

*Where success is measured
one student at a time*



Charles County Public Schools

School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Two-hour early dismissal

The next two-hour early dismissal for students is Wednesday, Feb. 16.

Schools/offices closed

Schools and offices will be closed on Monday, Feb. 21, in observance of Presidents Day.

Staff to be honored

The Board of Education will honor more than 60 Charles County Public Schools employees during a Years of Service ceremony on Thursday, Feb. 24, at 5 p.m. in the Board Room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

Math Counts

The regional middle school Math Counts competition is Saturday, Feb. 5, at Theodore G. Davis Middle School in Waldorf. The event begins at 7:30 a.m.

W-2 Information

All employees should have received a W-2 form through the pony or mail. If you lose your form, submit a completed request for a W-2 replacement form which is located on the staff services forms database. Employees can also access their W-2 information on the self-service portal.

Airing now

Airing now is a new episode of News-Break 96, a bi-monthly news show produced by the communications department that highlights Charles County Public Schools students and staff. Featured this week is the Henry E. Lackey High School Key Club, student artists featured in the Six Picks Art Exhibit at the Mattawoman Creek Art Center, and details about the Charles County Scholarship Fund.

School system not out of the winter woods yet

Until winter winds down, school schedules and makeup days are as unpredictable as the next snowfall.

So far, the school system has used the four inclement weather days built into the school calendar, leaving the last day of school for students as Monday, June 20, and Tuesday, June 21 for teachers. The school calendar, set by the Board of Education more than a year in advance, calls for any additional days used to be made up during Spring Break. If winter weather causes additional closings, make up days are scheduled to be taken from Spring Break in the following order: April 18, 19, 20 and 21.

Winter weather often requires that schools open with a one- or two-hour de-

lay or close early for the day. Decisions to close or delay opening of schools are made as early as possible. Every effort is made to make the decision by 5 a.m. and, when possible, earlier. The most reliable sources of school closing information are the school system's 24-hour information line and the Charles County Public Schools Web site.

The school system Web site, www.ccboe.com, is updated and a recorded message announcing closings or delayed openings is placed on the 24-hour information line, 301-934-7410 or 301-932-6656, as soon as a decision is made. Charles County Public Schools also participates with Schoolsout.com to provide free e-mail notification of closings. Visit

See Snow, page 2

Snow days used so far:

- Dec. 16, 2010
- Dec. 17, 2010
- Jan. 18, 2011
- Jan. 27, 2011

Board of Education's February 8 meeting agenda

The Board of Education's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, Feb. 8, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building on Radio Station Road in La Plata. The public portion of the meeting begins at 1 p.m. and student and staff recognition starts at 4:30 p.m. The meeting is televised live on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12 and is rebroadcast throughout the week. The meeting is also streamed live on the Charles County Public Schools Web site. Visit <http://www2.ccboe.com/boe/live/> to watch the meeting.

- Student Board Member update
- Parent Advisory Committee update
- CIP update
- Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement (MESA); Minority Achievement; and potential Advanced Placement (AP) teachers update
- Budget update

Unfinished business New business and future agenda items

- New business
 - Future agenda items
- Recognition – 4:30 p.m.**
- Students
 - Employees
 - Resolutions

Public Forum – 6 p.m.

- Action items**
- Minutes
 - Personnel
- Adjournment**





On the cover

Pictured on the cover are employees from Mary B. Neal Elementary School. Pictured, from left, are: Daphne Burns, vice principal; Joseph “Joe” Rubilotta, science teacher; and Jennifer “Jen” DeAtley, reading resource teacher.

Spellers get ready!

The annual Charles County Spelling Bee is Friday, Feb. 18, at Piccowaxen Middle School. The event begins at 6 p.m., and the winner will compete in the televised Scripps National Spelling Bee planned for June 1-2 in Washington, D.C. For more information about the national event, visit <http://www.spellingbee.com/>.

Tri-County Concerts

The annual Tri-County Concerts are planned for Sunday, Feb. 13, at the Mary Harrison Center, located on the Northern High School campus in Calvert County. The school is located at 2950 Chaneyville Road, Owings, Md., 20736. The concerts start at 2 p.m., are free and open to the public.

Local group to perform

The Chesapeake Symphonic Winds are performing at 3 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 5, at North Point High School in Waldorf. The group is comprised of staff from Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s County Public Schools, local musicians and military band members, and is under the direction of David Monk, an elementary school music teacher at three county elementary schools. Admission is free. For more information, call 240-682-2036.

Student art on display

The Six Picks High School art exhibit, which features works from students in Charles County Public Schools, is on display now through Feb. 13 at the Mattawoman Creek Art Center. The center is open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Call 301-743-5159 or visit www.mattawomanart.org for more information.

Bourassa to be honored by gifted education council

Maryann Bourassa, content specialist for gifted education with Charles County Public Schools, will be honored as an Outstanding Educator in Gifted Education – Program Coordinator, later this month by the Maryland State Department of Education’s Maryland Advisory Council on Gifted and Talented Education. Each year, the Maryland State Advisory Council on Gifted and Talented Education honors educators and parents for their contributions in developing talents of Maryland students from all populations in gifted education.

shares her understanding the need for a comprehensive identification and service model that reflects research based best practices. The resource teachers rely on her experience and expertise to tirelessly advocate for gifted children.”



Maryann Bourassa

Bourassa said she is humbled to receive recognition for something she enjoys doing each day. “I am honored to receive state recognition for my work in gifted education. I work with outstanding colleagues in our county and across the state, and I am proud to have been selected for this award.”

She was nominated for recognition by Mary Seremet, secondary gifted education resource teacher, and Joyce Campbell, elementary gifted education resource teacher, for expanding the gifted education program in Charles County, for providing leadership in establishing a successful gifted education identification process, and for helping to develop curriculum for gifted students. In their nomination statement, Seremet and Campbell state that Bourassa was essential in the expansion of gifted services to Charles County Public Schools students. “Maryann voices our system accomplishments and initiatives at many levels as she

To further her training and knowledge in gifted education practices, Bourassa pursued additional certification in gifted education through a new, online graduate program in conjunction with North Georgia College.

Bourassa also attends state briefings on gifted education and shares topics with county resource teachers to keep them informed of state and national

initiatives. Additionally, she attends state and national gifted conferences and has served on the planning committee for the Maryland State Conference to promote advocacy for students.

She will be honored, along with educators from other Maryland counties, at a Feb. 16 reception. Bourassa has worked for Charles County Public Schools since 1980, when she was hired to teach at John Hanson Middle School. She taught language arts at Hanson for more than 17 years before assuming a gifted education resource teacher position at the school in 1997. In 2003, she transferred to the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building and was named the content specialist in gifted education in 2008. She holds a bachelor’s degree in English education from Glassboro State College and a master’s degree in reading education from the University of Maryland, College Park.

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www.schoolsout.com to sign up for this free service. Staff can also sign up for text message notification at a cost.

Staff can also receive inclement weather announcements from Twitter by signing up at www.twitter.com/ccps, or signing up for the Charles County Public Schools press releases subscriber list for instant e-mail notification. Visit www.ccboe.com/pr to subscribe to the service. Radio and television stations also run the latest infor-

mation on school closings, delayed openings or early dismissals. A complete list of television and radio stations notified by the school system is printed on page 10 of the *Parent Handbook/Calendar*. Staff notifies stations by 5 a.m.; however, stations determine when and if the information is posted.

For more information on Charles County Public Schools inclement weather procedures for staff, visit <http://www2.ccboe.com/staffservices/inclementweather.cfm>.

Charles County Public Schools prohibits all forms of sexual harassment

The Board of Education of Charles County prohibits any and all forms of sexual harassment in the school and workplace settings. In addition, both federal and state law prohibit sexual harassment. Sexual harassers may face discipline up to and including termination from employment or expulsion from school.

School system employees and students may not commit acts of sexual harassment against any individual, including other employees and students. It is the obligation and responsibility of every employee to recognize sexual harassment and to take the appropriate action to ensure that such acts are addressed promptly, fairly, and effectively. Any incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately to a school system administrator.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other inappropriate verbal, written, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that takes place under any of the following circumstances:

- When submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment or participation in school system activities;
- When submission to or rejection of such conduct by a victim is used by the offender as the basis for making personnel or academic decisions affecting the victim;
- When such conduct has the effect of interfering with the victim's ability to fully participate in employment or academic activities; or

- When such conduct has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment.

Prohibited conduct may include, but is not limited to:

- Using sexually derogatory language;
- Making unwanted sexual advances or comments;
- Showing or distributing sexually offensive pictures, notes, e-mails, cartoons, jokes, or material in any format;
- Objectionably touching another individual in a sexual manner or blocking another individual's movement in a sexual manner;
- Committing a sexual offense or sex crime against another individual;
- Ogling another individual; and
- Requesting sexual favors, including rewarding individuals for providing sexual favors or penalizing individuals for withholding sexual favors.

It is not necessary for the victim to object to the behavior before reporting it to a school system administrator. All complaints of sexual harassment shall be investigated in a fair, appropriate, and timely manner. Retaliation for appropriately reporting sexual harassment is prohibited. Complaints may be filed with any school system administrator or with Keith Hettel, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources (employees), or Patricia Vaira, Director of Student Services (students), at (301) 932-6610.

Stapleson named Outstanding Teacher as Leader in Gifted Education

Kathryn Stapleson, a gifted education resource teacher at T.C. Martin Elementary School, was recently named an Outstanding Teacher as Leader in Gifted Education by the Maryland State Department of Education's Maryland Advisory Council on Gifted and Talented Education. The Maryland State Advisory Council on Gifted and Talented Education annually honors educators and parents for their contributions in developing talents of Maryland students from all populations in gifted education.

Stapleson said she was honored when she was notified that she had been nominated and selected for a state award. "I am very honored to receive this award and to represent the gifted education resource teachers in Charles County," she added.

She was nominated for recognition by Mary Seremet, secondary gifted education resource teacher, and Joyce Campbell, elementary gifted education resource teacher, for her expertise in creating lessons for students in different grade levels, for working collaboratively with the reading and math teachers to prepare students for challenging lessons and for her positive rapport with students and staff. In their nomination statement, Seremet and Campbell state that Stapleson is a go-to person for other resource teachers seeking assistance. "Other resource teachers look to Kathryn for her expertise and knowledge of gifted students and programs. She freely shares her experiences and insights to assist her colleagues in resolving issues."

Stapleson is also an active participant in the graduate level gifted education certification program available through North Georgia College and will complete the process later this school year. She

also assists in writing gifted education curriculum for elementary reading, math and summer enrichment programs, and leads countywide staff development lessons on differentiation and gifted education. "She can be counted upon to volunteer her expertise whenever there is a system or school need. Kathryn is a fervent advocate of gifted students who recognizes the importance of nurturing students of advanced potential," Seremet and Campbell wrote in their nomination statement.

She will be honored, along with educators from other Maryland counties, at a Feb. 16 reception at the Miller Senate Building in Annapolis. Maryann Bourassa, content specialist in gifted education for Charles County Public Schools, will also be honored at the reception as an Outstanding Educator in Gifted Education – Program Coordinator.

Stapleson began her teaching career in Charles County at Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School in 1987. She later transferred to Berry Elementary School in 1996 and began working as a gifted education resource teacher in 2006. As a gifted education resource teacher, Stapleson has worked with students at Arthur Middleton, Dr. Gustavus Brown, William A. Diggs and T.C. Martin elementary schools.

She holds a bachelor's and master's degree in education from the University of Maryland, College Park.



Kathryn Stapleson

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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 Patricia Vaira, Title IX Coordinator and 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.

Stone's safe driver task force receives grant from local agency

Students at Thomas Stone High School received a \$2,000 grant on Jan. 24 for their efforts in promoting safe driving practices. Stone, as well as Charles County's other five high schools, has a student task force dedicated to promoting safe driving among teenagers and to improve safety on the roads through awareness campaigns.

The student-led task force, named the "Lookin Out for Safe Drivers Task Force," applied for the grant through Strachan Insurance Agency. In the application, students had to specify the goals of the task force, as well as provide examples of events and activities. Gary Winsett, teacher at Stone and county advisor to the Charles County Association of Student Councils (CCASC), submitted the application for the force, which is comprised of about 15 student members.

The school system partnered with the Charles County Sheriff's Office three years ago to launch the "We Care" safe driving campaign. Each high school launched a teen driving safety task force and has coordinated school events and exercises to promote the campaign.

This is the second year that Stone has received a grant from Strachan Insurance Agency to help fund the teen driving campaign. Earlier this school year, the agency funded the Lookin Out Safety Bug driving event at North Point and La Plata high schools. The event features a Volkswagen Beetle that has been customized to demonstrate the loss of control a person would experience if they drove while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The event is scheduled to take place at Stone later this school year.



Thomas Stone High School received a grant for their teen driver safety task force. Accepting the check are, pictured from left, Ronald Cunningham, deputy superintendent; Officer Raymond Anderson; Stone Vice Principal Carl Pascarella; Stone teacher and SGA advisor Gary Winsett; Gina McElhaney of Strachan Insurance Agency; Sheriff Rex Coffey; and Stone seniors Ariel Queen and Emmanuel Bakare.

Personnel

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

Job openings

Elementary Teacher – J.C. Parks Elementary School, 10-month position. Apply by Feb. 9.

Special Education Teacher for Inclusion – Thomas Stone High School, 10-month position.

Life Skills Teacher – Piccowaxen Middle School, 10-month position.

Special Education Math for Self Contained and Inclusion – Thomas Stone High School, 10-month position.

Speech Language Therapist – Elementary school level, 10-month position.

Science Teacher – Mattawoman Middle School, 10-month position.

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

Instructional Resource Teacher, Middle School Level – John Hanson Middle School, 11-month position.

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

Food Service Substitutes – Openings at county schools, hours and locations vary. Salary is \$9.75 per hour. Apply by Feb. 14.

Special Education Instructional Assistant, Emotionally Adjusted (EA) Program – North Point High School, 10-month position. Apply by Feb. 7.

Coordinator of Middle School Instruction – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree, a minimum of five years successful teaching experience, and experience in leadership roles are required. Visit www.ccboc.com for more information.

Staff Notes

Retirement planning session scheduled

The Charles County Retired School Personnel Association (CCRSPA) and the department of human resources are hosting a retirement planning session Thursday, Feb. 10, 2011, 5 to 8 p.m., in the Board Room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. This session is for employees who are considering retirement at the end of the fiscal year. The session will include guest speakers and forms for processing your retirement. Pizza and light refreshments will also be available. RSVPs are required as space is limited for this event. For more information or to RSVP, contact Janice Spatz at 301-934-2146 or jspatz@comcast.net.

Travel, conference reports

The 2011 rate for mileage is \$.51 per mile. The 2011 mileage reports are available on the forms database located on the CCPS Web site, www.ccboc.com.