Where success is measured one student at a time

Charles County Public Schools

School News

Important Dates Coming Soon

Winter break schedule

Winter break for students and teachers begins Thursday, Dec. 22. Students and teachers return to school on Monday, Jan. 2. Administrative offices are closed Dec. 23-Jan. 2.

Interim Reports

Interims will be issued to students on Monday, Dec. 12.

Airing this week ...

Airing this week on Comcast 96 and Verizon FiOS Channel 12 is a new episode of Newsbreak 96, produced by the communications department. This episode features students and teachers sharing their thanks. You can also learn more about Rachel's Challenge at Theodore G. Davis Middle School and how to get information on school closings and delays when winter weather hits. Visit the school system Web site at http://www2.ccboe.com/publicinfo/channel96/ for programming schedules and show times.

La Plata's It's Academic team triumphs at regionals

La Plata High School's *It's Academic* team placed first at the annual Charles County Public Schools competition held Dec. 7 at Maurice J. McDonough High School. Pictured from left are freshman Matthew Kamin; junior Alexander Smith, who served as team captain; and junior William "Bao" Dinh. La Plata scored 330 points in the championship round against teams from North Point and Henry E. Lackey high schools to earn the top spot. La Plata's team will compete in a regional competition against Gar-Field and Blake high schools on Feb. 4, which will air on WRC TV (NBC 4) on March 3. Corinne Fox, a science teacher at La Plata, is the team's coach. North Point, which placed second, earned a spot to compete on NBC4 in early fall.

Board considers changes to rules for out-of-zone student transfer requests

The Board of Education is considering changes to the rules guiding student transfer requests that will limit the number of transfers and close what some members call loopholes in the procedures.

If approved, the Board's proposal limits transfer requests to schools where there is space available in the receiving school, including in the specific grade or program of studies.

If space is available, the Board has listed a number of conditions where transfers may be considered. All requests for transfers will be reviewed and decided by the office of student services, and must be requested by the last business day in March. The following is a synopsis of the proposed Superintendent's rule, which was developed by a Board subcommittee. A complete copy can be found at http://www2.ccboe.com/boe/presentations.cfm.

The first three conditions for transfer approvals involve students who move to a new zone during the school year. Under certain conditions, students may be granted an exception to continue at their current school until the end of the school year. Seniors may be allowed to complete the school year in the school in which they are currently enrolled, but out-of-county students will be charged tuition. The fourth condition involves students whose parents have entered into a contract to build, buy or lease a home in a different school attendance area within the first 90 days of the school year. It would allow for parents to request reassignment of the child to the school in the new attendance zone.

Proposed conditions five and six address transfer requests for children of certificated employees. The proposals state a student who resides in the county and whose parent or guardian is a certificated full-time, school-based employee may request a transfer to the school in which the parent/guardian is employed on a full-time basis. A student who resides out of the county and whose parent or guardian is a certificated full-time, school-based employee may request to enroll in the school in which the parent/guardian is employed on a full-time basis.

Additional conditions for transfers allow for requests to change school zones for an academic course of study not offered by the student's zoned school. Academic courses of study under this rule do not include JROTC and other courses offered at each school in which there may be differences in academic focus among the schools.

The rule also addresses unusual hardship cases on a case-by-case basis. Such exceptions will not be granted for issues such as the need for a particular schedule, sibling enrollment, redistricting, or day care.

Notebook

On the cover

Pictured on the cover are employees from North Point High School. Pictured, from left, are Catrice Alleyne, CISCO teacher; Richard "Rich" Pauole, engineering instructor; and Glenn Stergar, CISCO teacher.

Target field trip grants

Dr. Gustavus Brown and Arthur Middleton elementary schools were recently awarded field trip grants from Target. Brown received a grant for a first-grade field trip to Wakefield Farm in Virginia, the birthplace of George Washington. Middleton received a grant for third graders to visit the National Zoo. Since launching the program in 2007, Target has awarded $9.76 million in grants providing 1.2 million students with the opportunity to enhance their studies in the arts, math, science and social studies.

Board to meet Dec. 13

The Board of Education's next monthly meeting is Tuesday, Dec. 13 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 12 and is rebroadcast. All televised Board meetings are also streamed live at http://www2.ccboe.com/boe/live/.

Student spaceflight program

Employees and visitors to the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building have the opportunity to select the next student-designed patches to fly into space.

Students from across the county have submitted patch designs, and two will be selected to fly Mission I to the International Space Station (ISS). Patch designs submitted by elementary and secondary students are on display in the lobby of the Starkey building glass display cases. The elementary and secondary patch receiving the most votes will be flown to the International Space Station. Voting ends Jan. 6.

This is the second year that students have the opportunity to design a patch to be included in a space mission. Last school year, a patch designed by Troy Young of La Plata High School was selected to fly aboard the last flight of the Space Shuttle Atlantis (STS-135).

North Point High School is learning how to harness the power of the sun. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Dec. 5 for the school's new photovoltaic array. Pictured are North Point Electrical Construction Teacher Keith Gascon, Principal Kim Hill, JATC assistant director Ralph Neidert, JATC President David McCord, Vice Principal Ronald Wilson, T & B Electric Company Solar Estimator Shawn Gibson and T & B Electric Company Service Manager Mike Kloby.

New array provides learning tool for North Point

Students at North Point High School can now learn about solar energy through experience with a new photovoltaic (PV) array system installed outside the electrical construction classroom at the Waldorf school.

Donated by the Washington, D.C. Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC), the nine-panel PV array was installed by Crofton, Maryland-based T & B Electric Co., a member of Washington, D.C. Chapter, NECA. The donation comes from a long-standing relationship between the JATC and North Point, beginning when they contributed a classroom to the facility in 2004. The JATC is sponsored by the Electrical Alliance, a cooperative effort between the Washington, DC Chapter of NECA and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, (IBEW) Local 26.

North Point High School held a ribbon cutting ceremony at 2 p.m. on Dec. 5 with electrical students, faculty and staff, school administrators and members of the JATC, NECA and IBEW to introduce the PV array system with a short tour of the electrical construction classroom and work areas.

Keith Gascon, electrical construction teacher at North Point, said he expects the project to provide great benefits for students. He commended the JATC for its continuing support of the program and for working with the school to ensure students are exposed to the current skills needed in the electrical construction field. The array, Gascon said, will provide about 2,000 watt hours, or the power of a small generator. "The purpose is to provide energy to the work area, and also to provide education for our students and the JATC classes that are held here in the evening," Gascon said.

"While the system does not provide a great amount of energy to power the school, it is most valued as an instructive tool to better prepare students interested in pursuing an electrical career. This was an opportunity to give potential apprentices a hands-on experience, especially in the growing green sector of our industry," said Ralph Neidert, a master electrician in Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia and assistant director at the JATC.

About The Electrical Alliance

The Electrical Alliance is a cooperative effort between electrical contractors and skilled craftsmen to provide quality products and services to customers and to set the standard for efficiency and productivity within the electrical industry. The Washington, D.C. Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association and Local 26, IBEW, jointly sponsor it. To learn more, visit http://news.getchargedup.org or follow the Electrical Alliance on Twitter @dcelec_alliance.

JROTC Joint Military Ball

Charles County Public Schools held the fifth annual Joint Services Military Ball on Dec. 2 at North Point High School. The ball is attended by high school seniors in the JROTC programs and includes toasts to military personnel and others. To honor the Missing in Action, a silent toast is performed with water. Pictured clockwise from top left are Donald Wade, Board Member and "father" of the Military Ball; Maj. Patrick Malherek of Maurice J. McDonough High School and Col. Charles Gilbert of Henry E. Lackey High School; Mitchell Mills and Brandon Fournier of North Point High School presenting a toast; John Coleman of McDonough placing a service cap on an empty table to remember the missing from the Army; Brian Dorsey, Shane Ellis and Taylor Eshleman of Thomas Stone High School waiting to receive certificates; Debrah Shekleton of McDonough and Terrance Hayes of North Point sharing a dance as queen and king; and Sarah Olson of Lackey saluting after placing a service cap to remember the missing from the Air Force.

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In Memoriam

Charlene "Char" Frances Falken

Charlene Frances Falken, a school nurse, passed away suddenly on Nov. 22. Mrs. Falken worked as a school nurse for 19 years and served at a number of different schools.

She received her nursing education and training from Princeton NJ Medical Center and has been licensed since 1974. In 2006, she graduated from the College of Southern Maryland with an AA in Liberal Arts and in 2007 she graduated with honors from the Massage Therapy Program with an AAS.

Services were held Nov. 29 at Arehart-Echols Funeral Home in La Plata.

Mrs. Falken lived in Waldorf and she is survived by her husband Donald R. Falken Jr. and children Donald Falken III and Caitlin Jayne Falken.

Charlene Falken

Web portal contains important employee information

Charles County Public Schools launched a new employee web portal last school year. The portal allows employees to access payroll and benefits information. Payroll information and leave balances are available for view a week prior to the actual pay date. Through the portal, employees can also access employer forms, education and teaching certificates, and benefits details. Employees are strongly encouraged to sign up for an account. First time users can follow the steps below to get started:

- Access the portal: Staff Services Page or Employee Web Portal and click create an account.
- Fill out the personal information section. The entries you make will be validated from your HR record.
- You will need your employee identification number, which can be found in the box to the right of your name on your paycheck/voucher. Use your full first and last name as printed on the paycheck.
- Fill out the profile information section:
- Username and new password
- Confirm password – retype new password
- E-mail is required. The e-mail address is used to send notifications such as forgotten passwords.

Staff notes

Job Openings

Child Care Provider – North Point High School, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 14.

Early Childhood Autism Teacher – Location to be determined, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 20.

Special Education Inclusion Teacher – North Point High School, 10-month position. Apply by Dec. 20.

Media Specialist – J.P. Ryon Elementary School, 10-month position. Master's degree in library science required.

New Teacher Mentors – Openings at county middle and high schools, 10-month positions. Master's degree and a minimum of five years teaching experience and two years of experience in related leadership role required.

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

Literacy Teacher – Thomas Stone High School, 10-month position.

Pharmacy Technician Instructor – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center, 10-month position, part-time position.

Food Service Program Support Manager – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position.

Math Teacher – Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, 10-month position.

School Counselor – Mary B. Neal Elementary School, 10-month, part-time position. Master's degree in guidance and counseling and five years experience required.

Extra pay position

La Plata High School has the following openings:

- Head varsity tennis coach

Contact Cliff Nagle, athletic director, 301-753-1754, to apply.

Check name, address on pay statement

The Division of Finance, Business Administration & Technology is reminding employees to check the name on their pay statement. Names must be correct and match your Social Security card. If an employee's name has changed due to marriage, divorce or other circumstances and does not match Social Security's information, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may impose a $50 penalty to the employee and the school system.

The school system plans to release W-2 statements to employees by Tuesday, Jan. 31. A copy of your 2011 W-2 will be available to view or print, for personal use only, on the Employee Web Portal after Jan. 31. Only the original, and not copies from the portal, can be submitted to the IRS or state and local taxing entities. If an employee loses their W-2, they must complete and submit a "Request W-2 Replacement" form to payroll.

Employees should also verify the address printed on their pay statement. To update your name or address, contact the school secretary, a supervisor or the Human Resources Department to request a "Status change Form."