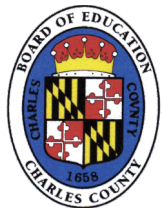


# School News



## Notebook

### Board meeting



The Board of Education will meet 1 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 13, in the boardroom of the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata. Recognition starts at 4:30 p.m., with public forum at 6 p.m.

### Professional learning

Check out the December professional learning opportunities through Charles County Public Schools (CCPS). There are lessons to support new teachers and best practices for math, ESOL and special education teachers. For more information, contact Velvet Gipson at 301-934-7253 or [vgipson@ccboe.com](mailto:vgipson@ccboe.com), or visit [MyCCPS](http://MyCCPS) on the Staff page of [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com).

### EAP program

The holidays can be stressful — let's face it — an ordinary Tuesday can be stressful. CCPS has an employee assistance program through ComPsych, a national employee assistance and work/life company. The EAP benefit is free to employees and their dependents, and it is also confidential. ComPsych representatives have expertise and clinical knowledge and are well versed in helping clients from young children to the elderly. The EAP can assist with managing and addressing stress, depression, anxiety, workplace difficulties, substance abuse, marital problems, family or parenting conflicts, grief, violence, unhealthy lifestyles and other issues. To learn more about the EAP benefit, [visit the Staff page](#) at [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com).



### Turner Tigers celebrate rededication of school

Eva Turner Elementary School recently celebrated a rededication ceremony. The school underwent a nearly \$22 million renovation, updating the facility from the one that first opened in 1979. Above, Turner fifth graders, Haylee Lopez, second from left, and Samrawit Dumessa accept a proclamation from Charles County Commissioner Thomasina Coates, left, and commissioners' President Reuben B. Collins, right.

Right Del. Edith Patterson, left, presents a proclamation to Lopez. Turner Principal Gary Lesko is pictured in the center.



### Swearing-in ceremony for Board of Education XVIII

The new Board of Education of Charles County will be sworn-in starting at 6 p.m., Monday, Dec. 19, at St. Charles High School in Waldorf.

The ceremony will take place in the school auditorium and is open to the public. The swearing-in also will be televised live on the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) website, [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com).

Seven new members were elected to office in November. They are Dottery Butler-Washington, Cindy Coulby, Nicole M. Kreamer, Yonelle Moore Lee, Esq., Jamila Smith, Brenda Thomas and Linda Warren. They join incumbents Michael K. Lukas and David Hancock, who were re-elected to their positions. Amira Abujuma, the Student Member of the Board,

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## On the cover

CCPS employees were honored by the Board at its Nov. 15 meeting. Pictured on the front cover from left are Laura Liverman, technology facilitator, T.C. Martin Elementary School; Devonni Farrar, second grade teacher, C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School; and Dana Clark, special education instructional assistant, St. Charles High School.

## By a hair

The results are in for this year's No Shave November competition held at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

This year Tom Antonelli, benefits representative, nabbed Best Beard; John Tompkins, content specialist for English and language arts, was named Best Baby Face; and Donald Moss, instructional specialist, brought in the most donations with \$330 raised. Mike Heim, chief of operations and supporting services, Steve Roberts, director of accountability and Mike Mickey, network engineer II, also competed this year. No Shave November at Starkey is held annually to benefit the Starkey Strong Relay for Life team. Through donations, \$911 was raised for Relay for Life. The worldwide No Shave November initiative — also called Movember (a portmanteau of Mo — Australian slang for mustache — and November) — helps raise awareness about men's health, and money for medical research.



## Winter break

CCPS schools and offices are closed Dec. 23 through Dec. 27 for winter break. Schools remain closed from Dec. 28 to Jan. 2. CCPS offices will be open Dec. 28 to Dec. 30, and closed Jan. 2. Schools and offices reopen on Jan. 3.

## In Memoriam Crystal Davis

Crystal Davis, an instructional resource teacher at Benjamin Stoddert Middle School, passed away Nov. 17, 2022.

After earning a bachelor's degree from Rider University in New Jersey, Davis worked in the sports broadcasting field.

She took a position as a computer aide at an elementary school and fell in love with teaching. Davis earned her master's in teaching and recently celebrated 15 years at Stoddert.

At Stoddert, Davis was an advocate for her students and built relationships with the school community. "She formed close relationships with families to build trust and lasting partnerships," Stoddert Principal Erica Williams said.

"She was the first one to work on getting meals, clothes, school supplies and other essentials to students in need," Casey Cleary, a math teacher at Stoddert, said. "She got to know students for who they were as people, so they felt valued. Countless students would be in and out of her office each day to grab a pencil, get some encouragement, or just to say hi."

Davis is remembered for the unique and tireless ways she used to help students grasp concepts and move further in their education.

"She would present material in the most creative and innovative ways to ensure students felt successful and had gained a deeper understanding," Jessica McCoy, an academic mentor at Stoddert who shared an office with Davis for the



Crystal Davis

past four years, said.

"She was extremely intelligent and proactive," Williams said.

Davis was a go-to person for Stoddert staff and students.

"The faith she provided in me as a new teacher has shaped me into the teacher I am today," Cleary, the CCPS finalist for 2020 *The Washington Post* Teacher of the Year, said. "Crystal taught me not only how to teach math, but how to teach children."

"She was as caring as she was knowledgeable, and every member of the school community, from students, to teachers, to building service, to administrators, knew that they could come to Crystal," Corrin Deavers, a reading resource teacher at Theodore G. Davis Middle School, said.

Beyond her teaching expertise, Davis was a beloved friend.

"I am honored to call her a true friend," Cleary said. "She saved so much room in her heart for everyone else and her presence will be forever felt. There is no one quite like her and all those who were able to have her in their life are the better for it."

Davis is survived by her children, Tara and Brayden Davis, and Ki'mon Wright, of whom Davis was the guardian; parents, Tracey and Roy Burns, and Anthony and Pam Jones; sisters, Heather Jones, Tiffany Fee and Sarah Jones; grandparents, William and Charlotte Weaver, and Marie Mings; nieces, Breanna, Addilyn and Rowan; and other family members and friends.

## SWEARING IN

will serve out her role until June when a new SMOB is sworn in.

The Board begins a four-year term and elects its officers at its first meeting of the year on Tuesday, Jan. 10.

## continued from Page 1

Officers include both the chairperson and vice chairperson positions and terms are for one year.

St. Charles is at 5305 Piney Church Road in Waldorf.



# Judy Center opens at Indian Head Elementary School

Indian Head Elementary School recently celebrated the opening of a Judy Center Early Learning Hub. It is the third Judy Center in the county with the others housed at Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School and Eva Turner Elementary School.

“The Judy Centers are unique to the state of Maryland,” Jennifer Gimmel, coordinator of the CCPS Judy Centers, said. Programs held at the center not only benefit children, but their parents. “It’s a safe place where the needs of children and their families are met,” Gimmel said.

Among the programs held and facilitated at the centers are parent education classes, health services and playgroups. “We have so much research about how the brain develops and play is such an important vehicle for learning,” Maria Navarro, Ed.D., superintendent of schools, said.

Shona Grimes, grandmother of a Turner prekindergarten student, said before her grandson entered school, she searched for activities to keep him engaged and prepare him for school. One day during a visit to the library she heard about the Judy Center. “It seemed too good to be true,” Grimes said. “But it was everything they said and more. Everything they have done to help is as much for the parents as it is for the kids. I can’t imagine where we’d be without the Judy Center.”

Save for a Power Tots program that takes place at the neighboring Village Green, almost all the Indian Head Judy Center programs are held in a colorful modular classroom on the school grounds. The site shares space with the Community School program, which provides support and services to families in need. The Community School program is housed at two schools in the county — Dr. Mudd and Indian Head.

## Getting the word out

Prior to launching the center at Indian Head, CCPS pitched the idea to Kevin Lowndes, CCPS chief of teaching and learning. It didn’t take much for him to get on board. “Why would we not do this,” he asked.

Before the start of the 2022-2023 school year, Gimmel and other Judy Center staff started outreach efforts to spread the word about the Judy Center at Indian Head elementary. The center has about 15 chil-



Community and school leaders recently attended a ribbon cutting at the county’s third Judy Center. Attending the opening from left are Superintendent Maria Navarro, Ed.D., left, Board member Virginia McGraw, Board member Elizabeth Brown, Board Chairperson Michael Lukas, Indian Head Elementary School Principal Shane Blandford and Jennifer Gimmel, coordinator of the CCPS Judy Centers.

dren per hourlong playgroup and sets up events during evening hours and other times that are most convenient for working parents. “We don’t follow the traditional school schedule,” Gimmel said, pointing out a recent virtual activity where families made pizzas — after picking up make-your-own-pizza kits from the center — in their own kitchens, following along with Judy Center staff through Zoom.

“They genuinely care about children,” Grimes said about center staff members. “And they care about families.”

The Judy Center provides services for children from birth to five years old and their families. To attend Judy Center programs, families must live in an area zoned for the center. For more information, [click here](#).

## Nominate an outstanding teacher for the LifeChanger of the Year award

Nominate an outstanding teacher for the LifeChanger of the Year award. The annual program recognizes teachers or school employees who make a difference in the lives of students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

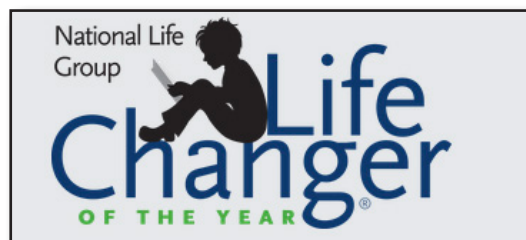
Nominees should demonstrate the following criteria daily:

- A proven ability to make a beneficial difference in the lives of students.
- The ability to create a positive school atmosphere.
- Demonstrate leadership within his/her school and/or district.
- A record of excellent performance at the professional level.

- A commitment to producing a nurturing atmosphere.
- Adhere to high moral and ethical standards.

Nearly 7,000 educators in 50 states have been recognized by the awards program since 2011 and more than \$650,000 has been given out to school and school employees. Each nominee will be eligible to win a cash prize up to \$10,000. All prizes are also split between the individual educator and their school.

For each LifeChanger nomination the awards program will create an [individual profile](#) on the website, <https://www.lifechanger->



[eroftheyear.com/](http://eroftheyear.com/).

Nominees will also receive a congratulatory certificate and a press release on the nomination will be sent to local media outlets. Anyone can make a nomination — by name or anonymously. To find a nomination link, [click here](#).

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Tajala Battle-Lockhart  
Elizabeth C. Brown  
David Hancock  
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**Superintendent of Schools**  
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The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Kathy Kiessling, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Nikial M. Majors, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (employees/ adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event.

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).

## North Point football clenches state championship title

The charge in the air Dec. 2 at North Point High School was electric as staff laminated handmade signs for the fan section and students attended a pep rally, leading up to cheer their varsity football team in 4A/3A state championship game against Arundel High School held at the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in Annapolis. The Eagles delivered a 31-14 win. "For me, this started four years ago before I even came here," quarterback Kaleb Hart, a junior, said in a newspaper interview closing the game. "I remember North Point losing to Quince Orchard [in the 2018 state championship] and I wanted to come here and win one for Coach [Tom] Petre and Coach [Bill] Condo, and these seniors." To watch a feature, [click here](#).



## College days

Micah Hinton, back left, a fifth grade student in Kimberly Miller's class at C. Paul Barnhart Elementary School, and Bryan Stewart, a student in Joseph Giorsetto's fifth grade class, try their hands at coding during [Destination College](#) at the College of Southern Maryland (CSM). The program is a Title I initiative, with the 10 Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) Title I schools sending fifth graders on a field trip to CSM for the experience.

## Personnel

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

### Job openings

**Aquatics Manager** — North Point High School, 11-month position. A bachelor's degree and five years of relevant experience coordinating aquatics programs and facility operations are required. Appropriate licensing and certifications required along with certification in pool operations in Charles County, lifeguarding, and in CPR, first aid and the water safety instructor course. Apply by Dec. 11.

**Administrative Instructional Assistant** — Eva Turner Elementary School, 10-month position. High school diploma is required along with experience working with children. Apply by Dec. 13.

**Building Service Worker** — North Point High School, 12-month position. High school diploma or GED required. Apply by Dec. 14.

**Principal** — Phoenix International School of the Arts (PISOTA), 12-month position. A master's degree from an accredited college or university and a Maryland Advanced Professional Certificate with Administrator II endorsement by March 1, 2023, are required. Three years of satisfactory teaching experience and three years satisfactory experience as an assistant principal are required. Apply by Dec. 16.

**School Psychologist** — All schools, 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 Dec. 16.

**Behavioral Health Clinician** — Jesse L.

Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Master's degree in social work or counseling and/or doctorate in psychology required. Licensure by relevant State Board of Examiners or department of health required. Apply by Dec. 16.

**IEP Facilitator** — All schools, 11-month position. A bachelor's degree is required with a master's degree preferred. Hold or be eligible for a Maryland Standard Professional Certificate with special education endorsement. Apply by Jan. 6.

**Title I Nonpublic Tutor** — Location to be determined, temporary position. Bachelor's degree and professional certificate in early childhood or elementary education required. Ability and willingness to work evenings. Position open until filled.