



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

A joyful noise

The Tri-County Band, Chorus and Orchestra concerts are slated to be Sunday, Jan. 10 at the Mary Harrison Center at 2950 Chaneyville Road in Owings.

The chorus concert will be at 2 p.m., the orchestra will play at 4 p.m. and the band will perform at 6 p.m.

Two-hour early dismissal set

There will be a two-hour early dismissal on Friday, Jan. 15. Afternoon prekindergarten students will attend school.

Schools closed for MLK Day

Schools and offices will be closed Monday, Jan. 18, in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

Advisory committee to meet

The Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee will meet 6:30 p.m. Jan. 19 at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

Third marking period to start

The second marking period ends on Jan. 25; the third marking period begins Jan. 26.

Mid-year orientation planned

The mid-year new teacher orientation is set for Jan. 28 in the staff development room at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

Semester break for students

Semester break is Friday, Jan. 29. The break is for students only.

Student leaders get together

Members of the Charles County Association of Student Councils (CCASC) will meet Jan. 27 at Thomas Stone High School in Waldorf. For more information about the CCASC, view the 2015-16 calendar.



Students, teachers crack the code

Richard Lindsey and Jadyne Woolsey, third-graders in Teresa Schinasi's class at Dr. James Craik Elementary School, work on an Hour of Code activity. Elementary school students flipped playing cards to determine "if-else" statements commonly used across computer programming languages. Schools across Charles County held Hour of Code events, including a parent/student night and interactive coding lessons through free online tutorials. Hour of Code was held last month during the Charles County Public Schools celebration of Computer Science Education Week Dec. 7 to 11. See a short story on page 2.

Health insurance premium rate increase is in effect

Premium rate increases for the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) sponsored health insurance plan through CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield and Caremark are effective with the first paycheck of 2016, Friday, Jan. 8.

CCPS offers eligible employees benefits that include medical, dental and pharmacy services. The two plan options for employees include CareFirst Preferred Provider Plan (PPO/PPN) and Blue Choice Opt-Out Open Access. New premium rates for 2016 are:

- PPO/PPN plan – individual, \$198 per month (bi-weekly, \$99) – increase of \$8; family, \$530 per month (bi-weekly, \$265) – increase of \$20.

- Open Access – individual, \$138 per month (bi-weekly, \$69) – increase of \$13; family, \$396 per month (bi-weekly, \$198) – increase of \$36.

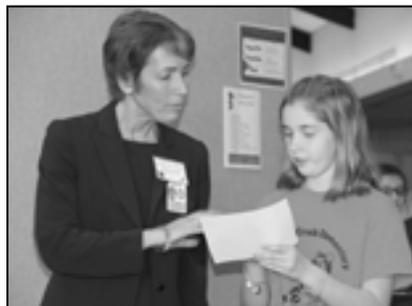
The health insurance plan follows a yearly calendar of Jan. 1 through Dec. 31. Changes to health insurance co-payments were negotiated between the employee unions, the Education Association of Charles County (EACC) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), to help offset the costs of the health plans. The following additional changes are now effective and apply to services under plans that require co-payments.

See Benefits, page 2

Hour of Code events abound in classrooms

While it didn't quite look like a computer science class, Ashley Bendert's fifth graders were learning how to code. Bendert's students were unplugged, using simple playing cards rather than computers to learn coding basics.

Using conditionals, Dr. James Craik Elementary School students flipped playing cards to determine "if-else" statements commonly used across computer programming languages. Students applied conditional problem solving skills by determining if something occurs, what do you do and if it doesn't, what else can you do? If, Bendert instructed her students, you draw a black card, multiply the face value by 10. If something else occurs – such as pulling a red card – use only the face value of the card. Once her students mastered the task, Bendert upped the game, making the conditional more challenging. "This teaches students problem solving skills and introduces them to technology's inner work-



Dr. James Craik Elementary School fourth grader Adeline Donnick, right, was Superintendent Kimberly A. Hill's tour guide during the school's Hour of Code event.

ings," Bendert said. The unplugged activity was part of Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) celebration of Computer Science Education Week Dec. 7-11 and an Hour of Code demonstration at Craik. Through a series of classroom visits, Craik students showed visitors how CCPS infuses computer science across

the curriculum and the innovative ways teachers introduce coding to the school system's youngest students. Schools across Charles County held Hour of Code events, like the parent/student night at Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School and an Hour of Code commitment by every student at St. Charles High School.

The activities, Craik Principal Debbie Calvert said, demonstrate how daily unplugged activities introduce children to coding beyond the Hour of Code. For the complete story, visit: <http://www.ccboe.com/pr/students-unplug-to-learn-about-coding/>.

Benefits

continued from page 1

- Office visit co-pays increase by \$5
- Pharmacy co-pays increase by \$5
- Emergency room co-pay is \$100 unless patient is admitted for treatment
- Dental deductible is \$30 per individual/\$80 per family

Employees with health coverage through the school system pay 25 percent of their total monthly premium through payroll deduction, and the Board of Education covers the remaining 75 percent. Employee contributions are deposited into a health care premium account, and premium amounts are determined by the total cost of health care services used and then paid by the Board through the premium account.

Open enrollment for health benefits is held annually in November. Outside

of open enrollment, employees can only make changes to health benefits within 31 days of a life event. Life events include the following and must be documented:

- Marriage, divorce or legal separation;
- Birth or adoption of a child;
- Death of your spouse or other dependent;
- Return from a leave of absence for you or your spouse;
- Beginning or end of your spouse's/dependents employment;
- Significant change in spouse's employment-based benefits; and
- Switch from temporary to full-time employment by you or your spouse.

Questions about CCPS health benefits can be directed to Christeda Warner, benefits analyst, at cwarner@ccboe.com or 301-934-7459.

Notebook

On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are teachers honored by the Board of Education during recent recognition ceremonies. Pictured, from left, are: Linda Holloman, fifth-grade teacher, Malcolm Elementary School; Pamela Batchelor, fourth-grade teacher, J.C. Parks Elementary School; and Daniel Meltsner, computer teacher, John Hanson Middle School.

Apply for Erly award

The Maurice Erly Professional Development Award is given to educators in the Educational Systems Federal Credit Union system, including those in Charles County.

The \$1,000 award can be used toward continuing education, including workshop registration, certification fees and tuition. Last year, Josh Hettel, an art teacher at La Plata High School, was given the award.

The award was named for Erly, who retired from the Prince George's County Board of Education after 38 years of service, with more than 25 of those years spent as the Coordinating Supervisor of Staff Development.

The deadline to apply for the award is Feb. 15. For more information, email Latisha Chase at lchase@esfcu.org.

Generate buzz for the 'bee'

The Charles County Spelling Bee will be next month. Held 6 p.m. Feb. 19, the competition will be hosted at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School in Waldorf. The snow date is Feb. 26.

Social network

Stay connected with what's going on with the Charles County Board of Education on Facebook. Go to www.facebook.com and search for the Charles County Board of Education, give the page a "like" to find out inclement weather notices, as well as information about closures, events and what's happening in schools around the county.

Like information in 140-characters or less? Charles County Public Schools is on Twitter. Go to <https://twitter.com/CCPS> to find out the latest goings-on in the school system. CCPS also posts inclement weather and breaking news information on Twitter and the school system website, www.ccboe.com.

Get fit for the New Year with gym discounts, employee wellness screenings

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is offering discounted gym memberships at World Gym, health risk assessments and biometric screening through the annual KeepWell@Work program to promote employee wellness. This is the second year the program is available as part of a partnership with Calvert Memorial Hospital and the State Department of Health's Maryland's Healthiest Businesses program.

A kickoff enrollment session for the benefit is scheduled for Monday, Jan. 18 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at World Gym in La Plata. Full-time employees (those who are eligible to receive CCPS health benefits) and their immediate family members (ages 12 and up) are eligible to participate. Program participants can also access weight management programs. A program kick-off enrollment session is scheduled for Jan. 19 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the World Gym location in La Plata. Employees who signed up to participate in the program during the winter enrollment period in 2015 – held January through February – must re-enroll to continue their participation.

The program features two enrollment sessions per year. The first session starts Jan. 18 and is available through Feb. 13. Another session is planned for later this year. These are the only two times that program participants can sign up. Eligible family members include any one who could be added to a CCPS-sponsored health benefit plan, such as a spouse and children up to age 26 (including adopted, stepchildren, or a disabled child with benefits who were enrolled prior to age 26).

As part of the gym membership, participants are eligible for a fitness orientation with a personal trainer who will help them develop an exercise program. The gym membership is for use at the following World Gym locations: La Plata, Waldorf, Prince Frederick, Owings, California, Lexington Park, Leonardtown and Lusby.

There are requirements for all employees, as well as participating family members.

These requirements include:

- The completion of an online health-risk assessment. This is required for everyone signing up and the fee is \$26 per person. Partici-

pants must first visit <http://www.calverthospital.org/body.cfm?id=1288> to request the health-risk assessment. The assessment fee is waived for participants who sign up for the 12-month gym membership.

- All participants must attend an enrollment session. A link to session information is posted on the CCPS employee portal, InsideCCPS.

- The gym membership is not required. However, participation in an enrollment session and payroll deduction for the health assessment fee is required. The \$26 health assessment fee will be paid through payroll deduction at \$1.09 twice a month for 24 pay periods.

- Completion of all requirements by the enrollment deadline of Feb. 13. Participants who cannot attend any of the scheduled enrollment sessions can contact the Keep Well Center at Calvert Memorial Hospital to complete the sign-up process. Call 410-535-8233.

Total cost of the gym membership is \$240 annually per person, which would be charged at \$20 per month, per person, and paid for through payroll deduction at \$10 per pay for 24 pay periods. There is also a \$26 gym membership enrollment fee per person that must be paid at the enrollment session. Accepted forms of payment include cash, check or a credit card.

Employees who already have a current gym membership/contract at the listed World Gym locations can sign up through the KeepWell@Work program to access the reduced rate of \$20 per month. The existing gym contract will be updated with a new start date at the time of enrollment, and will continue with the new cost of \$20 per month for 12 months. These employees will also receive a new key tag for their new membership. The enrollment fee of \$26 will only be waived for employees who already have a long-term contract with World Gym (one year or longer).

The goal of the program is to provide CCPS employees with opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles and keep health care costs and claims low. Additional information is posted on Calvert Memorial's website at <http://www.calverthospital.org/body.cfm?id=1286>. Questions can be keepwell@cmhlink.org or 410-535-8233.

Level, step increases top request in Superintendent's FY 2017 operating budget

Employee compensation is the cornerstone of the superintendent's proposed operating budget for fiscal year 2017, which will be introduced to members of the Board of Education Tuesday.

Dr. Kimberly A. Hill's proposal includes a reserve of \$12.3 million to provide employees step/level increases that include an estimated nearly \$4.9 million for one level/step increase, with a ballpark \$7.4 million for those who are two steps behind — there were no increases in 2011 and 2015.

The projected budget sets a reserve for collective bargaining with the Education Association of Charles County (EACC) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the two unions that represent school system employees.

If adopted, the budget would ensure proper employee placement on the compensation scale. The proposal does not have a request for a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) or for an adjustment for employees who are at the top of the scale.

Other items in the proposed budget include mandatory health care costs, which are estimated at \$3 million. The trend of rising health care costs calls for a 9.3 percent increase this year.

Teachers' pensions, the replacement of 14 school buses that have reached the 15-year limit, nurses' contracts and covering the increase of the Maryland Association of Boards of Education insurance premium are included in the proposal. In addition, the Teacher Mentor Program also will be supported, if Hill's proposal is accepted.

Lunch prices will increase by 10 cents to comply with federal price subsidy requirements — increasing the cost to \$2.65 for elementary students and \$2.90 for those in middle and high schools.

The Board of Education will hold a budget work session Jan. 25 with the board's final approval set for Feb. 9. The board will submit its budget to the Charles County Commissioners Feb. 29, with the Commissioners' public hearing slated for April 20. The board will adopt the final budget June 14.

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301-932-6610
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Editor/Writers

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Shelley Mackey
Sara K. Taylor

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Board of Education agenda for January 12 meeting

The Board of Education will meet Tuesday, Jan. 12, 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. Board meetings are also streamed live on the school system website at www.ccboe.com. The following is a meeting agenda and is subject to change.

Executive session – 12 p.m.

Call to order – 1 p.m.

- Pledge of Allegiance, North Point High School JROTC
- Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Superintendent's update

- Reports of officers/board/committees
- Correspondence/Board member updates
- Education Association of Charles County (EACC) update
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) update
- Student Board member update
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program

- Project status update
- James E. Richmond Science Center
- Algebra I textbook
- Proposed FY2017 operating budget
- Legislative update

Unfinished business

New business and future agenda items

- New business
- Future agenda items

Recognition – 4:30 p.m.

- Resolutions: *Black History Month; Career and Technical Education Month; National School Counseling Week; and Gifted and Talented Education Month*

- Students
- Staff

Public Forum – 6 p.m.

Action items

- Minutes
- Personnel
- System goals

Adjournment



Personnel

Apply for positions online at www.ccboe.com/jobs/currentopenings.php. All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job openings

Receptionist, Office of Human Resources — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. High school diploma or general education degree and one year of clerical experience, one of which must include experience performing similar clerical duties, required. Candidates should be proficient in Microsoft Office and have strong problem solving and troubleshooting skills. Apply by Jan. 12.

Principals, 2016-17 Candidate Pool — locations to be determined, 12-month positions. A master's degree, advanced professional certificate with Administrator II endorsement, minimum three years teaching experience and three years vice principal experience, and three current references required.

Interested candidates should apply by Jan. 22. **Vice Principals, 2016-17 Candidate Pool** — locations to be determined, 11-month positions. A master's degree, three years teaching experience, Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate with Administrator I endorsement and three current references required. Apply by Jan. 22.

Vice Principals, 2016-17 Candidate Pool — locations to be determined, 12-month positions. A master's degree, three years teaching experience, Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate with Administrator I endorsement and three current references required. Apply by Jan. 22.

ABE/GED Teacher — Lifelong Learning Center, 12-month position. A bachelor's degree and two years of experience required. Experience with adult learners and knowledge of adult learning theory and methodologies preferred. Apply by Feb. 1.

English Teacher — location to be deter-

mined, 10-month position. **Instructional Resource Teacher for elementary and middle school** — location to be determined, 11-month position. A master's degree, hold or be eligible for a Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate, and five years teaching experience required.

Home and Hospital Instructor — A bachelor's degree, experience working with students, and the ability to plan and implement lessons required. This is an hourly position.

School Bus Attendant Substitute — A high school diploma with five years of experience as a school bus attendant in Maryland.

Extra pay positions

St. Charles High School has the following openings:

- Girls' head varsity soccer coach
- Girls' assistant soccer coach
- JV head field hockey coach

Contact Jennifer Smith, athletic director, at 301-753-2090 to apply.