



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

24-hour information line

Charles County Public Schools posts school news, employee and student accomplishments, inclement weather closings and calendar information on a 24-hour information line. Call 301-932-6656 or 301-934-7410. The line is updated twice weekly and immediately when inclement weather decisions are made.

2010-11 Calendar

An electronic copy of the 2010-11 Parent Handbook/Calendar is available on the school system Web site, under the calendars tab located on the home page. Printed copies will be delivered to all schools and centers the week of Aug. 16. Requests for additional copies will not be honored until September to ensure all students and staff members receive one copy. The direct link to the calendar is <http://www2.ccboe.com/PDF/parent-handbook-calendar.pdf> for a copy. Call 301-934-7220 with questions or for more information.

Follow us on Twitter!

Did you know that Charles County Public Schools maintains a Twitter page? Follow us on www.twitter.com/CCPS for system updates, news, facts and more. The site can be accessed from the internal network by selecting view for work-related purposes only under the options area of the Websense notification page.

This Week

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



Justin Meeder, an Earth and space science teacher at Westlake High School, pictured left, demonstrates an orbital spin in a Barany chair with the assistance of Melissa Peterson, an aerospace education specialist with the Space Foundation, pictured right, during the Space Discovery Institute's Biological and Physical Research session held July 26-30 at Theodore G. Davis Middle School. Participants volunteered to take a turn spinning blindfolded in the chair, which simulates spatial disorientation effects. This is the fourth consecutive year that CCPS has partnered with the Space Foundation to offer the Discovery Institute to teachers.

Teachers blast off in to space through Discovery Institute

In a classroom at Theodore G. Davis Middle School, a group of Charles County Public Schools teachers are constructing rockets, building space stations and planetary bases on Mars, and experiencing zero gravity. These teachers are not switching career fields or preparing for space travel; they are participating in the school system's Space Discovery Institute to learn about stimulating scientific concepts that they can incorporate into classroom lessons.

The Institute, held July 19 through Aug. 6, featured six, week-long sessions and offers teachers cost-free opportunities to learn

about rocketry, the biology of living in space, astronomy principles, space technologies and robots, the history and geology of Earth, and long term space travel. The sessions are designed to give teachers across all content areas new tools to keep science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education interesting for students. Each project also models how teachers can incorporate different learning aspects such as kinesthetic, audio, and visual, into lessons.

Bradley Grey, a biology teacher at Westlake High School, participated in one of the courses offered July 26-30 – Earth

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School system implements new employee web portal

Charles County Public Schools recently launched a new employee portal on the school system Web site. The portal replaces the employee self-service system, and is linked to the staff services page.

Through the new portal, employees can: create and maintain user accounts; change their user name and password; configure personal settings; view and print employer forms; view paycheck information; view W-2 forms; view leave balances; view education and teaching certificate information; and view current and previous paycheck deductions and benefits details.

The direct link to the system is <https://info1.ccboe.com/employeeportal/employee/login.php>. All employees will need to set up an account in order to access the new portal, and will need their employee identification number and the last four digits of their social security number.

Employees will also need to use their full name as printed on their paychecks to create an account, and must supply a valid e-mail address in order to access the system.

Call 301-934-7488 or e-mail EP@ccboe.com for more information or with questions.



On the cover

Pictured on the cover are Charles County Public Schools teachers who participated in the Space Discovery Institute astronomy course offered by the school system in conjunction with the Space Foundation. Pictured, from left, are: Emily Herron, science teacher, North Point High School; Margot Savoy, language arts teacher, Mattawoman Middle School; and Sean Lloyd, mathematics teacher, Mattawoman.

New teacher orientation

New teacher orientation is Aug. 16-18 at North Point High School, and features activities designed to acquaint newly hired teachers with Charles County Public Schools. Activities include an opening ceremony, keynote address, content/grade level work sessions and human resources sessions.

Summer hours reminder

Charles County Public Schools has changed summer office hours to 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in selected schools and centers. The schedule will remain in effect until Monday, Aug. 23.

Now showing ...

Airing this week is a new episode of NewsBreak 96, a monthly show produced by the communications department. This episode features highlights from the Space Discovery Institute, the Charles County Youth Achievement Program and information regarding the school system's Maryland School Assessment (MSA) scores. The show airs on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12, and is available as a video on demand. Visit www.ccboe.com for a list of available videos.

Tax-free shopping week

The Maryland General Assembly approved Shop Maryland, a tax-free week, to be held Aug. 8-14. Shoppers will receive a 6 percent tax break for qualifying clothing and footwear priced \$100 or less. These items include sweaters, shirts, pants, jeans, dresses and shoes. A complete list of exempt and taxable items is available on the Comptroller's Web site at www.marylandtaxes.com.

In Memoriam



Peter Mahon

Peter Mahon, a longtime social studies teacher at La Plata High School, passed away on Thursday, July 22, 2010.

He began his career with Charles County Public Schools in 1979 at La Plata, where he spent the remainder of his career teaching social studies. Throughout his 30-year career, Mahon coached varsity soccer, boys' basketball and girls' track at La Plata.

He also served as La Plata's student government association advisor for most of his career and was the county's advisor to the Charles County Association of Student Councils (CCASC) for

more than 10 years. Mr. Mahon grew up in Long Island, N.Y., and graduated from the State University of New York at Oswego in 1979 with a bachelor's degree in secondary education.

Mr. Mahon lived in Waldorf and has two sisters, Peggy and Jane, and one brother, Eugene. Services were held July 26-27 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church and the burial was private.

La Plata High School is hosting a celebration event in honor of Mr. Mahon from 6 to 7:30 p.m., Monday, Aug. 23, in the school's auditorium. The event is open to the public.

Space Institute

Continued from page 1

Systems Science – and said he gained new ideas for the upcoming school year. “I also enjoyed working with other teachers from different subject backgrounds and seeing how they can bring space concepts into their curriculum,” he said.

Science teachers, such as Grey, are not the only teachers in the county interested in participating in the Space Discovery Institute. Each year, the sessions are offered to teachers across all content areas and more than 145 participants signed up this year, up from about 80 participants in 2009.

Participants in the Lunar/Mars Exploration and Base Construction course learned how to construct a crew exploration vehicle out of household items, such as plastic water bottles and drinking straws, and how to build a sustainable base on Mars. Molly Simpson, a kindergarten teacher at Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School kindergarten and first-year participant, said she learned a lot of concepts to bring back to her students.

“A lot of activities we did are able to be altered to fit the needs of your students. For example, we made germinators in the course. I can easily use this in my classroom to talk about the life cycle of plants and how plants can grow in space

with certain soils,” Simpson said.

Participants in the Biological and Physical Research, and Earth Systems Science sessions learned about the history of space and how to integrate STEM into all content areas and lesson plans.

Superintendent of Schools James E. Richmond joined the teachers in the Rocketry course to take a look at how the sessions can engage students in STEM education. “Our children have to be prepared to solve problems of the future. These courses and the school system's partnership with the Space Foundation are beneficial to our students and staff. The concepts taught as part of the Space Discovery Institute are essential to provide students with educational opportunities rich in fields such as science and mathematics,” Richmond said.

This is the fourth consecutive year that CCPS has offered the Space Discovery Institute, in conjunction with the Space Foundation, to teachers. Each year, the sessions are offered free of charge to all subject and grade-level teachers. CCPS developed the partnership with the Space Foundation to further develop STEM programs in the school system. For more information on the Space Foundation, visit www.SpaceFoundation.org.

School system hosts NASA geologist as part of the fourth Educational Exchange

The question of the day on Aug. 3 for Dr. Amitabha Ghosh, a planetary geologist assigned to work on NASA's Mars Missions, was, "When will human exploration on Mars become possible?" Ghosh was the guest speaker at the Charles County Public Schools Educational Exchange held at North Point High School in partnership with the National Space Foundation. More than 100 students, teachers, administrators and county organizations were invited to attend. The exchange serves to educate the community on the efforts the school system is making in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

Superintendent of Schools James E. Richmond welcomed guests and emphasized the importance of providing students with skills needed in the 21st century. "It is important for our students to have access to STEM-related programs and to become engaged by science and mathematics. We are advancing our efforts to provide students with tools necessary to succeed in the future and the very best education to prepare them for infinite possibilities," Richmond said.

Board of Education Chairman Roberta S. Wise introduced Ghosh, who serves as chair of the science operations working group for the Mars exploration rover mission and is responsible for planning rover activities on Mars. There are currently two rovers – Spirit and Opportunity – in use on Mars, which are used to collect geologic and experimental data, monitor planetary and atmospheric conditions and photograph planetary terrain. He spoke of recent Mars developments and his experiences in driving the rovers. "The most crucial part of



Charles County Board of Education Chairman Roberta S. Wise, pictured right, welcomes Dr. Amitabha Ghosh, a NASA geologist assigned to work the Mars rover missions, pictured left, at the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) fourth Educational Exchange, held Aug. 3 at North Point High School.

these missions is whether or not the rovers land successfully on Mars," Ghosh said. Spirit and its twin, Opportunity, began exploring Mars in January 2004 on missions Ghosh said were planned to last only three months.

The rovers rely on solar powered panels as power sources. Ghosh said winter conditions on Mars often cause the rovers to revert to hibernation mode because of the angles of the sun. "The rovers use existing energy in hibernation mode to recharge and heat its batteries, and all communications are suspended," Ghosh added. Spirit has been in hibernation mode since April 2009. Both rovers have made discoveries about wet environments that may have been favorable for supporting microbial life.

Ghosh also provided participants with a view of the mission through a video based on the launch, orbit and landing of the rovers. Participants were interested in NASA's future plans for Mars, as well as how the rovers operate. Iain Probert, vice president of education for the Space Foundation, asked about the driving schedules for the rovers. Ghosh said staff operate in shifts to operate the rovers, and NASA relies on images to navigate the terrain. Wendell Martin, principal of Theodore G. Davis Middle School, asked Ghosh what the likelihood of human exploration on Mars occurring in this century is and what it would entail. Ghosh said it is unlikely that human exploration on Mars will occur soon because of high costs and limited information is currently available about possible working conditions.

This was the fourth educational exchange hosted by CCPS. The Board of Education developed the exchanges two years ago.

Charles County Public Schools television stations features original programming

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) has two educational channels, Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12. The channels feature educational programming ranging from foreign language programs, and mathematics and science lessons for students. The channels are managed by the CCPS communications department and also feature original programming that highlights students and staff in action, as well as events happening in the school system. The stations are also used to broadcast Board of Education meetings live and rebroadcasts each meeting to keep the public informed.

Original programming for Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12 includes Newsbreak 96, a bi-weekly show that highlights school system events, programs, students and successes. All episodes are anchored by student representatives from county high schools. Anchors for the 2010-11 school year are: Holly Gonzalez, senior,

La Plata High School; Ryan Harris, senior, Maurice J. McDonough High School; Trey Lyles, senior, North Point High School; Arianna Poindexter, senior, Westlake High School; and Katrina Savoy, senior, Thomas Stone High School.

The station also broadcasts On Air, a monthly show that highlights programs and activities that make Charles County Public Schools a successful school system. Each month, three to five programs of newsworthy events and activities are featured and provide a visual representation of how the system operates.

The channels are provided free to the school system through a franchise agreement with the Charles County government. If you have an idea for the television station, contact Kyle Graves, video production technician, at kgraves@ccboe.com. Programming schedules are available on the school system Web site at www.ccboe.com.

Board of Education announces August agenda

The Board of Education's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, Aug. 10, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building on Radio Station Road in La Plata. The public portion of the August meeting begins at 11 a.m. The meeting is televised live on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12, and is rebroadcast throughout the week. Board meetings are also streamed live on the school system Web site at www.ccboe.com/live.

American Education Week; American Freedom Week; African American History Month; Career and Technical Education Month; National School Counseling Week; Read Across America; Women's History Month; Fine and Performing Arts Month; Month of the Young Child; National Student Leadership Week; Teacher Appreciation Week; Administrative Professionals' Week; Child Nutrition Employee Appreciation Week; National Physical Education and Sports Week; Washington Post Distinguished Educational Leader; Charles County Teacher of the Year; Employees' Retirement; and Washington Post Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award.



Executive session – 10 a.m.

Call to order – 11 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Recognition

- Book donation to school libraries from the Maryland Retired School Personnel Association
- Sacred Heart Ladies' Auxiliary #301, Knights of St. John International

Superintendent's Update to the Board

Reports of officers/boards/committees

- Correspondence/Board member updates
- Education Association of Charles County
- Student Board Member update
- Preparations for opening of schools
- FY2012 CIP State and local CIP program
- Summer programs
- Staffing update
- Board Chairman Election Bylaw
- Recurring Resolutions: *Health Careers Month*;

Unfinished Business

New business and future agenda items

- New business
- Future agenda items

Public Forum

Action items

- Minutes
- Personnel
- School naming

Adjournment

School News is published by
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The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Ronald Cunningham, Title IX Coordinator, or Patricia Vaira, Section 504 Coordinator (students), or Keith Hettel, Section 504 Coordinator (employees/adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, Maryland 20646. 301-932-6610/870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.

Personnel

Apply for positions online at www.ccboe.com/hur. Positions are open until filled unless otherwise noted. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job Openings

Purchasing Assistant I – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Apply by Aug. 6.

Security Alarm Technician – Annex Building, 12-month position. Apply by Aug. 10.

Food Service Assistant Manager – Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 10.

Child Care Provider – North Point High School, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 10.

Special Education Instructional Assistant – North Point High School, 10-month position. Apply by Aug 9.

Engineering Concepts Teacher – North Point High School, 10-month position.

Library/Media Specialist – General Smallwood Middle School, 10-month position.

Family and Consumer Science Teacher – Westlake High School, 10-month position.

Meeting in the Middle Instructional Assistant – John Hanson Middle School, 10-month position. Apply by Aug. 9.

Spanish Teacher – Opening at the high school level, 10-month position.

English Teachers – Openings at the middle and high school levels, 10-month positions.

Theatre Arts Teacher – High school level opening, 10-month position.

Vocal Music Teacher – High school level opening, 10-month position.

Instructional Resource Teacher – Opening at the middle school level, 11-month position.

Resource Teacher, Secondary Mathematics – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 11-month position. Master's degree preferred and a minimum of five years of teaching experience required.

Adult Independence Program/Special Education Teacher – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, 10-month position.

HVAC Teacher – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, 10-month position.

Title I Instructional Specialist for Early Childhood Education – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree and a minimum of five years teaching experience preferred.

Instructional Specialist for Science – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree in science preferred and a minimum of five years teaching experience required.

Extra Pay

North Point High School has the following openings:

- Head indoor track coach
- Assistant indoor track coach

Contact Principal Kim Hill, 301-753-1759, to apply.