



# School News

## Important Dates Coming Soon

### *The end is near*

Official employee end dates have been finalized for summer. Eleven-month teachers get out on June 23, with 10.5-month teachers calling June 22 their last day and June 16 is the last day for 10-month employees. On the support side, June 28 is the last day for 11-month employees, June 21 for 10.5- and 10-month employees and 10-month instructional assistants get out on June 16. Credit will be given if an employee worked or used leave for any of the inclement weather days which were Jan. 21, 22, 25 and 26 and Feb. 16. Food service managers and assistant managers who are 10-month employees get out on June 21 and 10-month food service workers call June 16 their last day.

### *Summer economic workshops*

Two summer opportunities to get resources and information to help teach Maryland Personal Financial Literacy Standards and economics concepts are being offered.

The Maryland Council on Economic Education will hold workshops for kindergarten through fifth-grade teachers.

Elementary Financial Literacy Institute, Part 1 will be 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 1 at Towson University in Towson.

The workshops will be held online and face-to-face.

The day-long workshop is free. Teachers who participate in the face-to-face class on Aug. 1, complete the online component, pass the assessments and comply with course requirements will earn a MSDE credit toward teacher certification. To register, go to <http://www.econed.org/events/34/elementary-financial-literacy-institute-part-1/>.

Elementary Financial Literacy Institute, Part 2 is 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 2 at Towson. The workshop is free and participants will earn one MSDE credit toward teacher certification. Go to <http://www.econed.org/events/35/elementary-financial-literacy-institute-part-2/> to register.



## Durr creates buzz, named Teacher of the Year

Jillian Durr, left, was named the 2016 Charles County Teacher of the Year. The Dr. James Craik Elementary School third-grade teacher engages her students, including Emmalyn Fetters, right, in interesting lessons. During a recent writing assignment students used a prop microphone as they pretended to be broadcasters reading from a news report about the Chesapeake Bay. Durr is a nine-year veteran of Charles County Public Schools, all spent at Craik. See story on Page 2.

## School nurses provide healthy learning environment

A typical day for a school nurse ... there is no typical day.

"You see different things every day," said Jennifer Ledford, who has been the school nurse at Indian Head Elementary School for six years. "It's always an adventure. There is always something going on. You will never be bored as a school nurse."

The school health program is a collaborative effort between Charles County Public Schools and the Charles County Department of Health which allows for nurses in each school. Nurses dole out maintenance medications for ADHD, allergies and other issues.

Schools are small societies, any given one will have its share of asthmatics, diabetics, students with seizure disorders and those who have anaphylaxis, a serious allergic reaction that is life-threatening. Add to that the occasional headache, injuries, stomachaches,

pink eye and colds and a nurse's office is rarely quiet.

D.W. Stephenson, a U.S. Air Force veteran, has worked in trauma and intensive care units of hospitals in California, Texas and for the last 10 years at Doctors Community Hospital in Lanham. Now at Maurice J. McDonough High School, this is Stephenson's first year as a school nurse. "I'm not an adrenaline junkie," he said about leaving the intense environment of a hospital setting. "I like having the ability to be able to take my military and nursing training and be able to take on whatever comes through that door."

There are "frequent flyers" — nurse speak for patients who always seem to turn up at the nurse's office — but this year McDonough's administration has laid out firm rules about how a student can see Stephenson, all must have a pass from a teacher.

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## Durr named system's Teacher of the Year for 2016

Jillian Durr's third-grade classroom at Dr. James Craik Elementary School buzzes like a beehive. Students stay on task while moving around the room, brainstorming ideas on a news report detailing the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Breaking into groups of four, kids discuss various ways to start their respective assignments. They can open with a quote, a question, an interesting fact, a definition or opinion — it's up to each of them. Durr gives them the resources, they take responsibility for their learning.



**Dr. James Craik Elementary School third grader Nicolas Reid goes over his writing assignment with his teacher Jillian Durr.**

Durr's room isn't a "free for all," she said, but she does strive to make her students comfortable and not restricted to their desks. If a student wants to sit in the room's library corner lounging on a pillow, that's OK. If another is more comfortable sitting under his desk for the time being, that's fine too. "The perfect model of a class is that they're engaged in whatever they're doing, and doing what works for them," said Durr, a nine-year teaching veteran recently named Charles County Teacher of the Year. "However they feel like learning, that's how I want them to learn."

There is a vocabulary wall where words are spelled out. If a student gets stuck on a writing assignment, they go check it out. If the word isn't there, Durr will write it down for them, and it's added to the wall. Leaving a desk to find an answer or a better place to sit doesn't disrupt the room. On top of being responsible, Durr teaches her kids to be respectful. "I want them to take ownership of their own learning," she said. Teaching information is in the job description, but Durr infuses lessons in a way that makes students want to learn and get excited by learning more.

"I tell them learning can be fun," she said. "They take it to the extreme. I present them with something, they take it and flourish."

Debra Calvert, principal at Craik, said Durr has created a sense of warmth and genuine respect in her classroom. Durr takes her time to develop a bond with each of her students. "Being in tune with her students results in a classroom that is both student-friendly and collagenolytic busy," Calvert said.

Durr's classroom has a honeybee

theme, something she's kept since her student teaching days. "Be sweet, be hard-working," is the motto of the class. "For the past nine years, I have had a bee theme in my classroom because honeybees are one of the smartest, most productive creatures in our world," Durr said. "Our world relies heavily on their efforts to ensure our planet's growth and food supply. With those two traits in mind, students can accomplish anything."

Growing up in Pennsylvania, Durr developed a love of math and credits her teachers for stoking it. "My teachers made it a point to really get to know me, find out my strengths, and guide me to help them grow," she said. Durr wanted to be a teacher from the time she was in kindergarten. After a year of teaching second grade at Craik, she was given the opportunity to teach third-grade. It was a chance she jumped at.

Third grade is the most important year in a student's life, she said pointing to studies conducted on the subject. It's the grade when students start "reading to learn and aren't learning to read," she said. And it's a year that sets up a student's foundation for the years to come. It also can be exciting. "You said this was going to be an important year," one of Durr's students told her. "You didn't tell us it would be the best year."

In June, the Maryland State Department of Education will select finalists from school systems around the state.

The Maryland Teacher of the Year Awards Gala is set for Oct. 7.

## Notebook

### On the cover

Pictured on the front cover are employees honored by the Board of Education at the April and May meetings. Pictured, from left, are Kelley Clancy, STAY program instructional assistant, F.B. Gwynn Educational Center; Marget Savoy, language arts teacher, Mattawoman Middle School; and Mark Pavlecic, vocal music teacher, Theodore G. Davis Middle School.

### Dinner on Walden University

A May 24 dinner at Casey Jones Restaurant in La Plata will be hosted by Walden University to provide information about online doctoral, master's and bachelor's degrees. The event starts at 6 p.m. at the restaurant at 417 Charles St. To RSVP, contact Katie Hykes at [Katie.hykes@waldenU.edu](mailto:Katie.hykes@waldenU.edu) or 443-286-3196.

### Learn classroom management

A classroom management workshop will be 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. June 20 to 22 at North Point High School at 2500 Davis Road in Waldorf. The workshop is free and teachers who attend the three days and complete the assigned work are eligible for two CPD credits, which will be awarded in September. The course is sponsored by the Education Association of Charles County and the Maryland State Education Association. It is a new Maryland version of the I CAN DO IT! workshop which features vocabulary and instructional issues of the current educational reform movement and focuses on strategies and skills needed to manage a classroom including lesson planning, environment, student behavior and home school relationships. The registration deadline is June 2. To register, go to <http://bit.ly/1SLFtrY>, use your work email username and password. For questions or more information, email [cdowling@mseanea.org](mailto:cdowling@mseanea.org) or [mkozlowski@mseanea.org](mailto:mkozlowski@mseanea.org) with questions.

### EACC Crab Feast is Aug. 26

The annual Education Association of Charles County (EACC) crab feast is Friday, Aug. 26 from 3:30 to 8 p.m. at the Charles County Fairgrounds. Tickets are on sale at [www.teameacc.org](http://www.teameacc.org) for \$20. Price goes up to \$30 after June 21. Admission includes all food. Preorders must be complete by Aug. 18. Attendees need to bring their school system identification badge and ticket to enter the feast.

## La Plata history teacher Barry named finalist in Post Teacher of the Year program

Dependable. Trustworthy. Competent. Driven. These are examples of qualities teachers strive to model in their classrooms and interactions with students. At La Plata High School, Kevin Barry, a longtime social studies teacher at the school, emulates these characteristics and more as his passion for teaching and learning is evident in all that he does. His lessons are engaging and often include the use of instructional technology to make the content come alive for his students.

Among his peers, he is well known as an exemplary teacher for his passion for teaching and pushing students to do their best, both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities and sports. Among La Plata students, he is known as a wonderful and motivational teacher. Also dubbed the 2015 "Faculty King" by students for his immense school pride and spirit, Barry is committed to fostering positive relationships with his students, colleagues and the school community.

For his passionate and engaging demeanor in the classroom and his commitment to connecting students with technology to learn, Barry was recently honored as Charles County's finalist for the 2016 *Washington Post* Teacher of the Year Award. Barry credits the staff and students at La Plata for inspiring his passion for education.

"The students I have taught and the players I have coached who challenge me and inspire me every day over my career. When I am able to see them have success in school, on the field, or when they graduate it makes everything I do worthwhile. The staff at La Plata High School whom has always made coming to work exciting and help create a community that I love to be a part of. An award like this is a credit to all of the hard work they put in to make our school a great place to work," Barry said of his recognition.

Formerly the Agnes Meyer Teacher of the Year program, the *Washington Post* Teacher of the Year program now recognizes one teacher from each participating school district as a finalist. One overall recipient for a regional award is ultimately chosen by the *Post*. Among La Plata staff, Barry was a standout candidate to nominate for the recognition.

Leslie Schroeck is a resource teacher at La Plata and spearheaded Barry's nomination. She said when staff at the school met to discuss a teacher who they would nominate for recognition, they quickly agreed that Barry was an excellent choice.

"Just spend a few minutes in the classroom with Kevin Barry and you will see evidence of well-planned lessons consisting of engaging learning activities. The *Washington Post* Teacher of the Year should be a teacher who others wish to emulate. Kevin Barry is that kind of teacher. He has shown through his teaching, coaching and leading that he is deserving of the title," Schroeck wrote in a nomination letter.

Barry has been teaching at La Plata since 2006. His subject areas include local, state and national government (LSN) and U.S. History classes to Advanced Placement (AP) Human Geography and exploring computer science courses. He is well known for providing an atmosphere for students that fosters academic achievement. He infuses technology into his lessons to expose students to history, geography and computer science in real time and connects them to the world. Barry is a teacher who understands the importance of providing students with real world applications to enforce what they learn in the classroom.

Lynne Arnold, principal at the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, served as a vice principal and principal at La Plata for several years. During her tenure at La Plata, Arnold worked with Barry and said he is

an exemplary role model of a professional educator. "Mr. Barry has consistently sought out ways to enhance his knowledge of teaching in order to provide his students with a broad range of experiences. He is always eager to learn new things and more importantly, bring that knowledge back to his students and staff. It is without reservation that I recommend Kevin Barry for recognition as an exemplary teacher. He represents everything we want in an educator and is well deserving of this honor," Arnold wrote in a nomination letter.



Kevin Barry

Barry said several individuals and experiences helped shape his desire to become an educator. As a child, he took road trips with his family and said his father would tell him stories about history that always inspired him to want to know more. During his grade-school years Barry had several teachers, Ms. Lombard, Coach McLeod and Ms. Christianson, who taught with such passion that it instilled in him a love of learning. "Those teachers had a passion for teaching and because of them I wanted to have the opportunity to inspire and teach when I grew up," Barry said. He also credits his teacher mentors during his internship with helping him to develop his teacher voice and inspiring him to find new ways to reach students.

Barry not only inspires students in the classroom, but also in athletics and extracurricular activities. He has coached the girls' varsity soccer team since 2007 and has helped the team achieve several awards for outstanding sportsmanship and ethics to academic achievement recognition. He pushes his athletes to do their best in the classroom and on the field. Barry expects his soccer players to act as model student athletes not only to support the program, but to demonstrate hard work and personal responsibility.

Another role Barry holds at La Plata is Telepresence coordinator, in which he coordinates virtual classroom lessons for all students and researches engaging lessons to present using the latest technology. He is also a national Code.org facilitator, which is part of Charles County Public Schools' partnership with Code.Org to enhance computer science initiatives. In this role, Barry works with partner school systems to present professional development sessions and trains teachers on how to infuse computer science and technology into lesson plans.

Ben LeBarron is a junior at La Plata and wrote a letter of recommendation for Barry's nomination. In his letter, LeBarron describes Barry as one of his favorite teachers. "His class discussions are very interesting and helps students learn of events in the entire world that they were never aware of. What separates Mr. Barry from other teachers is his knowledge and understanding of new technologies. Mr. Barry is a great teacher and I enthusiastically recommend him to be honored as the best teacher," LeBarron wrote.

Barry credits the social studies department, his family and other colleagues for supporting his passion to teach. "Chris Butler and the social studies department at La Plata who over the past 10 years have become part of my extended family. It is because of them I have learned so many different strategies and techniques that I would not be the teacher I am today without them," Barry said.

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## Nurses

There's no "hanging out" in the office to avoid class. Some days are more fast-paced than others. "I sent seven kids home today," Stephenson said recently. "One had a 101-degree fever, three were vomiting, three with pink eye."

School nurses are critical in stopping or at least slowing the spread of illness in a school, said Sandra Geier, the nurse at General Smallwood Middle School, who tended to more than 830 students in April. If one child in a classroom has the flu, chances are they will be spreading to their peers. "I let the teachers and building service workers know — you may want to do some extra cleaning, wipe door handles." Geier, a first-year school nurse in Maryland, — she previously worked in upstate New York — said if she sees trends or if a lot of people in the school are coming down with something, she'll let her supervisors at the health department know. "It feels like we're here by ourselves, but [supervisors] are only a phone call, text or email away," she said.

Depending on the age group, school nurses will deal with different issues. In elementary school Ledford said "accidents" aren't infrequent. Churches and parents are known to donate new underwear to the health room and extra pants are stored in a stack of drawers in the nurse's office; sometimes head lice will go around, but this year, "We've been pretty lucky," Ledford said, knocking on her wooden desk.

In middle school puberty hits and Geier often talks with students, especially girls, about how their

bodies are changing and what they can expect.

By high school, students are usually responsible enough to drop by for their required medications and head back out to class, Stephenson said.

That doesn't mean there aren't emergencies. Stephenson has been called to classrooms to attend to a sick person.

Earlier this year, he had to call 911 for a student who was having a seizure. Geier stays after school for a while to make sure kids who are learning to play sports or are involved in another activity have access to their medications if needed.

Some of her six diabetics can require 13 glucose tests a day; giving medicine to a kid on the verge of an asthma attack means they can go back to the field instead of having to call mom or paramedics.

Geier said that she is sometimes the first contact for a family with a medical concern. "I have an open door policy. Parents can come and talk to me," she said.

Being a school nurse is never boring. "I like working with the kids, they always have little stories," Ledford said. "There's never a dull moment here."

Like every job, it has its up and downs. "This job can be very frustrating," Stephenson said of nursing. "And it can be very fulfilling." But students appreciate school nurses. "If something happens at school, she's always there to help" said Sean Heckman, an eighth grader at Smallwood, about Geier.

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## Personnel

Apply for positions online at [www.cbcoe.com/jobs/currentopenings.php](http://www.cbcoe.com/jobs/currentopenings.php). All teaching positions require a bachelor's degree and MSDE certification requirements.

### Job openings

**Math, Social Studies, English and Special Education Teachers** — Virtual Academy at Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, 10-month positions. Teachers will work 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Bachelor's degree and certification requirements established by the Maryland State Department of Education, advanced computer skills, interpersonal skills and ability to work with non-traditional students required. Teachers wishing to apply for a voluntary transfer must meet some requirements. Teachers will be responsible for assessing and assisting students in assigned coursework, plan and provide for appropriate learning experiences and develop, select and modify curriculum on a per student basis, as well as developing alternative op-

tions for students. Positions will be open until they are filled.

**ESOL Teacher** — location to be determined, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree and certification of requirements established by the Maryland State Department of Education required, as well as knowledge of subject matter and appropriate instructional methodologies. Evidence of exemplary human relation skills, exemplary organizational and planning skills and ability to work effectively with students, parents and staff required. Job functions include planning and providing for appropriate learning experiences for children, supervising students in school-related settings and interacts with students, parents, staff and members of the community. Apply by Sept. 1.

**Building Service Workers** — locations to be determined, 10-month position. Candidates need to have the ability to read and write effectively, are physically capable of performing manual labor, have good verbal communications and human relation skills and a willing-

ness to work overtime if required. Functions include cleaning and caring for floors, collecting trash in and outside of the building and dusts and cleans walls, windows, ceilings and equipment. Position will be open until filled.

**Learning Resource Teacher for Elementary, Middle School** — location to be determined, 10-month position. The candidate should have a master's degree and hold or be eligible for a Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate with an endorsement as Gifted and Talented Specialist. Five years of satisfactory teaching experience, knowledge, training and/or coursework in gifted education and differentiated instruction, knowledge and understanding of the cognitive, social and emotional characteristics of the gifted learner required. Among the duties, the learning resource teacher serves as the school testing coordinator, and ensures personnel adhere to testing guidelines. The position will be open until filled.