



# School News

## Important Dates Coming Soon

### *Interims issued*

Interims will be issued to students on Monday, May 14.

### *Two-hour early dismissal*

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

### *SECAC meeting*

The next Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) meeting is 6:30-8 p.m., Wednesday, May 16, in the board room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building. Call the Parent Center at 301-934-7456 for more information.

### *Upcoming testing*

Elementary and middle school county assessments are May 21 through May 24. High school county assessments are May 21-25. High School Assessments (HSA) begin on May 21 and end June 6.

### *View the 'American Teacher'*

The Education Association of Charles County (EACC) invites you to attend a free viewing of the film, "American Teacher" on Wednesday, May 23, in North Point High School's auditorium. "American Teacher" is a movie created to share the everyday realities of being a public educator. A light dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m., and the film screening is at 6 p.m., followed by a panel discussion with EACC employees and community members. Please visit <http://americanteacherincharlescounty.eventbrite.com/> to RSVP. Registration closes at 12 p.m., on Friday, May 18.

### *Memorial Day closure*

Schools and offices are closed on Monday, May 28, in observance of Memorial Day.

## Board begins search for the next superintendent

The Board of Education this week voted to hire the Maryland Association of Boards of Education to assist with the search for a new superintendent. Superintendent James E. Richmond formally notified the Board of Education last week that he does not plan to ask for renewal of his contract in 2013. The 16-year Superintendent of Schools said he wanted to provide the Board with ample opportunity to fill his position before his final day on June 30, 2013.

Richmond is not required to notify the Board until the February prior to expiration of his contract, but he said "I think the right thing to do is provide the Board with as much time possible to complete the process of hiring a new Superintendent."

The Board has started discussing the process it will use to replace the long-time superintendent when he completes his final term next school year.

Richmond, who is a former Maryland Superintendent of the Year, took the top job in Charles County Public Schools in 1996 as interim Superintendent. He was appointed to his first four-year term as Superintendent in 1997, and he will complete his fourth term in June 2013.

During Richmond's tenure, the school system started paying closer attention to data to track student progress, and he oversaw the creation of a data warehouse. Richmond also focused on improving reading programs for the system's youngest students. He added a full-time reading resource teacher and a Reading Recovery teacher to all elementary schools as well as the Summer Reading Academy and Enrichment Reading Camp. "Our children must learn to read before they leave the primary grades in order to succeed. Reading is the most fundamental skill we must provide for our students," Richmond said.

Richmond also adopted a five-year plan

that focuses on academic achievement, career readiness and personal responsibility.

Under Richmond's leadership, Charles County Public Schools opened four schools and completed renovations and expansion of four others, including the addition of the school system's first indoor pool at Henry E. Lackey High School. Richmond's final project is the building of St. Charles High School, which will open in August 2014, more than a year after he leaves office.

While building North Point High School, Richmond directed staff to oversee technology improvements across the system and to provide equity and wireless access to all schools, students and staff. Using sound financial management practices, the Superintendent was able to allocate the system's funding to upgrade technology, improve infrastructure, reduce class sizes and ensure adequate materials of instruction for students.

The Superintendent also created numerous partnerships with businesses and county agencies, the most notable being with the Charles County Sheriff's Office and the Charles County Health Department. These partnerships placed School Resource Officers in each middle and high school and a health department nurse at every school. Richmond feels both enhance the safety and security of the schools.

Richmond has been recognized nationally, locally and by the state for Charles County Public Schools efforts to eliminate the minority achievement gap and his effort to develop science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs for all students. Most recently, the Space Foundation, in partnership with the Astronauts Memorial Foundation (AMF) and NASA, presented Richmond with the Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award for his outstanding contributions to Charles County Public Schools educational technology.



**James E. Richmond**

## Teachers honored for excellence in math, science

Six Charles County Public Schools teachers were recently honored by the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) for their accomplishments in the area of mathematics and science.

Honored as Outstanding Mathematics Teachers of the Year were: Amy Striker, Mary B. Neal Elementary School; Bethany Berkowitz, General Smallwood Middle School; and Gina Tallon, Westlake High School.

Honored as Outstanding Science Teachers of the Year were: Jessica Ramey, Theodore G. Davis Middle School; Diane Fisher, John Hanson Middle School; and Karena Bennett, Maurice J. McDonough High School.

Striker teaches fourth-grade general mathematics and has been at Neal for the past four years. She creates interesting and exciting lessons for her students and provides guidance to other teachers about math instruction. Striker is also the co-chair of the Neal focus group on mathematics curriculum.

Berkowitz teaches seventh-grade algebraic thinking and has been teaching at Smallwood for the past three years. She serves as the math department chair and differentiates her teaching methods to reach all types of learners. She also works with students during Smallwood's after-school and summer math programs.

Tallon teaches elementary algebra II and Advanced Placement (AP) calculus, and has been teaching at Westlake for the past 18 years. She is the math department chair and sets high expectations for her students. Tallon is also an integral part of the ACT/SAT

committee and AP team at Westlake.

Ramey teaches sixth-grade science and has been teaching at Davis since the school opened in 2009. Her lesson plans focus on three areas of scientific concepts: geology, meteorology and astronomy, and engage students in learning about Earth, the solar system, the weather and the rock cycle. She has also served as a coach to the robotics team and as a teacher mentor for the Naval Surface Warfare Center's (NSWC) science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) summer academy.

Fisher teaches seventh-grade life science and has been teaching at Hanson for the past 20 years. During her teaching career, Fisher has taught both sixth- and seventh-grade science classes and creates lessons that adapt to the learning needs of all students. Through a combination of hands-on activities and investigative lab exercises, Fisher's students learn about challenging concepts in fun ways.

Bennett teaches honors biology and AP biology and has been teaching at McDonough for the past 15 years. She holds high expectations for her students and creates engaging and exciting lesson plans to peak the interests of all learners. In addition to teaching Biology, Bennett is also the science department chair and serves as a teacher mentor.

The teachers were nominated for the award by staff, students and parents. They were honored by SMECO April 18 during a ceremony.



### On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees honored by the Board of Education on May 8. Pictured, from left, are: Linda McLaughlin, world language teacher, North Point High School; Andrea Hoover, social studies teacher, Mattawoman Middle School; and Kathryn Stapleton, gifted education resource teacher, T.C. Martin Elementary School.

### Last day of school

Students' last day of school for the 2011-12 school year is Monday, June 11. Two-hour early dismissal days are June 6, 7, 8 and 11. The last day of school for students in the Three's Program is Tuesday, June 5. The last day of school for teachers is Thursday, June 14. Teachers will attend in-service activities on Tuesday, June 12, and Wednesday, June 13.

Charles County Public Schools used three of the four student days built into the calendar during the first two weeks of the school year for inclement weather. The Board of Education approved three make-up days for students – Sept. 16, Oct. 21 and Nov. 2 – to restore days for possible use during the winter. Two of the days were teacher in-service days, leaving teachers to make-up those dates on June 12 and June 13.

Important dates for the 2012-13 school year have been finalized by the Board of Education and are listed on the school system website, under the calendars section. Two-hour early dismissal dates listed are subject to change. Copies of the Parent Handbook/ Calendar are distributed to staff during the week teachers return to the classroom.

### Robotics competition

Teams from Dr. Thomas L. Higdon, Indian Head, and Dr. Samuel A. Mudd elementary schools and Mattawoman Middle School placed at the Department of Defense/Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) In-School Robotics program competition held May 5. The competition based on environmental challenges that face the Chesapeake Bay and included research and robotics components. The top two winning teams in each division, which include students from Higdon, Indian Head and Mattawoman, won a four-day trip to Smith Island where they will have the opportunity to interact with the wildlife of the Chesapeake Bay and camp outdoors.



**Jessica Ramey**



**Amy Striker**



**Diane Fisher**



**Bethany Berkowitz**



**Gina Tallon**



**Karena Bennett**

## Staff recognized for making a difference for special needs students

The Charles County Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SECAC) recognized more than 100 Charles County Public Schools staff members at its sixth annual Teacher and Staff Appreciation Awards ceremony held Wednesday, April 25.

Staff members are nominated by students and parents in the community for making a difference in the lives of special needs children. Nominations are selected from six categories: individual elementary; individual secondary; elementary group; secondary group; individual related services and group related services.

In the individual elementary school category, Amanda Mastran, a special education teacher at Dr. Thomas L. Higdon Elementary School, was named the overall winner. Steve Willett, a special education teacher at Milton M. Somers Middle School, received the overall award in the individual secondary category.

Elementary group category winners are from William B. Wade Elementary School and include: Jenna Monroe, special education teacher; Karen Gross, instructional assistant; Bonnie Thomas Stern, instructional assistant; and Melissa Elliott, instructional assistant.

The secondary group award winners are from the F.B. Gwynn Educational Center. They are: Todd Wonderling, coordinator of special programs; Scott Paterson, school psychologist; Charlotte Dougherty, instructional assistant; Jeff Mathews, special education teacher; Jason Kiessling, special education teacher; Matthew Werner, special education teacher; and Kelley Clancy and Linda Westervelt, instructional assistants.

In the individual related-services category, Tamara Crozier, school nurse at Gwynn, was selected as the winner. In the group related-services category, Joanne Brown, occupational therapist, and Nathan Lebedeker, physical therapist, were named overall winners.

Additionally, staff members who were recognized for nominations include:

- Steven Baldo, special education teacher, Wade;
- Sunshine Barton, kindergarten teacher, J. C. Parks Elementary School;
- Karin Beausoleil, physical education teacher, Gwynn;
- Brenda Bivins, pre-school assistant, Wade;
- Scott Brain, school psychologist, Gwynn;
- Christine Busey, special education instructional assistant, Life Skills program, Gale-Bailey Elementary School;
- Angelene Carson, special education teacher, Wade;
- Robyn Cataldo, special education teacher, Berry Elementary School;
- Elizabeth Chotkowski, special education teacher, Gwynn;
- Lynne Cuppett, kindergarten instructional assistant, Wade;
- Heather Davis, special education teacher, Gwynn;
- Rachel Demichele, instructional assistant, Gale-Bailey;
- Sarah Desrosiers, special education teacher, Theodore G. Davis Middle School;
- Kathleen Duke, pre-kindergarten teacher, Wade;
- Alayna Effinger, special education teacher, J.P. Ryon Elementary School;
- Cynthia Fitzsimmons, special education teacher, Gwynn;
- Robin Figurelle, special education teacher, Mary H. Matula Elementary School;
- Lola Ganley, speech therapist, Gwynn;

- Anita Grimes, special education pre-school instructional assistant, Berry;
- Ginger Hedegore, school counselor, General Smallwood Middle School;
- Ann Herbert, pre-kindergarten teacher, Gale-Bailey;
- Michael Hoffman, fifth-grade teacher, William A. Diggs Elementary School;
- Cherelle Holland, long-term substitute teacher, Davis;
- Amanda Hughes, special education teacher, Gwynn;
- Erica Hughes, fourth-grade teacher, Matula;
- Teresa James, school psychologist, Arthur Middleton Elementary School;
- Joann Jenkins, special education instructional assistant/Life Skills program, Ryon;
- Mary Jenkins, instructional assistant, Ryon;
- Betty Jennings, pre-school assistant, Berry;
- Susan Jennings, instructional assistant, Gwynn;
- Krysta Jones, kindergarten teacher, T.C. Martin Elementary School;
- Marvin Jones, principal, Berry;
- Lynn Kennedy, substitute teacher;
- Jason Kiessling, special education teacher, Gwynn;
- Celeste Law, special education teacher, John Hanson Middle School;
- Terry Leighton, speech therapist, Gwynn;
- Emily Locke, speech language pathologist, Smallwood;
- Jason Mackey, special education teacher, Smallwood;
- Donna Maki, speech therapist, Berry;
- Kelly Marshall, school psychologist, Matula;
- Jacklyn Mitchell, school counselor, Matula;
- Kayleigh Monroe, special education teacher, Gwynn;
- Theresa Mularski, mathematics teacher, Hanson;
- Nancy Murphy, pre-kindergarten teacher, Berry;
- Wendy Pancheri, multiple intensities teaching program instructional assistant, Gwynn;
- Patricia Powell, teacher, Malcolm Elementary School;
- Wanda Proctor, school counselor, Benjamin Stoddert Middle School;
- Teresa Robinson, coordinator of autism services, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building;
- Melissa Ryan, special education teacher, Gwynn;
- Sandy Shliep, MIT program instructional assistant, Gwynn;
- E. Diane Simmons, elementary teacher, Matula;
- Nicole Spalding, special education teacher, Matula;
- Barbara Staebler, school psychologist, Matula;
- Patricia Stokes, special education teacher, Diggs;
- Dana Sturdivant, mathematics teacher, Stoddert;
- Cynthia Viering, pre-school instructional assistant, Gale-Bailey;
- Marjorie Watson, special education instructional assistant, EA program, Davis;
- Coty Werkau, language arts teacher, Stoddert;
- Sue Wheeler, special education teacher, Gale-Bailey;
- Billie Williams, instructional assistant, Ryon; and
- Joyce Yates, MIT program instructional assistant, Gwynn.

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## Sgt. Rye receives D.A.R.E. Lifetime Achievement Award

Sgt. Carl Rye, supervising school resource officer for Charles County Public Schools, recently received the Sam Walker Lifetime Achievement Award and was named as the Maryland D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Officer of the Year for 2012 by the Maryland D.A.R.E. Officers Association (MDOA).

The annual award recognizes an MDOA member who demonstrates dedication and commitment to the D.A.R.E. program, the schools in which they serve and the local community. Rye was nominated for the award for his commitment to expanding the D.A.R.E. program in Charles County Public Schools and for his dedication to ensuring children are successful.

Rye said he is honored to receive the award. "It is an honor to be nominated and recognized by my peers for this award. I have been involved with the D.A.R.E. program for more than 20 years in Charles County and I am dedicated to serving the children in our community," Rye said.

The D.A.R.E. program is taught to sixth-grade students and is designed to help them recognize and resist the pressures that influence them to experiment with alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. The

program is available through Charles County Public Schools partnership with the Charles County Sheriff's Office. Rye has been an officer with the Charles County Sheriff's Office for the past 26 years and started to teach the D.A.R.E. program in Charles County middle schools in 1991.

In 2001, Rye was assigned to work with the school resource officer program and was promoted to Sergeant and supervising officer for the southern region of Charles County. Rye shares supervisory duties with Sgt. Mike Vaughn, who oversees the northern region of Charles County. Vaughn

nominated Rye and said Rye is an integral part of the D.A.R.E. program and school resource unit in Charles County.

"Sgt. Carl Rye has been at the forefront of the D.A.R.E. program for nearly two decades. He has been a trailblazer for D.A.R.E. in Charles County and without his dedication and hard work, the program would not be what it is today," Vaughn wrote in an award nomination letter.

Rye received the award last month during the MDOA annual conference. As the state honoree, he is eligible for the National D.A.R.E. Officers Association (NDOA) national award.



Sgt. Carl Rye

## Personnel

**Job Openings**

**Job Placement Coordinator** – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, 10-month position. Apply by May 18.

**Reading Recovery Teacher** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 10-month elementary position. Master's degree in early childhood education/reading and a minimum of three years experience required.

**Reading Resource Teacher** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 11-month elementary position. Master's degree and a minimum of five years experience required.

**Instructional Specialist for Compliance and Special Education** – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 11-month position. Master's degree in special education with a minimum of five years teaching experience and three years with inclusion required.

**Staff Notes**

**Register for the Space Discovery Institute**  
Spaces are still available for the summer

Space Discovery Institute, offered through Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) and the Space Foundation.

The institute is available for CCPS teachers and certificated staff, and will be held at Theodore G. Davis Middle School. The four, weeklong sessions focus on astronomy, biological and physical research, rocketry and space technologies in the classroom. There are 50 available spaces per session and participants can sign up for more than one session. The sessions run from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the schedule is as follows:

- **Astronomy Principles for the Classroom** - July 23-27: this course focuses on exciting ways to bring the universe into the classroom. Topics include motions of the heavens, astronomical research tools, stars and constellations, auroras and planets.
- **Space Technologies in the Classroom: Robotics and Nanotechnology** – July 23-27: this course examines the use of space

technologies in society, space transportation and design, robotics, communications, space power and space structures.

- **Rocketry Space History and Future of Space Flight** - July 30-Aug. 3: participants will learn about the history of rocketry and space exploration, and will build various rockets to use in the classroom with students.
- **Biological and Physical Research: Long-Term Space Travel** - July 30-Aug. 3: this course covers the effects of microgravity on the human body and other dangers that space exploration presents for humans.

The sessions are open to teachers across all subjects and grade levels. All courses include a light breakfast and lunch. To register, visit <http://www2.ccboe.com/staffdev/courses/index.cfm> and select the CPD course registration link. For more information, contact Monique Wilson, instructional specialist for STEM, at 301-934-7287 or [mwilson@ccboe.com](mailto:mwilson@ccboe.com).