

School News



Richmond accepts fourth term as Superintendent

James E. Richmond was unanimously reappointed by the Board of Education on Tuesday, Feb. 10 to serve a fourth, four-year term.

Richmond, who has served as superintendent since July 1, 1997, said he was pleased to have his contract extended. "It is with great pleasure that I accept the appointment to a fourth term as superintendent of Charles County Public Schools. We have seen tremendous success throughout the past four years and I anticipate our students will continue to build on those successes. I am grateful to work with such a dedicated staff and am proud to serve as superintendent of Charles County Public Schools," Richmond said.

Chairman Donald M. Wade said Charles County Public Schools is lucky to have Richmond as superintendent. "Charles County is fortunate to have a superintendent who wants to be here in the school district. He brings with him an international recognition of his expertise as a superintendent, contacts, professional executive experience, education and a love for children. His success rate in Charles County is evident by the results of our school district at the federal and state level. Under his leadership, Charles County Public

Schools has achieved tremendous academic success and has made necessary advancements in technology to ensure our students are prepared to learn and work in the 21st century," Wade said.

Richmond has been recognized nationally, locally and by the state for Charles County Public Schools' (CCPS) efforts to eliminate the minority achievement gap. Richmond has received national recognition for his work to upgrade and push Charles County Public Schools to the forefront in technology for students. In 2007, Cisco Systems honored Richmond with its 21st Century Award and its Outstanding Vision and Leadership Award.

Richmond came to CCPS in 1966 as a classroom teacher at La Plata High School. He transferred to Thomas Stone High School in 1969 when it opened and became principal there in 1973. He served as principal at Stone until 1985 when he was appointed director of supervision and curriculum. He next served as director of school administration, beginning in 1987, then became the regional administrator for the southern region schools in 1994. Mr. Richmond was appointed as interim Superintendent of Schools in 1996.

CCPS launches new substitute system, SmartFind

Finding a substitute is about to become a little easier. Charles County Public Schools is upgrading its substitute calling system to include more technology options and to increase its daily fill rate. The new system takes effect at 5 p.m. on March 8.

This week, human resources division staff is training school location teacher representatives on the new system, SmartFind Express. Training for substitute teachers is scheduled for 4:30 p.m., Feb. 24, at Westlake High School. Substitutes planning to attend the training must RSVP at 301-934-7233 or send an e-mail to info@ccboe.com. The school

system plans to also offer a computer-based training option prior to March 8.

Until the new system goes live, teachers and administrators continue to use the SEMS call-out system for any absences they need to fill. The current system, SEMS, will be taken off line at 10 a.m. on March 6.

Here are some changes for teachers, administrators and substitutes:

- There will be a new toll-free 800 number to call, which will be distributed by human resources and posted on the Web site.

See SmartFind, Page 2

Board revises budget

The Board of Education on Feb. 10 revised Superintendent James E. Richmond's budget proposal to include a request to fund step, or longevity increases, for employees.

The increase, which was unanimously approved by the Board, brings the total of the Board's fiscal year 2010 budget request to the Charles County Commissioners to \$308.7 million, or a 3.1 percent increase over FY 2009. The increase requested from the commissioners this year is \$9.4 million, or 6.5 percent.

The Board must submit its budget proposal to the county by March 1; however, state and county funding estimates are not final or confirmed. The Charles County Commissioners have scheduled a public hearing, which includes accepting comments on the Board's budget, on April 29 at the county government building in La Plata.

PTO's host parent workshop

The Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTO) from Berry and William A. Diggs elementary schools will host a College Savings Plans of Maryland workshop from 7- 8 p.m., Tuesday, March 3, at Berry Elementary School in Waldorf.

The workshop informs elementary and middle school parents of opportunities to prepare for their child's college expenses. The session will cover two college savings plans being offered by the Maryland Savings Plan: The Maryland Prepaid College Trust plan and the Maryland College Investment Plan.

Mid-year orientation

The mid-year new teacher orientation will be held 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 20, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building in La Plata.

Notebook

Student scholars

Mary Fletcher, a senior at Westlake High School, and Gavin Reen, a senior at La Plata High School, were recently named finalists in the Distinguished Scholar Program. The program is coordinated through the Maryland Higher Education Commission and rewards finalists with a \$3,000 scholarship per year for four years as an incentive to attend a two-year or four-year Maryland college or university.

Westlake's fast runner

Westlake High School senior Devon Smith competed in the Milrose Games, a national indoor track meet for professional, college and high school runners, on Friday, Jan. 30, in New York City. Smith won the junior level men's 60-meter dash with a time of 6.65 seconds, which is the seventh fastest time for high school runners who have participated in the event. With this win, Smith is ranked first nationwide in both the junior men's 55-meter and 60-meter dash races.

On the cover

Pictured on the cover are exemplary employees honored by the Board of Education at its Jan. 13 meeting. Pictured, from left, are: Norma Williams, second-grade teacher, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School; Donna Griffin, fourth-grade teacher, William B. Wade Elementary School; Todd Wonderling, special education teacher, F.B. Gwynn Educational Center; Kathryn Koch, language arts teacher, Matthew Henson Middle School; Cynthia Rivera, secretary, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer Elementary School.



Pictured above are staff from Neal Elementary School staff who participated in the Polar Plunge. In the back row, from left, are: Ashley Chippa, Brooke Kohlhorst, Janeen Willinger, Neal Principal Carol Leveillee, Jennifer Vaino, Carrie Lamb, Carolyn Engleson, Amber Kirk, Julie Colaizzi and Laura Jewell. In the front row, pictured from the left, are Amy Striker, Kristen Park, Lena Van Sickle and Linda Einhorn.

Neal, Matula staff take icy plunge in the name of charity

Staff and community members from Mary B. Neal and Mary H. Matula elementary schools raised money for the Maryland Special Olympics on Saturday, Jan. 24, by participating in the 2009 Polar Bear Plunge held at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis. The 22 participants from Neal, along with 27 participants from Matula, plunged into the Chesapeake Bay, which reportedly had a

water temperature of 34 degrees. Matula raised \$6,500, which tripled their efforts from the past three years that staff has participated. Neal raised more than \$2,000 as first-year participants. Proceeds are donated to the Maryland Special Olympics, which is devoted to sports training and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

SmartFind

- The new Web site is ccboe.eschoolsolutions.com.
- Login information changes with the new system. Teachers and substitutes now use their telephone number. The new system login is the employee identification number. Employee identification numbers are on each paycheck. If you are unsure of your number, call the help desk at 301-934-7233. Pin numbers remain the same. If you are unable to remember your pin number, directions are provided on the site to receive an e-mail with the pin number.

Jeremy Campbell, human resources specialist, said the new system adds improvements for both teachers and substitutes. Substitutes still receive phone calls or can manage which job offers they would like to be considered for on the Web site.

Substitutes will also receive e-mail updates for accepted jobs. Substitutes also have the option to cancel acceptance of a job on the Internet at least 24 hours in advance of

Continued from Page 1

the job start time. There is also an added feature for teachers that allows them to attach files to a job. Teachers can post their lesson plans on the job posting, which can be downloaded by an administrator at the school or the substitute filling in for the class.

Campbell said that there are additional phone lines available with SmartFind Express, and the prediction is that the fill rate will increase from a daily average of 93 percent to 98 percent. "It is crucial to have an effective substitute system for instruction," Campbell said.

Charles County Public Schools has 940 active substitute teachers. Due to the high number of substitutes already trained, the school system is not accepting applications for substitute teaching at this time. All employment opportunities for Charles County Public Schools are posted on the school system Web site at www.ccboe.com. For additional information, call 301-934-7233.

Parks teacher prepares to embark on an educational journey of a lifetime

Deanna Wheeler, a science teacher at J.C. Parks Elementary School, is about to embark on the educational experience of a lifetime. She said she always wanted to bring “real life experiences to her teaching” and she will be given the opportunity to do so next month after she spends 21 days aboard an icebreaker in the Bering Sea with scientists as part of the PolarTREC program.

The PolarTREC program, which stands for Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating in the Arctic, is an educational research experience that is funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation and managed by the Arctic Research Consortium of the U.S. During her polar expedition, Wheeler will participate in polar research such as examining the food chain for walruses and eiders, to testing the water and examining the sediment at the bottom of the sea for living organisms.

Wheeler will be able to share her experiences on board the USCGC Healy with other educators, scientists and students through Internet tools including online teacher and research journals, message boards, and podcasts. Wheeler said she will not only be able to



Deanna Wheeler

share the experiences with her students at Parks, but she will be able to share data and her experiences with other Charles County Public Schools students through the online tools available on board the icebreaker.

“If students at another school are working on a specific project in which I have data for, they can view daily reports that we will upload to the Internet,” Wheeler said.

Wheeler said the application process was rigorous as she was one of 250 teachers nationwide to apply for participation in the program and PolarTREC only accepts 12 teachers per year. She will depart for her experience in Kodiak, Alaska on

March 10 and will return to Dutch Harbor in Maine on March 31. She will attend training in the next few weeks to prepare for the experience.

In celebration of the International Polar Year, 2007-2009, PolarTREC provided more than 40 teachers the opportunity to work with a team or researchers in the Arctic or Antarctic. To follow Wheeler’s daily logs, or for more information about the application process and PolarTREC program, visit www.polartrec.com.

Sixteen Charles County Public Schools students participated in the Drive2Survive program on Sunday, Feb. 1. The Charles County Sheriff’s Office funded student scholarships for the program, which is an advanced driver training program that teaches driver safety and collision avoidance with true-to-life situations in a controlled, safe environment. The cost of the program is \$300 per participant. The students were selected based on essay submissions coordinated through their English classes. Pictured, to the right, is Maurice J. McDonough High School junior Alexandria Maloney as she prepares to drive through one of the training courses.



La Plata biology teacher to lead others for Project Lead the Way program

Robert Bushman, a biology and biomedical sciences teacher at La Plata High School, was recently named a lead teacher for the Principles of Biomedical Sciences program for Project Lead the Way (PLTW). He was recommended for the position by other PLTW teachers, La Plata Principal Evelyn Arnold, and John Holmes, the science department chair and teacher at La Plata.

As a PLTW lead teacher, Bushman will be responsible for teaching this summer during a training institute for other teachers. He will help guide new teachers through the program coursework, labs, curriculum, software and program protocols. Bushman said he has participated in PLTW for the past two years and thoroughly enjoys working with students and staff involved in the program.

“The program itself is a blast. It is a very team-oriented program that the kids relate to and love learning more about. My students are



Robert Bushman

constantly engaged by the variety of activities, the course work and the hands-on aspect of the program,” he said.

The PLTW Biomedical Sciences program is a four-year series of courses designed to bring students closer to the possibilities of a career in a medical-based field. The courses are integrated into the students’ core curriculum and are designed to expand upon college preparatory math and science programs.

Bushman said his students all enjoy participating in the program. “It is a wonderful experience to see all of my students eager for what the program holds next and the future of the program,” he said.

PLTW is a non-profit organization that promotes pre-engineering courses for middle and high school students. The program seeks to build partnerships with public schools to increase student interest in engineering.

Personnel

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

Adult Education Instructional Assistants – Lifelong Learning Center; four part-time positions available. The hours are 8:30–11:30 a.m. and 6–8:30 p.m. Apply by Feb. 13.

Educational Interpreter – Robert D. Stethem Educational Center; 10-month position. Candidates must have a degree in sign language interpretation and have a passing score on the Maryland Quality Assurance Screening (MQAS). Apply by Feb. 17.

Secretary, Special Education Non Public and EA – Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building; 12-month position. Apply by Feb. 20.

Guidance Secretary – Mattawoman Middle School; 11-month position. Apply by Feb. 20.

Special Education Teacher for Math – Thomas Stone High School; 10-month position.

NJROTC Instructor – Westlake High School; 10-month position.

Life Skills Teachers for Severe and Profound – William A. Diggs Elementary 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.

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.

Extra pay positions

Westlake High School has the following open position:

- Head Varsity Softball Coach

Contact Principal Chrystal Benson, 301-753-1758, to apply.

Girls' Lacrosse Officials

The Southern Maryland Women's Lacrosse Officials Association is seeking people interested in becoming certified girls' lacrosse officials. Knowledge of the game is preferred, but not required, and comprehensive training is provided. Officials will referee games at the high school, youth and recreational levels.

Contact Kay Percich, the training coordinator of the Southern Maryland Women's Lacrosse Officials Association, at 410-286-3742 or kaypercich@comcast.net.

Special Olympics Unified Sports Countywide Coordinator

The Special Olympics Maryland Unified Sports is seeking a countywide coordinator. The start date is March 30 and the coordinator will be paid a stipend through a Special Olympics grant. Contact Janet Stephanson, 301-392-7585, or Jan Johnson, 301-934-7323, by Feb. 20.

Special Olympics Unified Sports Countywide Coordinator

The Special Olympics Maryland Unified Sports is seeking high school sports coaches for spring track and field. The start date is March 30 and a \$1,500 stipend will be paid through grant funds provided by the Special Olympics Maryland Unified Sports. Contact the high school principal of the school in which you are interested in applying by Feb. 20.

System announcements

Presidents' Day closing

School and offices are closed on Monday, Feb. 16, in observance of Presidents' Day.

Years of service ceremony

The Board of Education will honor more than 70 Charles County Public Schools employees during a Years of Service ceremony scheduled for 5 p.m., Feb. 24, at the Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building.

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