

School News



Where success is measured one student at a time • January 16, 2009 • R-310

CCPS employees donate \$90,000 to United Way

Charles County Public Schools employees pledged more than \$90,000 to United Way this year, a contribution increase of nearly \$3,600 over last year.

“We are very happy this happened because with the state of the economy, we were expecting the worst,” said Dorothy Harper, president and CEO of the United Way of Charles County.

During the past decade, the school system’s United Way campaign has more than tripled from a start of about \$28,000 to this year’s record breaking total. Donations come from employees from all schools and centers. Harper said several schools saw dramatic

increases in pledges from employees, including: Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School, which increased 190 percent; Dr. James Craik Elementary School, which increased 198 percent; and Henry E. Lackey High School, which is up 145 percent.

“I am proud that our employees continue to support the United Way, especially in tough economic times when people and agencies need our donations the most,” said Superintendent James E. Richmond.

Permanent school system employees can opt to donate funds through payroll deduction, one-time donations or through credit card payments.

Semester break change

Schools are closed for students on Tuesday, Jan. 20 for semester break and staff can take liberal leave. Schools are now open on Friday, Jan. 23. The second marking period ends Jan. 16, and report cards will be issued to elementary school students and mailed to middle and high school students on Tuesday, Jan. 27.

MD ranks first in education

The Maryland public school system was recently ranked as number one in the nation by *Education Week*, a leading education newspaper. Maryland was ranked based on student performance; state education policies; state accountability and standards; and work on school readiness, high school reform, and preparation for college and the workplace.

Maryland has a history of ranking high in *Education Week’s* annual review of state education systems; it ranked third in the 2008 “Quality Counts” report. For a detailed report, visit <http://www.edweek.org/ew/index.html>.

Staff orientation date change

The mid-year new teacher orientation has been rescheduled from Wednesday, Jan. 21, to Friday, Feb. 20, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

Centers closed Jan. 20

All school-based community centers will be closed on Tuesday, Jan. 20. Community programs scheduled for that day have been canceled. Call the Charles County Department of Community Services, 301-934-9305, for more information.

Superintendent presents 2010 budget to Board

Superintendent James E. Richmond presented a \$304.6 million budget to the Board of Education on Tuesday, saying the main focus is student achievement, keeping successful academic programs in place and keeping direct cuts to the classroom to a minimum.

The budget reflects a \$5.1 million increase, or 1.7 percent, more than this year. Richmond said state funding is expected to increase only \$70,900 and the county request is estimated at \$5.4 million, or 3.7 percent. The county and state totals are preliminary estimates, and Richmond said he knows “we are facing the most austere and difficult times in well over a decade.”

Richmond said the fiscal year 2010 budget is tight, and only includes increases for mandatory costs. “Since state funding has essentially evaporated in 2010, we will rely to a greater degree on funding from the Charles County Commissioners to prevent deep cuts from being made to the education budget,” Richmond said. Negotiated items, such as employee wage increases, are on hold until the school system receives better funding estimates. Mandatory costs include health insurance increases, transportation contract increases

including bus replacements and additional buses, and utility and service contract increases.

“We have endured several rounds of budget cuts already and expect more to be imposed in the coming weeks... We have taken a number of steps to create savings by holding positions open, deferring purchases of technology and other equipment, and cutting back discretionary spending as it relates to food, travel and staff development. These actions have been taken to cushion the impacts of past and anticipated future cuts,” Richmond said.

The largest cost increase is expected in health insurance. The budgeted \$3.7 million increase is based on estimates from CareFirst. Last year, the school system raised prescription co-payments and made other changes to curtail health insurance cost increases.

Richmond reiterated his focus on student achievement and said, “We have made great progress over the years and I do not want to see our efforts stalled or reversed. I am confident that our staff will continue to be our greatest resource, and we will make our final recommendations in the best interest of both staff and students,” Richmond said.



Notebook

Staff present technology

Staff at Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School will present “Using Technology to Write a New Chapter in a Title I School” at the Florida Educational Technology Conference (FETC) on Jan. 22-24 in Orlando. The session focuses on technology initiatives such as a laptop take-home program for students, the use of Smart Boards in each classroom, virtual field trips and how the use of technology impacts student achievement.

Presenters include Principal Annie Blount; Kathy Adkisson, instructional specialist; Diane Karrick, Title I technology teacher; and Barbara Anderson, second-grade teacher.

Employee assistance

CCPS offers employees the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP provides a confidential professional counseling service for employees whose personal problems are affecting their abilities to function effectively at work or home. The EAP is available to all employees who work 20 hours or more per week and their immediate family members. Confidentiality is maintained and CCPS assumes the cost for the initial EAP assessment. Call 301-932-9656. A professional staff member is available on a 24-hour basis.

On the cover

Pictured on the cover are employees honored by the Board of Education on Dec. 9. Pictured, from left, are: Daniel Kaple, social studies teacher, Henry E. Lackey High School; Joni Rooney, Title I technology teacher, C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School; Kathy-Lynn Kiessling, vice principal, John Hanson Middle School; and Jack Belle, teacher, Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School.

Singapore educators impressed with school system

East met west in Charles County’s classrooms recently when six Singapore educators visited three schools to learn about staff development, use of technology and successful instruction.

Charles County and Singapore teachers and administrators shared ideas, experiences and culture in late December as part of a visit to the United States by the eastern educators during a global education conference. The Singapore visitors spent time at William B. Wade Elementary School, C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School and Milton M. Somers Middle School.

The visiting teachers observed classrooms and instructional strategies, and Charles County’s staff learned about education in Asia. The Asian educators were impressed with the small class sizes and elementary schools that compare to their primary schools with student populations of more than 2,000 and average class sizes of 40.

Teachers also discovered common global practices. The visitors commented on the strong character education program in Charles



Teachers from Singapore visited the school system last month to learn about classroom culture and technology available. Teachers Mohamed Ridza B. Hashim, far left, Terence Tng, second from left, Ranjit Singh, center, talk with William B. Wade Elementary School Principal Amy DiSabatino, right, about staff development and student learning.

County’s schools that mirrors many of their efforts at home. “My team of colleagues is so impressed by the importance placed on character education in all of the three schools. We are most impressed by the culture of caring, respect and trust not only between students and teachers, but also from staff to staff,” said Ranjit Singh, the team’s leader and the vice principal of Temasek

Primary School in Singapore.

The visitors were also familiar with the Smart Boards and technology used in classrooms, and Temasek, like Wade, is recognized for its high performance on standardized tests. While Charles County’s students take the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), Singapore’s children must pass the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE).

The Singapore visitors wanted to see how Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) provides staff development. Wade Principal Amy DiSabatino guided the visitors to a classroom

See Visitors, Page 3

Wade, Wise re-elected as Board chairman, vice chairman

The Board of Education of Charles County re-elected Donald M. Wade as chairman and Roberta S. Wise as vice chairman at its Jan. 13 meeting. The Board elects a chairman and vice chairman each January.

The officers serve one-year terms. This is the third year for Wade and Wise in the leadership positions.

Wade is a three-term Board member and was first elected in 1998. He is a lifetime resident of Charles County and helped bring the JROTC program to Charles County. Col. Wade spent 30 years on active duty and was a professor of aerospace studies at three univer-



Donald M. Wade



Roberta S. Wise

sities. He was a teacher, a department chairperson and a faculty advisor to 21 JROTC units in Prince George’s County before retiring in 2006.

Wise is a first-term Board member, first elected in November 2006. She is a retired Charles County Public Schools teacher with 34 years

of experience. A former Charles County Public Schools Teacher of the Year, she also received the *Washington Post* Agnes Meyer award for outstanding teachers in 1991. For most of her career, she served as a mathematics teacher at Henry E. Lackey High School. She was a coordinator of the Educational Partnership Team and a math resource teacher before retiring in 1999.



Tracie Gregan



Wanda Bulkowski-Larsen



Kristen Lednum



Wendie Newcamp



Beth Winkler

Five teachers earn national certification in specialized content areas

Five Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) teachers joined the ranks of accomplished teachers nationwide who achieved National Board Certification.

Tracie Gregan, Wanda Bulkowski-Larsen, Kristen Lednum, Wendie Newcamp and Beth Winkler, each completed a yearlong performance-based assessment series to become Nationally Board Certified Teachers, according to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

Gregan is a kindergarten teacher at Mary B. Neal Elementary School and earned a generalist/early childhood certificate.

Bulkowski-Larsen is an art teacher at La Plata High School and earned a national certificate in art/early adolescence through young adulthood.

Lednum is a fifth-grade elementary teacher at William B. Wade Elementary School and earned a generalist/middle childhood certificate.

Newcamp is a gifted education resource teacher at General Smallwood Middle School and earned an English language arts/early adolescence certificate.

Winkler is a kindergarten teacher at Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary School and earned a generalist/early childhood certificate.

Nationally Board Certified Teachers must complete an extensive review of their skills and work, which includes teacher portfolios, student work samples, videotapes, and thorough analysis of the candidates' classroom teaching and student learning. Teachers also complete a series of written exercises that probe the depth of their subject-matter knowledge.

Newcamp said the experience was "rewarding" because it helped her reflect on and improve her teaching practices. Bulkowski-Larsen also said the experience was rewarding, yet challenging.

"The required level of reflection on my teaching processes has given me the insight and inspiration to be a better teacher," Bulkowski-Larsen said.

Lednum also used the process to reflect on her teaching techniques. "My teaching has been forever changed as I will continue to enrich my curriculum to meet the needs of all the learners in my classroom," she said.

The five CCPS teachers join 9,600 teachers nationwide, and 302 in Maryland who achieved National Board Certification in 2008. Certification is valid for 10 years, after which a teacher may seek renewal. Charles County Public Schools has 19 nationally certified teachers.

By achieving National Board Certification, the Charles County teachers are eligible for a \$2,500 stipend added to their annual salary as well as an annual \$2,000 incentive from the Maryland State Department of Education as long as they remain in the classroom and maintain their National Board Certification.

"I recommend the process for anyone who is passionate about teaching and hungry for the next step," Bulkowski-Larsen said.

Only teachers with a standard or advanced professional certificate who have a minimum of three years successful teaching experience are eligible to apply for National Board Certification.

More information about NBPTS can be found at the NBPTS Web site at www.nbpts.org.

Visitors

where students were working during a multiplication staff development session. At Wade, DiSabatino embeds staff development into actual classroom lessons. Teachers prepare for a lesson by reviewing reading materials, and then observe a member of the Instructional Leadership Team model the lesson with the children in the classroom as teachers assess how it works and how their class responds.

"I am impressed by the sound leadership of the school leaders in championing staff development," said Singh.

Next, the Singapore teachers headed to Barnhart where Principal Kim Hairston invited them to see a three-year-old class, where a quality early childhood experience emphasizes literacy development. The visitors also attended a fourth-grade class where each student was using an Eee PC, a small, resilient personal laptop, as part of their daily literacy lesson.

This, along with demonstrations of Smart Boards, provided a glimpse of how CCPS infuses technology into learning and the classroom.

Somers provided the visitors with a sampling of science, art and literacy at the middle school level. It was hard to pry the visitors from science teacher Jason Walent's classroom where a maze of wires competed with live critters for attention. Walent's approach to teaching mixes hands-on learning with technology and the visitors took the teacher up on his offer to show them a lesson on the Smart Board, but declined the opportunity to handle one of the many spiders, snakes or reptiles hidden in aquariums throughout the room.

Continued from Page 2

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

General Maintenance Worker – Maintenance Shop; 12-month position. Apply by Jan. 21.

Educational Interpreter – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center; 10-month position. Apply by Jan. 22.

Secretary to the Principal – Theodore G. Davis Middle School; 12-month position. Apply by Jan. 26.

Food Service Substitutes – Openings at county schools; hours and location vary. Apply by Jan. 27.

NJROTC Instructor – Westlake High School; 10-month position.

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

Life Skills Teachers for Severe and Profound – William A. Diggs Elementary and Henry E. Lackey High schools; 10-month positions.

Special Education Teacher – General Smallwood Middle School; 10-month position.

Language Arts Teacher – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center; 10-month position.

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

Coordinator of Autism Services – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; 12-month position. Candidates must be pursuing a master's degree and have three years of experience with autism at the system level.

Certified School Psychologist – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; 10.5-month position. Candidates must be eligible for MSDE certification.

Extra Pay Positions

Henry E. Lackey High School has the following openings:

- Head varsity girls' soccer coach
- Head junior varsity girls' soccer coach
- Girls' varsity assistant soccer coach
- Girls' junior varsity assistant soccer coach

Contact Principal James Short or David Anderson, 301-753-1753, to apply.

Staff Announcements

CCPS looking for job shadow volunteers

Charles County Public Schools is looking for volunteers to participate in its job shadow program that pairs students and business leaders. Kick-off for the job shadowing program is on Groundhog Day, Feb. 2, and continues through March 13. Students participate in career exploration through this program as part

of the school system's focus on career readiness. Students can job shadow between 8:30 a.m. and noon; however, other arrangements can be made for unique experiences.

Call Connie Mouton, coordinator of minority achievement, 301-934-7245 or e-mail cmouton@ccboe.com for more information. The deadline to volunteer is today.

Important insurance information

CareFirst notified all employees last month that we were to receive new medical and dental ID cards in the mail by Jan. 1. By now, all employees should have received their new cards in the mail. If you have not, call CareFirst at 877-691-5856.

Employees can order additional ID cards, view claims, view and print an explanation of benefits and access other policy information at www.HCBO.com. To access your policy, select the sign-up now tab; key in your Social Security number in the contract field area; key in your date-of-birth and select submit; then, set up your user name and password. This will take you to the home page, where you can select manage my plan. Employees who have not received their ID cards can print a verification of coverage form as proof of coverage for their provider and pharmacy.

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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.