Superintendent's Report
September 12, 2017
Board of Education

I'm pleased to report that we had a smooth opening of schools last week. A successful opening of schools takes extensive planning, organization and attention to detail. Our staff's commitment to that work resulted in a great opening for our 26,400 students. We started the year with 305 new teachers, with fewer than 30 teaching positions remaining open.

Today, our prekindergarten and three's program students joined us for their first day of school, edging our unofficial enrollment up to 26,403 students and increasing from 26,390 last year. Our post-Labor Day opening of school was the first since the 1991-92 school year. We have met the challenges of developing a calendar meeting the requirements of Governor Hogan's executive order for all Maryland school systems to open after Labor Day and close by June 15. The last day of school for students is June 15, which includes five inclement weather days that could be deducted if we have a mild winter. We made a number of adjustments to the calendar, one being a reduction in the number of days scheduled for spring break.

On Thursday, September 7, I joined Sheriff Troy Berry and officers from the Charles County Sheriff's Office at Westlake High School to pass out flyers and remind student drivers of the rules of the road. We asked student drivers to put away their cell phones and to keep their speed down. The program is called We Care, and since 2008, we believe it has helped reduce the number of accidents involving students. Student government leaders work with School Resource Officers and administrators year-round to provide safe driving messages and programs for our students.

There are a number of new communication tools this year. New this school year is an online gradebook program for parents, students and teachers to track academic progress, attendance, class assignments and more. CCPS has launched Synergy/YouVue, which replaces the Edline gradebook as well as an aging, 40-year student information system. The new system includes parent access, called ParentVue, student access, or StudentVue, and teacher access, called TeacherVue. Schools are distributing activation letters to parents at open houses and other scheduled times. Parents must show identification to receive their access code.

Also new this year is the use of text messages as part of systemwide and school notifications. Recipients must opt-in to receive text alerts. On Oct. 1, parents and staff will receive an opt-in text message from CCPS through a new School Messenger notification tool.

Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School students started the school year in a transition school during the renovation and expansion of Dr. Mudd. Staff expects to complete Mudd's renovation by the start of the 2019-20 school year. Later today, Assistant Superintendent of Supporting Services Mike Heim and his team will update you on construction projects, including Billingsley Elementary School and kindergarten additions at Berry and Dr. James Craik elementary schools.

You will also hear from members of the food and nutrition services team about the many facets of our school meal programs. Meal prices remain the same this year, and we plan to offer free breakfast to all students throughout October. You will also receive an update on the summer lunch program, the increased use of Eco-friendly products, and a recent effort to recruit additional food service workers and substitutes.

We will continue to look for innovative ways to deliver instruction to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. Technology is an effective tool for teachers to use in classrooms, but the significance of an outstanding teacher can never be replaced by technology. We understand that and value the work that our teachers do each and every day to build positive relationships with our students.

We are looking forward to a great school year, and I hope you will visit our schools often.

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