



School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Two-hour early dismissal

The next two-hour early dismissal is Wednesday, April 13.

Report Cards issued/mailed

Elementary school report cards will be issued to students on Friday, April 8. Report cards for middle and high school students will be mailed home on Friday, April 8.

Wrestlers take top title

Congratulations to the La Plata High School wrestling team for earning the Maryland state title in the Class 4A/3A South region at the state dual meet held Feb. 12. The team earned first place with a score of 58 to 18 over Leonardtown High School of Calvert County. The team also earned first place in the Class 4A/3A South Regional tournament held Feb. 25-26. This is the third state dual meet title that the team has earned and the third regional tournament win that La Plata has achieved since 2006. Todd Sharp, a science teacher at La Plata and longtime wrestling coach, retires from his coaching career with a career dual meet record of 185-20 over an 11-year period.

New application system

Beginning today, April 1, Charles County Public Schools is using a new job application system located on the school system Web site, www.ccboe.com. Application data stored on the old system will not be transferred to the new system. All current employees, including temporary staff and substitutes, will need to complete a new application on the new system when applying for a new position.

The system will continue to be managed by the Human Resources department. For additional information, call 301-934-7255.

DiSabatino named 2011 Principal of the Year

Each school day, William B. Wade Elementary School Principal Amy DiSabatino completes morning announcements by saying, "I am proud to be the principal of the Wade Wildcats."

This year, students, staff and parents let DiSabatino know how proud they are of her by nominating her for the *Washington Post* Distinguished Educational Leadership Award. Recently, the *Washington Post* announced that DiSabatino is this year's winner from Charles County, which also makes her the 2011 Charles County Public Schools Principal of the Year.

"Mrs. DiSabatino is the key factor in making Wade a great school," Shane Blandford, first-grade teacher, wrote in a nomination letter.

DiSabatino is passionate about Wade, student learning and instruction. At Wade, students are excited about taking the Maryland School Assessment (MSA), a feeling they catch from their principal. At a recent gathering of fifth graders preparing to at-

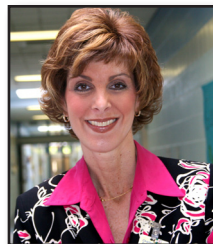
tend MSA centers, DiSabatino let the children know how proud she was of them and told them she knew they were ready to succeed. Everything DiSabatino does, according to staff, involves an instructional challenge or strategy. It's her leadership, according to staff, that helps Wade students rise to the top on state testing. Wade's MSA scores are consistently at or above 90 percent proficient with virtually no achievement gap.

"This award is very special to me because it brings recognition

to our extraordinary school and to the students, staff and community. I feel privileged to have the opportunity every day to work with my wonderful Wade family and to play a small part in helping to raise them to be successful," DiSabatino said.

Parents describe DiSabatino as a champion for student success and a principal who takes the time to communicate with parents. They say it is not surprising to see Mrs. D, as she is known, serving fries at McDonalds or selling tickets at the fall festival. She al-

See DiSabatino, page 3



Amy DiSabatino

Dutrow named Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher

At North Point High School, Christine Dutrow is known as a teacher who has a natural ability to inspire those who surround her - as if she embodies a magnetic force that radiates her passion for working with children. One minute she can be found in her classroom, enthusiastically teaching a group of her students to "think outside of the box" and get in touch with their creative writing side, and then the next minute, she has rearranged a classroom into a mock studio where she encourages students to explore their love for tap dancing.

The passion Dutrow has for teaching English, her charisma and love for dancing and her desire to explore and share some of her favorite works of literature with her stu-

dents is evident in her work. She pushes her students to do their best and is not afraid to show her care and concern for their education as well as their overall well-being.

For these qualities, and her ability to connect with her students and instill a strong desire to learn in them, Dutrow was selected as the 2011 *Washington Post* Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award recipient for Charles County.

Dutrow, along with her husband, Jason who teaches social studies at North Point,



Christine Dutrow

See Agnes Meyer, page 3



On the cover

Pictured on the cover are employees honored at the March Board of Education meeting. Pictured, from left, are: Nina Capuano, elementary teacher, Arthur Middleton Elementary School; Anne Ward, English teacher, Thomas Stone High School; and Daniel Meltsner, technology teacher, John Hanson Middle School.

Early Childhood Registration

Registration for the Three's program, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten begins on Monday, April 4. Application packets are available on the school system Web site at <http://www2.ccboe.com/register/register.cfm#prek>.

Educational Showcase

Charles County Public Schools is hosting its first Educational Showcase on Saturday, April 2, at North Point High School. The event begins at 10 a.m. and will feature educational presentations on a variety of topics ranging from information on the early childhood education program and bullying prevention to an Edline system and advanced placement curriculum overview. Entertainment will also be provided by student performers, such as school bands, choirs and Destination Imagination teams, and children in attendance can participate in story time with guest readers or have their face painted by honor society students.

Guests in attendance will receive a gift bag with special items and will have the opportunity to choose from more than 40 presentations that feature interesting and popular topics for elementary, middle and high school students, as well as general sessions targeted for students of all ages. Additionally, each school will maintain a booth to provide attendees with specific school-related information from parental involvement opportunities to extra-curricular activities available for students.

The event will showcase all of the opportunities that Charles County Public Schools offers students, parents, staff and the Charles County community. There will be something of interest for all ages. Visit http://www2.ccboe.com/educational_showcase.cfm for more information.

Board votes to delay high school opening to 2014

The Board of Education on Monday voted to delay the opening of St. Charles High School until 2014.

The vote followed a weeklong review by the Board, including two work sessions and a meeting with the Charles County Commissioners to ask for funding.

Construction and annual operating costs are the center of discussions between the Board and the Charles County Commissioners. The Commissioners asked the Board to delay construction on the new high school from 2013 to 2014 so they are able to better handle the construction costs. On Monday, Board Chairman Roberta Wise said the Board had two options: delay the school for a year or stop the project. Opening in the year 2013 as planned was no longer an option. The Board voted 5-0, with two abstentions, to delay the opening. Voting for the delay were Wise, Vice Chairman Maura Cook, Michael Lukas, Pamela Pedersen and Donald Wade. Abstaining were Jennifer Abell and Patricia Bowie.

Last week, the Board met with the Commissioners to summarize issues and to ask the commissioners to consider and commit to the following:

- yearly operating costs of \$10 million;
- payment of construction cost increases caused by delaying the school opening for one year;
- keeping the school design intact;

- additional funding to secure the construction site if project is delayed; and

- assurances to pay for emergency facility repairs needed for student safety if the school system changes its capital improvements plan to push out all other projects for five years.

At the meeting, and then in a March 28 letter to the Board, the Commissioners said they are 100 percent supportive of the high school and "We understand that it involves a commitment on our part to fund future opening costs. We will stand behind our commitment," the letter, which is signed by all five Commissioners, stated. The Commissioners then addressed each of the five points in general, only specifically guaranteeing that the school design would not change.

On the issue of operating costs, the Commissioners wrote, "As Boards, we will serve a four-year term together. We choose for that experience to be built on trust. We ask that you work with us to develop a plan for annual operating costs of the high school over the next three years while the building is under construction."

The Board of Education's March 28 work session is being aired on Comcast Channel 96 and Verizon FiOS 12 and can be viewed in full at <http://www2.ccboe.com/publicinfo/channel96/vod/>.

Board of Education announces April 5 agenda

The Board of Education's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, April 5, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

Executive session – 12 p.m.

Call to order – 1 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance, Westlake High School's JROTC unit

Recognition – La Plata High School, 3A/4A state wrestling champions and Unified Sports Bocce ball champions; North Point High School, 4A state boys' basketball champions

Superintendent's update

Reports of officers/boards/committees

- Correspondence/Board member updates
- Education Association of Charles County update

- Student Board member update
- Concussion procedures
- CIP update
- Students Targeting Academic Rigor with Success (STARS) program and SpringBoard English language arts

- School calendar 2012-2013

- Budget update
- Legislative update

Unfinished business

New business and future agenda items

- New business
- Future agenda items
- Recognition** – 4:30 p.m.
- Public Forum – 6 p.m.
- Action items
- Minutes
- Personnel

Agnes Meyer

continued from page 1

began her career with Charles County Public Schools in 2005. Born and raised in Ohio, Dutrow said she was excited to have the opportunity to start her career at a new high school and after visiting the area and meeting system staff, she and her spouse accepted positions and relocated to Maryland.

North Point Principal Kimberly Hill said it was during Dutrow's first year of teaching that she realized what a special teacher she had teaching in her school. "It was immediately apparent that she not only took her job very seriously, but that she wasn't afraid to show that she cares about her students. Students want to follow her lead because they know she expects them to be successful," Hill said in a nomination letter.

When she was notified that she had been selected as the award recipient, Dutrow said she was stunned and overwhelmed by the news. "I feel so honored - to receive this award is such an honor," she said. Now in her sixth year at North Point, Dutrow said each day of work is just as exciting as her first day. "Every day is so different in teaching. That is what makes it so exciting," she added.

Dutrow's choice of career paths has a lot to do with her love for dancing and reading. As a child, she began to take dance classes at a local studio, where she eventually was asked to come back and teach classes during her high school years and during her time in college. She said she knew from working with children that she wanted to

change her major in college to secondary education. It was also her love for novels such as "The Lord of the Flies" that fused her desire to teach English.

Her passion for teaching is also clear to her students. Devonte Thomas, a senior at North Point, credits Dutrow with molding him into a confident writer. "She wants you to be successful and to me this is everything an outstanding leader should be," Thomas wrote. North Point junior Tanner Morton said Dutrow has a unique way of catching and maintaining students' interests in class. "I remember her classes more than most because instead of just reading a book and doing a worksheet, we would have deep and interesting discussions in class and she always managed to keep us interested afterward," he wrote in a nomination letter.

Dutrow is also well known for choreographing musicals for the theater department, spring choir shows and routines for the school's pom pon squad. She earned her bachelor's degree in adolescent to young adult education with a focus in integrated language arts from the University of Akron in 2005, and will complete her master's degree in curriculum and instruction from McDaniel College in July. *The Post* will honor Dutrow during a reception later this spring. She will be recognized by the Board of the Education at their April meeting.

DiSabatino

continued from page 1

ways looks for ways to make parents feel like they are part of the school, parents say.

"Mrs. D. seems to know all the students in the school and the parents of each child as well. ...Whenever I have a question or concern, Mrs. D. responds promptly to my e-mail. She doesn't pass the buck to a teacher or another administrator, but is always willing to take the time to address a parent's concerns directly," parent Pamela Green wrote.

In school, DiSabatino leads by modeling. It is common to see the principal at the front of the class demonstrating a lesson or strategy, combining student lessons with teacher training.

Staff members said DiSabatino is an exceptional principal with a high level of expectation for staff and students. Teachers and students describe her as a school leader who is enthusiastic, positive, flexible and inspiring and one who goes above and beyond to help students succeed.

"Mrs. DiSabatino is our best instructor and biggest cheerleader. She encourages us with a personal note, public announcement or a special treat," Deborah Williams, guidance counselor, wrote.

"I am quite humbled and very grateful to my staff for the nomination and very appreciative of all the support from the staff," DiSabatino said.

DiSabatino is a La Plata resident and a 24-year veteran of Charles County Public Schools who began her career in 1987 as a teacher at Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School. In 1995, DiSabatino was promoted to vice principal at Malcolm Elementary School where she served two years before being assigned as vice principal of Arthur Middleton Elementary School. She became principal of William B. Wade Elementary School in 2000. DiSabatino earned her bachelor of science in elementary education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and her master's degree in administration and supervision from The George Washington University.

The *Washington Post* each year honors outstanding principals throughout the metropolitan area through its educational foundation. A committee reviews nominations throughout the school system and one principal is chosen to represent Charles County in the program as its Principal of the Year.



Amy DiSabatino, center, talks with Cortlend Davis, left, and Ethan King, right. Pictured in the back are London Mitchell and Nicholas Waters.

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Blast off this summer with space exploration classes

An early childhood space exploration class has been added to the summer Space Across the Curriculum class lineup this summer.

Taught by National Space Foundation instructors, the class centers on space and science education for early learners and provides early childhood educators tools to inspire young students through inquiry-based learning. Hands-on activities are specifically designed to instill the excitement of exploring the child's world and the wonderment of space and can be immediately used in the classroom, according to the Space Foundation's course description. The early childhood class is one of six offered free this summer.

Employees are urged to sign up now for classes, which begin the week of July 18. The Institute includes six weeklong sessions for teachers. In addition to the early childhood class, courses include 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 into lessons.

Courses are open to all content area teachers from the three's program to grade 12. Graduate

credit is also available. The new early childhood class does not qualify for graduate credit; however, teachers are still able to get CPD credits.

Dates of classes are the weeks of July 18-22, July 25-29 and Aug. 1-5. Classes are held at Theodore G. Davis Middle School and are held 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Registration can be completed online at www2.ccboe.com/space_foundation.cfm.

The schedule is as follows:

July 18 - July 22

- PreK-2 Early Childhood Space Exploration
- Earth Systems Science: Our Earth Revealed

July 25 - July 29

- Biological and Physical Research: Long-Term Space Travel

- Lunar/Mars Exploration and Base Construction

- Rocketry: The Future of Human Space Exploration

Aug. 1 - 5

- Astronomy Principles for the Classroom: Kinesthetic Astronomy

- Space Technologies for the Classroom: Nanotechnology and Space Spin-Offs

Contact Monique Wilson, coordinator of STEM education, at mwilson@ccboe.com or 301-934-7287, for more information. Visit www.ccboe.com for details.

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

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

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

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

Family & Consumer Therapist – Westlake High School, 10-month position.

Instructional Resource Teacher, Middle School Level – Location to be determined, 11-month position.

Staff Notes

Support Personnel Awards

Charles County Public Schools is looking for award nominees for the annual Outstand-

ing Support Personnel Awards program. The awards recognize support personnel who exemplify excellence in their positions. Awards are given in the following areas: Outstanding Building Service Employee; Outstanding Food Service Employee; Outstanding Instructional Support Employee; Outstanding Maintenance Employee; and Outstanding Secretary.

To be eligible, employees must meet the following criteria: works full-time, has been employed by CCPS for a minimum of three years and in their nominated position for three years, and not have been a recipient of this award within the past five years.

Nominees must meet criteria in the following areas: resourceful in seeking and completing job responsibilities; seeks new knowledge and skills and understands aspects of position; utilizes technology when necessary; fosters cooperative relationships with students, colleagues and the communi-

ty; and demonstrate outstanding leadership.

Nomination materials must include a brief career summary, a description of contributions in nomination criteria areas and a minimum of three support statements. Teachers, students, colleagues, parents and administrators may make nominations. Nomination packets are due by Tuesday, May 3 and should be sent to the division of human resources.

The goals of the awards program are to recognize exemplary employees and to encourage support personnel to provide creative and quality services that support the schools and the school system. Award recipients will be announced and recognized by the Board of Education at their June 14 meeting.

Contact Jeanette Sudik at 301-934-7356 or jsudik@ccboe.com with questions or for more information.