

School News



Where success is measured one student at a time • May 22, 2009 • R-317

Teachers, staff rally for funding at budget hearing

“Do The Right Thing” was the theme at the May 20 Charles County Commissioners’ public budget hearing as more than 200 Charles County Public Schools teachers, administrators and staff members rallied together to request additional funding for the school system.

Some even dressed in rain slickers and carried umbrellas to represent requests for the Commissioners to provide additional funding for next school year out of the county’s “Rainy Day” fund balance, which they reported as of March 31,



Pictured above are C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School staff who attended the May 20 Charles County Commissioners budget hearing. More than 200 Charles County Public Schools staff members dressed in rain slickers to represent the request for the Commissioners to use “Rainy Day” funds to support the school system.

the state’s legal requirement that the county fund public schools at least at the same per pupil level as in the prior year. However, this

contained approximately \$25 million in undesignated funds.

After cutting the school system’s 2009 fiscal year budget by \$7 million, the Commissioners announced on April 23 that they planned to fund the school system at the Maintenance of Effort level of \$145,093,200 for fiscal year 2010. This amount meets

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Smallwood’s Jones is 2009 Teacher of the Year

Janet Jones was born into a home that nurtured and valued education. Some of her earliest childhood photographs show her “teaching” her father, who played along by sitting in an old school house desk. As a child, Jones also taught her brother and his friends in a makeshift school room in her basement. “I can’t remember a time when I did not value learning,” Jones said.

Jones, a 33-year veteran educator and reading resource teacher at General Smallwood Middle School, has come a long way from her childhood makeshift classroom. She says throughout her career, she has never lost the desire to watch students grasp new ideas, play with language and own their literacy. Her experience and desire to teach and instill children with a love for reading earned



Janet Jones

Jones the 2009 Charles County Public Schools Teacher of the Year award.

Superintendent James E. Richmond surprised Jones with the news two weeks ago. “I was truly and totally surprised, but I am glad it was a surprise” she said.

Jones was encouraged to apply for the award by Smallwood Principal Cynthia Baker and Vice Principal Kathy Perriello. “Jones is energetic, innovative and enthusiastic and is doing a fantastic job. She creates a hunger in all staff to read and to share their readings and learning with others,” Baker said in a nomination statement.

Jones said the process was intense, but beneficial to her. “It brought up memories of past teaching experiences and positives with

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CCPS to offer finance course

Charles County Public Schools is offering a free summer financial literacy workshop at Maurice J. McDonough High School for public school students throughout the county in grades 10 and 11.

The workshop is from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., June 29 through July 9, Monday through Thursday. Students must complete a registration form to enroll for the workshop and are responsible for their own transportation. The form is available on the school system Web site at <http://www2.ccboe.com/gifted/summer.cfm>.

The workshop will expose participants to basic financial literacy skills needed to enter the workforce or continue their education after high school. Enrollment is limited and available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The deadline to register is Friday, June 12. Registration forms should be mailed to Charles County Public Schools, c/o Wanda Sellers, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, Md., 20646, or e-mailed to wsellers@ccboe.com. Call 301-934-7404 for more information.

Neal named top donator

Mary B. Neal Elementary School was recently recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) as Charles County Public Schools top contributor for the Harvest for the Hungry Kids Helping Kids food drive campaign.

Neal students collected 1,453 pounds of food during the campaign. The campaign is a three-week service learning project held each fall and provides students with the opportunity to learn about hunger while collecting food for their local food banks.



Notebook

State selects Service Fellow

Michael Ficalora, science teacher and student service learning coordinator at Piccowaxen Middle School, was named one of nine state Service-learning Fellows by the Maryland State Department of Education.

Service-learning Fellows are selected for their abilities to create exemplary service-learning experiences for their students and provide expertise and assistance to their peers. As a Service-learning Fellow, Ficalora will help train and mentor other teachers in service learning, work with local service learning teams and help write curriculum.

Student member chosen

Kyle Grusholt, a rising senior at Maurice J. McDonough High School, is the student member of the Board of Education of Charles County for the 2009-10 school year.

EACC to hold crab feast

The Education Association of Charles County (EACC) plans to hold its annual crab feast 3:30 to 8 p.m., Friday, Aug. 21, at the Charles County Fairgrounds. Tickets are \$25 and must be purchased in advance. The event is open to all employees and space is limited. The deadline to purchase tickets is July 31. Call 301-392-0150 for more information.

On the cover

Pictured on the cover are employees recognized by the Board of Education May 12. Pictured, from left, are: Richard Kelly, special education teacher, Mattawoman Middle School; Michelle Sirna, secretary, T.C. Martin Elementary School; and Pamela Jones, culinary arts teacher, North Point High School.

Partial calendar for 2009-10 school year

The following is a partial calendar for the 2009-10 school year. The calendar is subject to change.

- Aug. 17, 2009** - First day for returning teachers
- Aug. 24, 2009** - First day of school for students, grades K-12
- Aug. 31, 2009** - First day for 3's program and PreK students, category 1,2
- Sept. 7, 2009** - Labor Day, schools/offices closed
- Sept. 8, 2009** - First day for PreK students, category 3
- Sept. 18, 2009** - Teacher in-service day; schools closed for students
- Sept. 30, 2009** - Two-hour early dismissal, AM PreK attends
- Oct. 12, 2009** - Columbus Day, schools open
- Oct. 16, 2009** - MSTA Convention, schools closed
- Oct. 21, 2009** - Two-hour early dismissal, PM PreK attends
- Oct. 29, 2009** - Two-hour early dismissal, AM PreK attends
- Nov. 5, 2009** - Teacher in-service day; schools closed for students
- Nov. 11, 2009** - Veterans Day, schools/offices closed
- Nov. 25-27, 2009** - Thanksgiving holiday, schools/offices closed
- Dec. 2, 2009** - Two-hour early dismissal, PM PreK attends
- Dec. 21-23, 2009** - Winter break, schools closed
- Dec. 24-25, 2009** - Christmas Eve/Christmas, schools/offices closed
- Dec. 28-31, 2009** - Winter break, schools closed
- Jan. 1, 2010** - New Year's Day, schools/offices closed
- Jan. 18, 2010** - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, schools/offices closed
- Jan. 22, 2010** - Semester break, schools closed for students
- Jan. 27, 2010** - Two-hour early dismissal, AM PreK attends
- Feb. 5, 2010** - Teacher in-service day, schools closed for students
- Feb. 15, 2010** - Presidents Day, schools/offices closed
- Feb. 24, 2010** - Two-hour early dismissal, PM PreK attends
- March 4, 2010** - Two-hour early dismissal, AM PreK attends
- March 24, 2010** - Two-hour early dismissal, PM PreK attends
- March 29-April 1, 2010** - Spring break, schools closed
- April 2, 2010** - Spring break, schools/offices closed
- April 5, 2010** - Spring break, schools/offices closed
- April 8, 2010** - Two-hour early dismissal, AM PreK attends
- April 28, 2010** - Two-hour early dismissal, PM PreK attends
- May 12, 2010** - Two-hour early dismissal, AM PreK attends
- May 26, 2010** - Two-hour early dismissal, PM PreK attends
- May 31, 2010** - Memorial Day, schools/offices closed
- June 16, 2010** - Last student day*
- June 17, 2010** - Last teacher day*

* Four inclement weather days are built into the calendar. If they are not used, they will be deducted from the end of the school year. If additional inclement weather days are needed, they will be added to spring break, beginning with March 29 and continuing with March 30, 31 and April 1.

Make-up equity training scheduled for certificated staff

Charles County Public Schools has scheduled five make-up equity training sessions. All certificated staff are required to participate in one session. The schedule is as follows. Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building certificated staff:

- June 30, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., or 1 – 3 p.m.

The previously advertised date of June 24 was rescheduled to June 30.

School based certificated staff and instruc-

tional assistants:

- May 27 or 28, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., middle and high school staff
- June 1 or 2, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., elementary school staff

All sessions will take place in the Board Room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. Please RSVP to Tracie Mattera at tmattera@cceboe.com. Call 301-934-7360 with questions or for more information.

Staff attend budget hearing

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means the system will only receive \$98,200 in new funding over last year's budget.

Board of Education Chairman Col. Donald M. Wade spoke before the Commissioners and asked that they consider fully funding the Board's budget request of \$154.5 million. "I encourage you to consider funding above the Maintenance of Effort level. Acknowledging the need for the Board to fund a step increase for employees recognizes the hardship placed on teachers and staff to cope with rising health, food and living costs during these challenging economic times. It is not just governments that are under pressure with budget shortfalls. In the audience you see the faces of those struggling each day with the economic downturn," Wade said.

Maintenance of Effort budget funding will maintain successful academic programs implemented in past years; however, it does not advance any new programs. The Maintenance of Effort funding, combined with the \$6 million in state cuts, will require significant additional reductions to the school system's budget. The Board has requested that the school system receive an additional \$9 million in addition to the Maintenance of Effort funding. This was not approved by the County Commissioners.

More than 30 CCPS employees signed up to speak before the Board of Commissioners and stressed the school



Members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local 2981, and the Education Association of Charles County (EACC) attended the county's budget hearing May 20 to request additional funding for the school system. Pictured, from left, are AFSCME executive Board members Ramona Dibenedetto and Catherine Curtis, Darlene Willett, AFSCME secretary, Bill McLaughlin, AFSCME vice president, and Keith Fowler, AFSCME president.

system's need for additional funding. Linda Howard, a social studies teacher at John Hanson Middle School, has been a teacher in Charles County since 1970. "You want us to do more for students with less," she told the Commissioners. Patricia O'Connor, a school counselor at Arthur Middleton Elementary School, said many school system employees are county taxpayers and deserve to receive some sort of compensation for classroom enhancements and for their experience. "We are just asking as residents of the county for what we deserve," she said.

Wade also emphasized to the

Commissioners that the Board's request for additional funding includes continuing cost-cutting measures the school system has already made this school year. "Our budget request includes cost-cutting measures made this year through hiring freezes, shrinking some programs, and holding back many purchases such as technology and instruction materials. We have many education issues, including testing and accountability, reduced state and federal funding, compensation and affordability, special education and technology demands. We are doing everything we can to be fiscally responsible, which includes advocating

for our teachers and staff," he said.

The Board of Education's fiscal year 2010 operating budget totals \$308 million. This includes new funding to cover mandatory increases in health insurance, transportation, maintenance service contracts and utilities, and employee longevity steps. School system staff are in the process of negotiating with both the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the Education Association of Charles County (EACC) unions. The 2010 budget will be finalized by the Board of Education in June.

Jones

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students over the years. No matter how long I teach, I continue to strive to learn how to reach one more student," Jones said.

Jareika Swann, an eighth-grade student at Smallwood, is an example of a student whose life Jones has impacted. Swann has worked with Jones since she started at Smallwood in the sixth grade.

"As a sixth grader, I disliked books and reading. Now, I enjoy reading. This is because of Mrs. Jones. I now feel confident in myself and my reading ability," Swann said.

Her desire to instill a love for reading

does not stop with her students. Earlier this year she launched a "One Book, One Smallwood" reading initiative to encourage staff to read and discuss books together. Her goal is to expand the program into the local community. "Reading, and talking about reading, should not be locked away in our classrooms when the bell sounds. It belongs in the larger community," Jones said.

Jones also enjoys working with and training other teachers in reading and writing strategies and interventions.

"As a resource teacher, I also support educators to grow in their learning and to

find their own style of teaching. Learning grows when it is shared and I believe that my strength is creating learning communities through rich discussion and support," Jones said.

Beyond the classroom, Jones is a consultant with the National Writing Project and is a member of the National Assessment of Educational Progress reading committee.

Jones will be recognized by the Board of Education at their June 9. She will also compete for the 2009 Maryland Teacher of the Year award. The state winner will be announced later this fall.

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

Summer Academy Administrator, Elementary – Elementary school level. Applicants must be a current vice principal or administrative assistant at a Charles County public school.

Food Service Manager – Eva Turner Elementary School, 6-hour, 10-month position. Apply by May 22.

Building Service Worker – Adult Services/Stone Annex, 4-hour, 12-month position. Apply by June 1.

Extra pay positions

Thomas Stone High School has the following opening:

- Head varsity baseball coach

Contact Principal Larry Martin, 301-753-1756, to apply.

Teachers needed for Civics Mosaic

Civics Mosaic II, an international comparative program for high school social studies teachers, is looking for two educators who seek to connect civic knowledge and civic engagement with classrooms in Russia. The program emphasizes and compares civic concepts applied to current policy issues in Russia and the US.

Teachers must have three or more years of successful teaching experience, are willing to host a colleague from Russia in their school, travel and teach in Russia, attend professional development sessions and share what they learn as part of the CCPS social studies program. All expenses and a stipend are included.

Contact Jack Tuttle, content specialist in social studies, or his assistant Laura Vigneault, at 301-934-7322 or lvi-gneault@ccboe.com, for an application. Applications are due by May 28.

Staff Notes

Devitis named Coach of the Year

Daniel Devitis, a school counselor and head varsity baseball coach at La Plata High School, was named the District IV Coach of the Year earlier this school year by the Maryland State Baseball Association (MSBA).

He has coached baseball at La Plata for more than 30 years, with 28 years of experience at the varsity level. District IV includes Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's counties. Devitis was nominated for the award by members of the MSBA Board.

He was recognized at a ceremony held at Oriole Park at Camden Yards in February and received a plaque.

Athletic directors honored by MSADA

The Maryland State Athletic Directors Association (MSADA) recently honored two CCPS athletic directors for contributions to athletics at the local, state and national levels. Honored were David Anderson, athletic director at Henry E. Lackey High School, and Jennifer Smith, athletic director at Maurice J. McDonough High School.

Anderson was honored with the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association State Award of Merit, which is presented to an NIAAA and MSADA member who has demonstrated contributions to interscholastic athletics at both the local and state levels.

He was also named as the District 4 MSADA District Athletic Director of the Year. This award is presented to an athletic administrator who has made significant contributions to athletics in their school and district. Anderson has been the athletic director at Lackey since 1980.

Smith, athletic director at McDonough, was awarded with a MSADA Certificate of Appreciation Award. The award is presented to athletic administrators who have made significant contributions to athletics in their school districts.

Last day of school reminder

The last day of school for students is June 12. Teachers last day is June 16.

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