pay position

Thomas Stone High School has the following opening:

- Assistant girls' basketball coach

Call Principal L.C. Martin, 301-753-1756, to apply.

### Staff notes

#### Aflac open enrollment date addition

Aflac, an insurance company, offers additional benefits for Charles County Public Schools employees. An open enrollment meeting was recently scheduled for Maurice J. McDonough High School. Representatives will be on location at the school on Thursday, Oct. 16, from 7 a.m. - 4 p.m.

A detailed list of Aflac open enrollment dates and times for other schools and centers was published in the Aug. 29 *School News* newsletter, which is available on the system Web site, [www.ccboe.com/staffservices/newsletters](http://www.ccboe.com/staffservices/newsletters).

The list will also be published in the Sept. 26 edition. Call 301-934-7345 for more information.

**School News** is published by  
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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.*