Sen. Cardin visits North Point, tours STEM programs

Sen. Ben Cardin roamed the halls of North Point High School on Monday, chatting with students, cloning plants, examining recycling models and talking computers. This is what 21st-century learning is all about, the U.S. Senator says while calling the school a model for the state and nation.

Cardin’s sweep through classes was part of a half-day visit that included working and talking with students and teachers, as well as a roundtable discussion with Charles County Public Schools administrators, principals and community partners.

On Monday, the students were the teachers; the Senator was the student. Cardin got a lesson in learning at North Point. A strong proponent for strengthening science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education in the United States, Cardin said he believes Charles County Public Schools is doing things right.

First stop was Tara Johnson’s biotechnology class where Cardin partnered with students cloning plants. As Cardin’s lab partners guided him through the lesson, he shared information about the Chesapeake Bay, the shortage of Blue Crabs and his belief that Charles County’s students will figure out how to clone much-needed seagrass to help replenish waning crustacean populations. “You are going to figure out how we can get seagrass to grow in Maryland and the Bay,” he told the students while tying the impact of seafood availability to Maryland’s economy.

“We need to build the type of schools where children can learn and be challenged. North Point represents what we need,” Cardin said as he visited Richard Pauole’s engineering class. Students shared with Cardin how building blocks and marbles help them learn to construct recycling structures that sort bottles by color. It’s a project that mimics a real world situation, Pauole explains.

When Cardin arrives in Glenn Stergar’s Cisco Networking Academy, he warns the students that they can assume he has no idea about much of what they are learning. Students provide a demonstration of routers, switches, interface, security and connectivity. Student Anthony Briggs tells Cardin he has just witnessed some “good old-fashioned Cisco.”

Cardin’s tour ends with brief stops in the auto mechanics classroom and kitchen where students are preparing a four-course lunch. “This is a hands-on model that can be used

Top photo: North Point High School students Anthony Briggs, seated left, and Derek Carey, seated right, speak to Sen. Benjamin Cardin, center, about the Cisco program. Also shown, from left, are Glenn Stergar, Daniel Perez, Marcel Dion, Travis Finkenauer and Abriel Corsey. At left is student Hugh Watson, left, and Cardin, right.

Student spellers ready for bee

The Charles County Spelling Bee is 6 p.m. tonight, Feb. 27, at Milton M. Somers Middle School in La Plata.

Spring forward

Daylight savings time begins on Sunday, March 8. Remember to turn your clock forward one hour.

Science/History Fair switch

Dates for both the Science and History fairs have been changed on the March 2009 calendar. The History Fair will be held March 6-7 at La Plata High School. The Science Fair will be held on Saturday, March 28, at North Point High School.

Please make a note of the change on your copy of the 2008-09 Parent Handbook/Calendar.

Assessment time

Charles County Public Schools third-quarter assessments will take place March 9-13.

Substitute system reminder

Charles County Public Schools will launch its new substitute calling system, SmartFind Express, at 5 p.m., Sunday, March 8. The current system, SEMS, will be taken off line March 6. The new Web site is ccboe.eschoolsolutions.com. Please note that the new site will not be accessible until March 8. Call 301-934-7233 or visit www.ccboe.com for more information.

Student art on display

Charles County Public Schools student art will be on display during the Youth Art Month show, 5-7 p.m. March 12, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata.

See Cardin, Page 2
Two county educators honored for technology use

Kevin Barry, a social studies teacher at La Plata High School, and Dee Van Gelder, media specialist at Milton M. Somers Middle School, were recently awarded by the state as outstanding for their use of technology.

The awards, sponsored by MICCA, an association for educators using technology, recognize employees for their use of technology in teaching and for implementation of technology in their classroom lessons.

Barry has been recognized as Charles County’s Outstanding Educator Using Technology. The award recognizes outstanding prekindergarten through grade 12 teachers who have made an exemplary contribution to instructional computing practices in Maryland schools.

Van Gelder has been recognized as the Charles County Outstanding Leader in Technology Education. This award recognizes an educator outside the classroom who has made exemplary contributions to the implementation of technology.

Barry regularly uses the CPS, or classroom performance system, pads to collect data from his students in order to assess their understanding of learning goals and to enhance his lesson planning.

In an award nomination statement, staff at Somers said Van Gelder serves as a valuable resource for students and teachers as they interact with technology in the building. She seeks ways to find grant funds that enable the school to obtain additional technology.

and the rest of the country can learn from what you do here. What I like about this approach is that you apply it to all schools and make sure all students have access to these opportunities,” Cardin said to Superintendent James E. Richmond.

The Senator is a cosponsor of the America Competes Act, which was enacted into law in 2007 and calls for funding to strengthen STEM education in the United States. He commended the school system not only for its work at North Point, but also for programs that involve the college and Naval Surface Warfare engineers and the vision for the next high school. Cardin supports funding for the Charles County digital classroom project, which is likely to be included in the FY 2009 budget. He says he is working to establish a federal partnership with Charles County Public Schools.

Cardin

Continued from Page 1

The Board of Education’s next monthly meeting is Tuesday, March 10, 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 recognition begins at 4:30 p.m. The meeting is televised live on Comcast Channel 96 and rebroadcast throughout the week. Program schedules for Channel 96 are available at www.ccboe.com.

Executive session – 12 p.m.

Call to order – 1 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance, Henry E. Lackey High School’s JROTC unit

Reports of officers/boards/committees

• Superintendent’s update
• Correspondence/Board Member updates
• Education Association of Charles County
• Student Board Member update

Board agenda - March 10

• CIP update
• Special Education Citizen’s Advisory Committee
• 2010-2011 school calendar
• Legislative update

Unfinished business

New business and future agenda items

• New business
• Future agenda items

Recognition – 4:30 p.m.

• Students
• Employees
• Resolutions: Month of the Young Child and National Student Leadership Week.

Public Forum – 6 p.m.

Action items

• Minutes
• Personnel

Adjournment
The Board of Education honored 63 Charles County Public Schools employees at a Feb. 24 ceremony. The Board each year recognizes employees each with 40, 35, 30 and 25 years of service to children.

**40 years of service**
- Maria “Mollie” Johnson, supervising pupil personnel worker, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; and
- Muriel Werking, speech therapist, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School.

**35 years of service**
- Denise Barnes, guidance counselor, Milton M. Somers Middle School;
- Suzanne Edelen, elementary teacher, Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School;
- Doris Fluharty, secretary to the principal, William B. Wade Elementary School;
- Wilson Ford, Electrician, Radio Station Annex;
- Susan Gray, content specialist for science, Starkey;
- Sharon Hanley, media specialist, John Hanson Middle School;
- Shirley Harris, guidance counselor, General Smallwood Middle School;
- Laura Hedges, kindergarten teacher, J. C. Parks Elementary School;
- Jane Hobbs, specialist in reading, Starkey;
- James Morrow, pupil personnel worker, Mattawoman Middle School;
- Barbara Pennington, physical education teacher, Hanson;
- Sandra Shegogue, secretary, Piccowaxen Middle School;
- Henry Sinkey, instructional resource teacher, William A. Diggs Elementary School;
- Britta Von Der Lippe, elementary teacher, Indian Head Elementary School;
- Edith Wenk, food service worker, Piccowaxen; and
- Kathryn Wilkerson, career and vocational education teacher, La Plata High School.

**30 years of service**
- Melbourne Arbin, III, career and technology resource teacher, Henry E. Lackey High School;
- Brenda Bivins, EEEP instructional assistant, Wade;
- Billie Laub, speech therapist, Mary H. Matula Elementary School;
- Karen Bryant, elementary teacher, Eva Matula;

**25 years of service**
- Oksana Mouchn-Dobbs, special education teacher, Somers;
- Kathleen Morris, vice principal, Somers;
- Oksana Mouchn-Dobbs, special education teacher, La Plata;
- Linda Parrish, language arts teacher, Piccowaxen;
- Jerome Petty, vice principal, Somers;
- David Zippi, art teacher, McDonough.

**30 years of service**
- Rosemary Venable, media specialist, Smallwood.
Apply for positions at www.ccboe.com/hur, or in writing to the personnel office. Positions are open until filled unless otherwise noted. All teaching positions require a bachelor’s degree and MSDE certification requirements.

Job openings
Summer Academy Site Coordinators, Elementary, Middle and High levels – Locations and hours are to be determined. Applicants must have a master’s degree or advanced professional certificate; a minimum of three years satisfactory teaching experience; and two years experience in leadership roles. Apply by March 10.

Summer Academy High School Program Coordinator – Locations to be determined. Applicants must have a master’s degree or advanced professional certificate; a minimum of three years teaching experience; and a minimum of two years of experience in leadership roles; and in the Summer Academy program. Apply by March 10.

Summer Academy Administrator, Middle School level – Locations to be determined. Applicants must be a current Charles County Public Schools vice principal or administrative assistant. Apply by March 10.

NJROTC Instructor – Westlake High School; 10-month position.
Special Education Teacher – General Smallwood Middle School; 10-month position.
Language Arts Teacher – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center; 10-month position.
Special Education Teacher for Math – Thomas Stone High School; 10-month position.
Coordinator of Autism Services – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; 12-month position. Candidates must be pursuing a master’s degree and have three years of experience with autism at the system level.

Staff Notes
Equity training
All certified staff at the schools and centers are participating in equity training on Wednesday, March 4. All school-based personnel will receive their training at their schools, and certificated employees at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building have the option to attend one of two training sessions that day in the Board room.

Superintendent James E. Richmond said the March 4 training is not the same as the diversity and blended cultures training previously offered and he hopes the training inspires employees to renew their passion for ensuring that all children reach their potential. Training for classified staff is scheduled for June 26. Direct any questions to your supervisor.

TELL survey online
Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley is encouraging certificated staff to complete the 2009 Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) Maryland Survey. All school-based staff, including administrators, classroom teachers, media specialists and counselors, are eligible to participate in the survey, located at www.tell-maryland.org.

Through the survey, educators will be able to confidentially share perspectives related to teaching and learning conditions that impact teaching and learning in schools. The survey also addresses issues such as time, facilities and resources, student conduct, community engagement, empowerment, school leadership, professional development, student learning and new teacher support.

The survey is available online through March 18. Participants will need an access code to complete the survey, available through their school’s administrator. The access code can only be used once. The survey takes 30 minutes to complete and must be completed in one session. Visit www.tellmaryland.org for additional information.