

School News



Important Dates Coming Soon

Vaccine survey helps planning

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is partnering with the Charles County Department of Health to survey parents about their interest in the COVID-19 vaccine recently approved for children 12 and older. CCPS is asking parents of children who meet the age criteria to complete an optional interest survey. The survey will help the health department plan for vaccine supplies and distribution clinics. [The survey is available by clicking here.](#) Deadline to complete the survey is 11:59 p.m., Sunday, May 16. CCPS does not require any staff member or student to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Earlier this week, the FDA approved use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in children ages 12 to 15. Anyone 16 and older is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine in Maryland. Parents with questions can contact the health department at 301-609-6717.

Graduation 2021 plans

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) will celebrate the [Class of 2021 during in-person graduation ceremonies](#) at Regency Furniture Stadium from May 28 to June 3. COVID-19 safety guidelines, mask wearing and social distancing measures will be in place for the ceremonies, and tickets for families are limited to three per graduate.

- Friday, May 28 — **St. Charles High School**, 9 a.m.
- Tuesday, June 1 — **Westlake High School**, 9 a.m.
- Tuesday, June 1 — **Henry E. Lackey High School**, 1 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 2 — **Thomas Stone High School**, 9 a.m.
- Wednesday, June 2 — **La Plata High School**, 1 p.m.
- Thursday, June 3 — **Maurice J. McDonough High School**, 9 a.m.
- Thursday, June 3 — **North Point High School**, 1 p.m.



Signs of graduation appear

Matt Helming, technology education teacher at St. Charles High School, plants a yard sign in front of the home of a graduating senior. Started last year when the school year was disrupted by closures brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the signs are delivered to the homes of CCPS seniors who attend the county's seven high schools. This year, CCPS staff delivered the signs on May 5.

Calvert named 2021 CCPS Principal of the Year

Principal Debra Calvert's passion to be the best for children is infectious. Calvert, who is principal at William A. Diggs Elementary School, spreads this passion among her team each day. Her work ethic, coupled with her desire to do her best for students, is why Calvert was named the 2021 Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Principal of the Year and finalist in *The Washington Post's* Principal of the Year program.

Calvert knew her team had nominated her for recognition in prior years but did not realize she was nominated this year. Calvert was surprised last week by Superintendent of Schools Kimberly Hill of her selection as principal of the year. "It was definitely a surprise. It is an overwhelming feeling because I love what I do. This is a very humbling experience and I am honored," Calvert said.

Calvert has spent her entire career with CCPS and first joined the school system as a middle school language arts teacher. She played school as a child with her siblings and friends. Her desire to teach children a love of reading and writing — Calvert's favorite subjects — led her to pursue a career in education.

Calvert has been the principal at Diggs since 2016 and previously led Dr. James Craik Elementary School as principal for two years. She is well known among her elementary school colleagues as a role-model administrator who exemplifies excellence



**Debra
Calvert**

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On the cover

The Board of Education of Charles County honored outstanding employees at its May meeting including from left, Joseph Brawner, building service manager, Henry E. Lackey High School; Alycia Smith, technology facilitator, C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School; and Teonna Scott, reading interventionist, John Hanson Middle School.

Masks remain as of May 14

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) changed its guidance on masks and face coverings for fully vaccinated people. According to the CDC, fully vaccinated people are no longer required to wear a mask indoors or outdoors.

As of May 13, 2021, CCPS has not received updated guidance from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) or the county's local health officer. Therefore, as of May 14, the mask requirement for CCPS has not changed. Face coverings are required in Maryland schools by the Governor's Executive Order, which was renewed on May 12. Cloth face masks must be worn on school grounds by students, staff and visitors as ordered by the MDH and MSDE. Until the Governor, MDH and MSDE change orders that specifically address schools, existing mask mandates on CCPS properties remain in effect. If/when changes are made, CCPS will publish new guidance in its Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) process for staff and students.

McDonough, Lackey hit stage

Maurice J. McDonough High School will perform the rock musical "Ranked" 7 p.m. May 14 and 15, and 2 p.m. May 16. The play is rated PG for mild language. Tickets are "pay what you can," with donations accepted to fund next year's program. The show will be livestreamed. To order the show, go to <https://mhsdrama303.booktix.com/>. Ticket can be ordered up until 15 minutes before the show.

Henry E. Lackey High School will perform "High School Musical Jr." 6:30 p.m. May 21 via livestream. The show is based on the popular Disney movie. For tickets and more information, go to <https://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/47491>.



Staff in the Department of Student Services dress in shades of green on May 6 to bring awareness to the importance of mental health.

Mental Health & Me event raises awareness

The Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Department of Students Services is looking for students to submit writings and artwork for the inaugural Mental Health Awareness event, Mental Health & Me.

Each participant will receive a certificate of participation in the Mental Health & Me event and honorable mention submissions may be highlighted and publicly recognized.

Any enrolled CCPS student can participate by writing or creating artwork (pictures of artwork should be smaller than 8.5 inches by 11 inches) focused on one of the following topics:

- What does mental health mean to you?
- How are mental health and self-care related?
- How can students and adults in schools work together to improve mental health and encourage wellness?
- What are your favorite self care activities (what do you like to do to take care of your basic needs) and how do you keep healthy habits?

How has the pandemic impacted mental health and what advice do you have for students to promote positive mental health for themselves and other students during the pandemic?

- What does mental health look like?
- Describe the effects of mental health?

Submissions are due by May 21 and can be emailed to Beila Lugo at blugo@ccboe.com.

May Mental Health Awareness should be written in the subject line. Make sure to include the student's name and school in the body of the email.

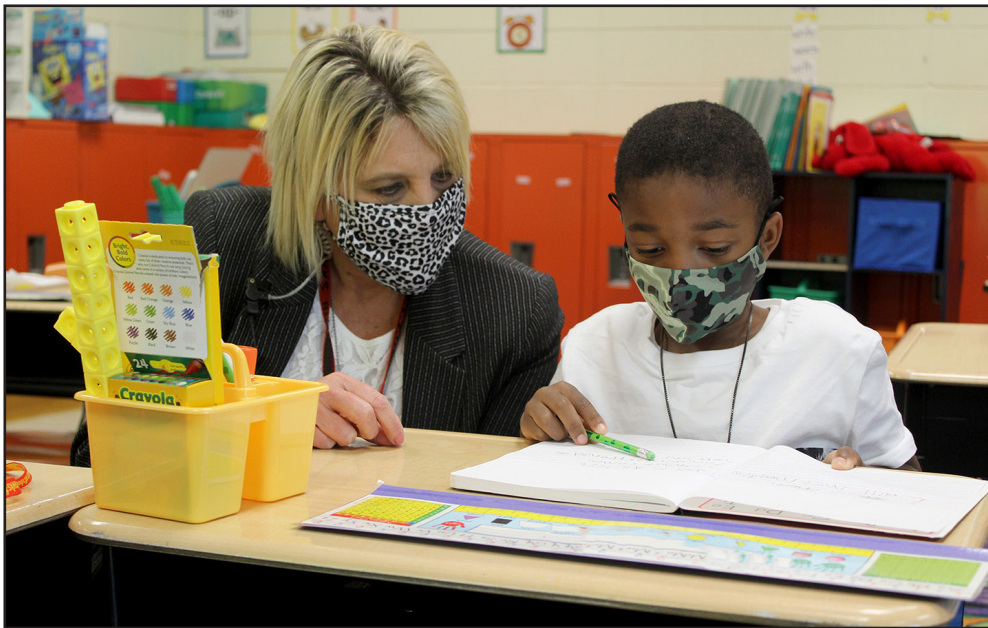
The artwork and/or essay can be attached to the email or embedded within it. For more information, visit www.ccboe.com/ss/mental-health.

CCPS offers Employee Assistance Program

CCPS has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, Deer Oaks EAP Services. The EAP benefit covers six confidential short-term counseling visits for contracted employees who work more than 20 hours per week and their immediate families. Deer Oaks coordinates with CCPS's health plan for cases that require treatment under the medical benefit. For information, call 888-993-7650 or go to www.deeroakseap.com. The member login and password are ccboe.

CALVERT

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Debra Calvert, principal of William A. Diggs Elementary School, left, talks with first grader Donovan Clark about an assignment. Calvert was named the 2021 Charles County Public Schools Principal of the Year.

in education. Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School Principal Nicholas Adam worked with Calvert as a vice principal and wrote a letter of recommendation on behalf of her nomination.

Adam said it was Calvert who inspired him to pursue a principalship. “Any successful school always begins with outstanding leadership. Diggs is one of those successful schools because of Debbie Calvert’s leadership. Her tireless dedication and care for her school, staff and students is inspiring,” Adam wrote in a nomination letter.

Calvert is a visible leader in the school and leads by example. She is in classrooms observing instruction, talking with students and teachers in the hallways, in the cafeteria during lunch and on the playground during recess. She shares fun and engaging activities with her staff for use in the classroom with students and models instructional strategies.

Calvert supports teamwork and empowers teachers to share their skills and talents with their colleagues. Teachers at Diggs know Calvert is committed to their success in the profession. “Not only is she approachable and willing to help with any questions or concerns that may arise, you truly have the sense that she ‘has your back,’” Jacqueline Stancliff, Diggs fourth-grade teacher, wrote in a nomination statement.

Calvert began her career with the school system in 1989 as a language arts teacher at John Hanson Middle School. From there, she transitioned to also teaching middle school social studies and then high school English at Thomas Stone High School. While she loved being in the classroom with students, Calvert developed a desire to help students on a larger scale.

She took a position as an instructional specialist at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School in 2002, where she led staff development for teachers. She planned instruction and coordinated the school improvement plan. Calvert loves to learn and her desire to help other educators be successful was evident. “I enjoy learning about instruction and working with teachers to help them engage their students in learning and achieve success,” Calvert said.

Before Calvert transitioned to the instructional specialist role, she received national recognition for excellence in classroom teaching. In 1999, Calvert was named a recipient of the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. The national-level award recognizes educators for excellence but also highlights the future impact they will have in the education field.

She said receiving the Milken Award was a memorable career moment for her. “I have

spent my entire career with Charles County Public Schools and have worked with so many wonderful people and excellent role models. Receiving the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award was definitely a highlight of my career,” Calvert said.

It did not take long before Calvert’s talents led her to a position to support students at a countywide level. She served for two years as the coordinator of middle school instruction and led instruction at the middle school level. Ultimately, Calvert missed the personal relationships school-based staff develop with children in schools. This led her to pursue a different administrative route and become a vice principal. Calvert spent six years as a vice principal at Mattawoman Middle School before becoming principal at Craik.

Lisa Wehausen has worked with Calvert at Diggs for the past five years as an instructional specialist. Wehausen describes Calvert as a visionary leader who puts measurable actions in place to support a vision and goal for the school. “One of the things I enjoy most about working with her is that she sees the bigger picture as well as the details. It is a pleasure to work with such a consummate, professional leader who inspires others by ‘knowing, showing and going’ the way,” Wehausen wrote in a nomination statement.

Calvert is now in year seven of her principalship and year 32 in education. She and her husband, Mark, have three sons who graduated from La Plata High School. She credits her husband and family for always supporting her career. “My husband is my foundation. He is my support system and my family are my biggest fans. They have always been there for me and encouraged me in so many ways,” Calvert said. “I truly love what I do each day. Everything about my job is fun. I am able to work with students and staff members every day, building relationships and watching them grow,” Calvert said.

Calvert has a Bachelor of Arts degree in elementary education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and a Master of Education in Educational Policy, Planning and Administration, from the University of Maryland.

As Principal of the Year, Calvert will be honored by the Board of Education later this year. Calvert was also the finalist from Charles County in the *Post’s* Principal of the Year awards program.

School News is published by
Charles County Public Schools
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301-934-7220
Fax: 301-932-6651

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CCPS provides nondiscriminatory equal access to school facilities in accordance with its Use of Facilities rules to designated youth groups (including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts).



Sweet treats

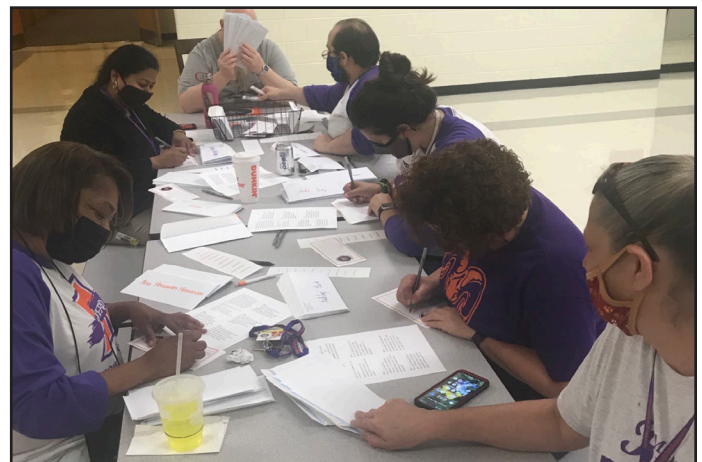
George Henderson Jr., left, owner of Sweet Street Donuts food truck, visited the Robert D. Stethem Educational Center for Teacher Appreciation Week. Henderson, a Charles County Public Schools graduate, attended Stethem for Culinary Arts. Tanika Horne, principal's secretary, is pictured on the right.

Submitted by Jermisha Farmer, Stethem's PR liaison.

Dear seniors

Staff at Maurice J. McDonough High School write personal letters to 2021 graduating seniors. The tradition started last year and has ramped up this year. Each senior will receive a letter along with their graduation materials.

Submitted by Gwen Todd, McDonough's PR liaison.



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

Reading Recovery Teacher — All elementary schools, 10-month position. A degree in early childhood education, elementary education, or reading and meets certification requirements as established by the MSDE. Three years of successful classroom teaching experience at the primary levels is required. Apply by May 19.

Community Resource Liaison — All high school, 10-month position. Master's or bachelor's degree in special education, transition, counseling, rehabilitation or related field. Certificate in post-secondary transition preferred or able to obtain one. Apply by May 20.

Instructional Resource Teacher — Location

to be determined, 11-month position. A master's degree is required and applicants must hold or be eligible for a Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate. Apply by May 24.

Reading Resource Teacher — Location to be determined, 11-month position. A master's degree is required and applicants must hold or be eligible for a Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate. Apply by May 24.

School Psychologist — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 10.5-month position. Applicants must possess or be able to obtain School Psychology Certification in Maryland. Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) credential is preferred. Apply by Aug. 1.

English Teacher — St. Charles High School, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree required and applicants must meet certification

requirements as established by the MSDE. Apply by Aug. 20.

Middle School Computer Teacher — General Smallwood Middle School, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree required and applicants must meet certification requirements as established by the MSDE. Apply by Jan. 31.

Science Teacher — Mattawoman Middle School, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree required and applicants must meet certification requirements as established by the MSDE. Apply by Aug. 23.

Computer Science Teacher — Location to be determined, 10-month position. Bachelor's degree required and applicants must meet certification requirements as established by the Maryland State Department of Education. Apply by Jan. 31.