

Superintendent's Report
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Today you will receive updates about Career and Technology Education (CTE), the changing roles of school counselors and school psychologists, our literacy grant and the most recent financial audit.

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) has always been a leader in career and technology education. Today's presentation by the CTE team outlines the numerous career education options available throughout the school system as well changes to the application process this coming school year. The report will also highlight how we are working to make career and technology education more accessible to all students.

Members of the student services team will update the Board on the evolving roles of school counselors and psychologists, the mediation center, community conferences, bullying and next steps in the delivery of services.

This year, we retrained and rescreened all of our substitute teachers. We are closely monitoring our substitute pool to determine how well our current model is meeting school needs. We have considered the possibility of outsourcing substitute services through a third-party vendor, but at this time we have decided to stay with our current model. We will continue to consider all of our options as we begin the budget planning process for FY2020.

The human resources office is reviewing the Teacher of the Year format. Board members suggested that we expand the recognition of teachers who are nominated and selected for the state Teacher of the Year and the *Washington Post* Teacher of the Year awards. We have many excellent teachers, and this year we are encouraging each school to nominate one of their top teachers. We are planning to celebrate the nominees at a reception similar to the one honoring our volunteers.

Later today, Mrs. Hollstein and her team will update you on the \$2.7 million literacy grant that Charles County Public Schools received. We are excited to share with you and with the public how we are using this funding to enhance reading instruction. The team will also talk about how the grant is focusing our attention to third-grade readers and helping teachers more effectively screen children for reading problems.

A grading policy survey about a proposed change to the scale used determine an F grade is posted on the ccboe.com website and closes on Monday, October 15. There were more than 1,000 responses as of yesterday, and we encourage parents, students and staff to take the survey or participate in the Monday, October 22 Town Hall. The Town Hall will begin at 6 p.m. with a short presentation, followed by time for people to ask questions, offer suggestions or opinions about the proposal. The Board's work session begins at 7 p.m.

The 21st annual Charles County Public Schools College Fair was a huge success with more than 1,811 high school juniors and seniors attending during the day and about 1,000 people attending the evening session which included two financial aid presentations. Each of our high schools have

college financial aid nights for students and parents throughout October. This year 115 colleges registered in advance and nine Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) registered and presented information to our students.

This month, schools are welcoming students with free breakfast. The purpose is to encourage students to develop healthy habits and to offer a positive start to the school day. Our program is being highlighted by Kellye Lynn, education reporter at WJLA-TV channel 7 tomorrow at around 5:15 p.m. Two weeks ago, students were able to sample fresh produce with their lunches during Maryland Homegrown School Lunch Week. The week was a great way to encourage students to try new foods.

I'll be engaging with students through student advisory councils again this school year. We will begin with elementary and high school advisory councils this month, and a middle school advisory group in November. I am also meeting with classroom teachers at each level to learn about their successes, challenges and ideas to keep CCPS a great place for teaching and learning.

Before closing, I would like to address misconceptions recently aired during a Fox 5 report on CCPS absentee rates. The report didn't tell the whole story about what we are doing in Charles County Public Schools in regards to student attendance and graduation.

The report failed to point out that CCPS attendance rates are above the state average at all three levels—elementary, middle and high school. It also failed to recognize that last spring we initiated an outside audit to review our attendance regulations, record keeping, grades and graduation rate to ensure our programs for students with high absentee rates are instructionally sound and rigorous. Finally, and most importantly, the report failed to recognize the extraordinary efforts of teachers, school counselors and other staff at the school and district level to get students in class and caught up instructionally. All of this information was provided to the reporter by our staff, but not shared in the story.

I know many people believe we should have hard and fast rules that fail or write off children who fall behind due to absences or other reasons. But I don't. I did not commit my career to public education to watch children fail. Our job as educators is to support each child's effort to learn and complete school, and we will continue to do that in a rigorous and credible way. I look forward to hearing from our independent auditors when they issue their report, and assure you and the public that if there are areas that need to be improved we will do so.

Mrs. Hollstein said in her interview that she is proud of what we do to help children succeed, and I agree. Our responsibility is to educate all children, despite the challenges they may bring with them to the school house each day. We will continue to do so with high standards and fidelity.

As always, thank you for your support of teaching and learning in Charles County Public Schools.