

September 2023: New Staff Edition

Colonial Courier

Colonial Heights High School



The CHHS football team has worked hard to deliver hard-earned wins with the help of cheerleaders, the marching band and fans supporting them on the side lines. After a loss to Matoaca on Sept. 22, the football team ended its undefeated streak, making its record 3-1. All photos courtesy of Mrs. Sara Davis.



Colonial Courier

Colonial Heights High School

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Andersen accepts warm welcome at CHHS

by Ava Kwiek

Every year, new teachers arrive to teach at CHHS. This year, Mrs. Beth Andersen, English teacher, is one among many.

Mrs. Andersen has been teaching English for more

last two years, I was teaching and administrating the Teachers for Tomorrow program for all four Hanover County high schools," said Mrs. Andersen. "I really enjoyed that position, the program and my students, but it involved a lot of travel

poetry.

"I love teaching literature, especially poetry, because it's such a thrill helping students to unlock the power of language and see how authors use symbols, diction and other literary devices to create rich meaning," said Mrs. Andersen. "It offers us the opportunity to engage about deep topics and to focus on the connectedness of mankind."

When in the classroom, Mrs. Andersen makes sure that students get their work done, but she also makes sure that her students understand what they're doing.

"I thought she was very genuine and caring when I first met her," said Aleena Nito-Powell, 10. "I like that she explains and makes sure that you understand if you are confused."

"I like how she handles the classroom: it's not too talkative, and she's in control," said Nassara Kolor, 10.

Outside of school, Mrs. Andersen loves to travel and

Photo courtesy of Beth Andersen



Mrs. Andersen enjoys a trip to Caen, France. She loves to travel around the world to experience different cultures through performances, restaurants and museums.

than 20 years, and she also taught and administered Teachers for Tomorrow in Hanover County for two years.

"While I taught English, first in Gloucester County, and then in Prince George for many, many years, for the

between schools."

She was drawn to teaching English because of its ability to allow people to examine and more clearly understand the experience that everyday people live in with literature and language. Her favorite genre of teaching literature is

especially enjoys big cities and places of cultural experiences, such as museums, performances and restaurants.

In high school, Mrs. Andersen never played sports; however, she was very involved in her school. She was a part of student government and the forensics

team, as well as many honor societies and several other clubs.

“I love going to concerts with my husband, family and friends; bargain shopping; yoga and wellness; and loving on my boy cat, Longfellow,” said Mrs. Andersen.

When Mrs. Andersen first came to work at CHHS, she

found it to be a warm and welcoming community, and she loves the diverse student body and positive climate.

“I look forward to getting to know my wonderful students better, to growing as a professional and to learning what it means to be part of the Colonials family,” said Mrs. Andersen.

Photo courtesy of Beth Andersen



Mrs. Andersen has been teaching English for over 20 years. She also had two years of experience teaching and administering the Teachers for Tomorrow program for all Hanover County high schools.

Anderson excited to return back to CHHS

by Catherine Alderson

CHHS alumni, Mrs. Melissa Anderson, science teacher and Class of 2027 sponsor, is a member of the school again, but this time from a different perspective.

When she was a student at CHHS, Mrs. Anderson was very involved. She was the president of her class, was a member of the cheerleading and field hockey teams and was voted "Most Spirited" of her class.

Majoring in biology, Mrs. Anderson graduated from the University of Mary Washington. Instead of going straight into teaching, she started off by working at Capital One's Informational Technology Center for 12 years.

Photo by Terri Moody



In her free time, Mrs. Anderson enjoys spending time with her husband and two children.

Years later, she did a long-term substitute teaching job at CHHS for Mrs. Lori McDonald, biology teacher. This job really sparked Mrs. Anderson's interest in being a full-time teacher.

"I loved being around the teenagers; it was just fun," said Mrs. Anderson. "I felt like it kept me young."

After having experience in the classroom, Mrs. Anderson got a job teaching science at Thomas Dale High School. She stayed there for 12 years, working at the freshman building for two years. When the science position at CHHS opened, she was ready to return back to her alma mater.

Mrs. Anderson is excited about teaching at a smaller

school where she can have a bigger impact on her students. She had over 140 students at her previous school, but at CHHS she has a fraction of that number.

"Everyone here is very positive and welcoming," said Mrs. Anderson. "Every teacher that I've talked to wants this school to be the best that it can be; the atmosphere is just more positive here."

Bringing a new member into a department can be a big change, but Mrs. McDonald has high expectations with Mrs. Anderson's teaching style and new ideas for her courses.

"Mrs. Anderson has a cheery attitude and is happy to make a shift in her teaching career," said Mrs. McDonald. "She is across the hall from me in a science lab, and the students are engaged and happy whenever I take a quick look across the hall or see them coming and going."

Although CHHS is much different from her previous

school, Mrs. Anderson knows all of her content, and is ready to make a difference with her students.

"Mrs. Anderson is an extremely pleasant teacher who puts a smile on all of her students' faces," said

exciting!"

In Mrs. Anderson's free time, she enjoys traveling, shopping, watching movies and spending time with her family. One thing that she's looking forward to most this school year is teaching with

Photo by Patricia Reynolds



Sisters Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Moody are both CHHS alumni that have returned back to their high school to teach.

Gwendolyn Kapinskis, 9. "I love being in Mrs. Anderson's class every morning; she makes science fun and

her sister, Mrs. Terri Moody, English 9 and journalism teacher.

Hurt passionate to changes lives

by Emily Chavez-Ponce

Singing and everything related is the heart of life itself. Without it, most of the fun of life is gone. Mr. Norman Hurt, piano/chorus teacher, is ready to share his passion for music at CHHS.

Mr. Hurt is one of the many new teachers at CHHS. Starting his third year of teaching, Mr. Hurt was nervous not only about starting at a new school, but also about his classroom situation due to the construction, but as time goes on, he is making the most of the situation.

Mr. Hurt is returning to CHHS three years after graduating from Longwood University. While a student at Longwood, he completed his student teaching with recently retired CHHS chorus teacher, Mrs. Cynthia Breckenridge.

"I loved my time here, and I loved my time with the students," said Mr. Hurt.

When he heard about a job

Photo courtesy of Norman Hurt



After completing student teaching with recently retired CHHS chorus teacher Mrs. Cynthia Breckenridge a few years ago, Mr. Hurt has returned to teach full time.

opportunity and being able to teach what he enjoys the most, he just had to apply. Along with the job came a loving family waiting for him.

"I just love how welcoming everyone is and the family

dynamic there is," said Mr. Hurt.

Although originally Mr. Hurt's first career choice wasn't being a teacher, he has always had music in his life because his parents were

very involved in the music industry.

“My parents would travel a lot, and they were always singing,” said Mr. Hurt.

Later on he found his own passion through his own teachers, who made him want to travel this path.

Describing his way of teaching, he believes that he is understanding, fair and sympathetic and tries to

make everything easy at any given time; he believes these strengths make him a good teacher.

Hearing from a student’s point of view, Micah Wikerson, 10, who is taught by Mr. Hurt, described Mr. Hurt as calm with the class, and if they are struggling, Mr. Hurt will help them get it done.

“He’s a cool teacher because

he’s not so hard on us but also not laid back,” said Wikerson.

Mr. Cougar Conley, band teacher, has been mentoring Mr. Hurt through his journey at CHHS so far. To add to his list of skills, Mr. Conley said Mr. Hurt “brings a lot of new and innovative skills to the music department, that his ascents of excitement and passion for music are fresh, new and innovative to the department.”

Mr. Colney also believes that Mr. Hurt’s past experience from being at CHHS will be very helpful, and he is very excited to work with him.

Mr. Hurt’s goals for his first year at CHHS are to make chorus and music classes grow even more. He wants students to come in and feel welcomed to music, whether they have experience with music or not. Everyone has a chance at music, and Mr. Hurt wants to be the one to encourage them to take that chance.

Photo courtesy of Norman Hurt



Mr. Hurt 's passion for music began at a young age when he was inspired by his parents who were "always singing."

James takes next steps in teaching career

by Ethan Greenwald

Photo courtesy of Timothy James

There have been many changes to CHHS over these past school years: construction, a new principal, a new superintendent and, of course, new teachers. New teachers usher in a new era within the school and their departments.

One of many new teachers is Mr. Timothy James, SPED teacher and former long-term substitute, a position that has helped him as a teacher now.

“My experience as a long-term substitute over the years exposed me to different subject areas in which I had to research and relay the information to the students,” said Mr. James.

Mr. James’s time as a substitute also allowed him to get more experience with other teachers and get to know them.

“I was getting great tutelage from teachers like Mrs. McConnell, Mr. Flickinger, Mrs. Rush, Mrs. Kennedy, and others,” said Mr. James.

Mr. James has spent his



Mr. James enjoys attending and cheering on CHHS during sports events.

time at CHHS and has been an active member of the community by attending sports events and cheering on students.

“My favorite thing to do outside of school is to see my Colonials compete and cheer them on to success,” said Mr. James.

Mr. James’s mentor, Mr. Daniel Pulskamp, SPED department lead teacher,

thinks that Mr. James is good at connecting with students.

“Mr. James brings a lot of enthusiasm,” said Mr. Pulskamp. “Mr. James shows good understanding of math and an ability to connect with the kids. He will do well.”

Jones continues her teaching adventure

by Allyson Cobb

After teaching at Prince George High School for 16 years, Mrs. Paola Jones, Spanish and ESL teacher, decided it was time for a change. She then found her way to CHHS, and with open arms, the CHHS staff welcomed her.

"I come from Prince George High School," said Mrs. Jones. "I was ready for a change and the opportunity to continue growing as an educator."

"CHHS has a wonderful staff, and everyone has been so welcoming, especially my department," said Mrs. Jones.

Not only has Mrs. Jones made new friends, but she also reconnected with old ones.

"I used to work with Senora Jones and was very excited to work with her again," said Ms. Sarah Warwick, Dual Enrollment U.S. History teacher.

"Senora Jones has a lot of energy and passion, not just for her subject, but for her

school community," said Ms. Warwick. "She is very dedicated to her students

to being a friend on the language hallway, she's also Mrs. Jones's mentor.

Photo courtesy of Paola Jones



Mrs. Jones has come to CHHS after teaching in Prince George for 16 years. This semester she is teaching ESL, Spanish 3 and Dual Enrollment Spanish 4.

and wants them to be successful."

Mrs. Jones has connected with Mrs. Laurie Melis, Spanish teacher. In addition

"Senora Jones is always very positive and upbeat," said Mrs. Melis. "I bet it's fun to be in her class!"

As she continues her

professional journey, Mrs. Jones has some goals in mind she would like to achieve. She wants to urge students to take complete advantage of the many new dual enrollment classes.

Mrs. Jones encourages “students to take advantage of the wonderful opportunities CHHS is offering by taking dual enrollment courses and earning college credits while

still in high school.”

Mrs. Jones’s students have nothing but great things to say about her.

“She’s energetic and always smiling,” said Justis Merriman, 11.

“No matter what, she’s willing to help,” said Rylee Lundie, 11, “and she lets us work in groups, so that’s a plus.”

As a teacher, Mrs. Jones

takes pride in “building relationships and having a good rapport” with her students.

While Mrs. Jones loves teaching, she didn’t always want to become a teacher. She started her adult life with the intention of being a counselor.

“I graduated with a psychology degree in hopes to become a substance abuse counselor,” said Mrs. Jones.

As a teacher, Mrs. Jones leads her students to learn rather than lecturing to them.

“I believe I am a facilitator in the classroom,” said Mrs. Jones. “My goal as an educator is to encourage critical thinking and self learning.”

Mrs. Jones was ready for a change and believes being at CHHS is exactly what she needed.

“I was ready for a new professional challenge,” said Mrs. Jones. “This will allow me to continue growing as an educator.”

Photo courtesy of Paola Jones



Outside of school Mrs. Jones loves spending time with her daughter. Her daughter, Leah Jones, graduated from Prince George High School.

Patterson eager to build relationships

by Whitnie Hoyle and Gavin Jarvis

Teacher support is an essential part of getting students engaged in the classroom. Mrs. Betsy Patterson, paraprofessional, spends her time encouraging students to keep them on track and ready to learn while supporting teachers so they can focus on instruction.

Mrs. Patterson was born in Trenton, Tenn. She likes to spend time with her dogs, her kids and her husband. She attended the University of Tennessee to play softball and basketball. She acquired a bachelor's of science in social work, sociology and criminology.

Mrs. Patterson decided to come to Colonial Heights from another school because of the leadership that is at the high school. She wants to make sure that students are where they need to be and that they succeed.

"Mrs. Patterson is willing to help all students when needed," said Mrs. Cathy

Bailey, digital apps teacher. "She has been actively working to get to know the students and build relationships. She is such a huge help when students

the classroom.

"Mrs. Patterson's eagerness to learn the content and build relationships with the students in each class makes the classroom environment

Photo courtesy of Betsy Patterson



Mrs. Patterson is eager to connect with students to make the classroom environment more comfortable for them.

have questions or just need more guidance."

Mrs. Patterson supports Mrs. Bailey in her class. Mrs. Bailey appreciates Mrs. Patterson's positive attitude and her contagious energy in

more comfortable and inviting," said Mrs. Bailey. "Students are not hesitant to ask questions, which is so important in any class environment."

Mrs. Patterson wants

Photo courtesy of Betsy Patterson



Mrs. Patterson enjoys spending time with her husband and her dogs outside of school.

students to listen to their teachers, to be positive and to be themselves. Two of these students include Dylan Adams, 12, and Dawson Moody, 12, who both have Mrs. Patterson as a resource in Mr. Jacob Crowder's

finance class.

"She's really involved with kids," said Moody. "She walks around and has conversations with us and really makes us feel welcome."

Not only does Mrs. Patterson support the students, but also she supports Mr. Crowder while he is teaching.

"They pair super well together because I feel like their personalities match very well," said Adams.

One person that has inspired Mrs. Patterson is her grandmother because of how hard she worked and how she raised her kids.

"I wanted to get my education and further it, and she was the one," said Mrs. Patterson. "She's always been the one."

Colonial Heights has impressed Mrs. Patterson because of the leadership and the teamwork throughout the staff and teachers. She encourages students to keep doing what they're doing because it's working.

Ratliff takes charge as new superintendent

by Gavin Jarvis

Students and teachers are important factors for education. Through the school system and administration, leaders make decisions that amplify the school experience for these students and teachers. One of these newly established leaders is Mrs. Haidee Ratliff, Colonial Heights Public Schools superintendent.

Mrs. Ratliff was born in Petersburg General Hospital, and she grew up in Colonial Heights. Mrs. Ratliff then went to Longwood University because she wanted to be a teacher. She loves to read

and work on projects she has for the new house that she bought with her husband.

At Longwood, Mrs. Ratliff first majored in physical education, but she ended up having trouble with anatomy and physiology. She decided to take a special education course and loved it. After college, she ended up teaching back in Colonial Heights.

"I believe that Colonial Heights is a great place to grow and learn," said Mrs. Ratliff. "Colonial pride is very important to me, and we help each other out, and we're a family, and we want everyone

to succeed."

Mrs. Ratliff has a long history in the education field. Teaching, counseling and administration are just a few examples of her career. She bounced around the system, and then retired, just to come out of retirement to work in education again. She tried to apply for the superintendent position before, but she wasn't offered the position.

"I just decided it wasn't meant to be," said Mrs. Ratliff. "And then last year, somebody called and said, 'if it came open, would you apply?' So I did."

Photo courtesy of Haidee Ratliff

Haidee Napier

Superintendent
of
Colonial Heights
Public Schools



The school system contains a lot of moving parts. Mrs. Ratliff, being the superintendent, makes one day just as busy as the rest. She has many people that help her make decisions, two of those being Mr. Patrick Neuman, director of curriculum and assessment, and Mr. Travis Ridley, assistant superintendent of instruction.

Both Mr. Ridley and Mr. Neuman highlight the experience and knowledge Mrs. Ratliff has accumulated while working in the school system.

“She has worked in so many different positions in education and really understands how the organization works on so many levels,” said Mr. Neuman. “She is smart, experienced and a tireless worker.”

Mr. Neuman worked with Mrs. Ratcliff as the principal at Lakeview Elementary while she was the assistant superintendent for CHPS. Now Mr. Neuman helps support teachers and students in implementing

instruction and testing. In addition, he also supports Mrs. Ratliff by contributing to team-discussed decisions that need to be made at the school administration offices.

“We talk daily about how to tackle problems and make plans together,” said Mr. Neuman. “Each of us has our specific job or title, but we all can fluidly step in to help in

He served at North Elementary for 11 years. Now that Mrs. Ratliff is superintendent, he assists her in her everyday job.

Mr. Ridley assists Mrs. Ratliff by collecting information and providing that information to help her in making good and informed decisions that affect student outcomes.

Photo courtesy of Haidee Ratliff



Mrs. Ratliff poses with her family in June of 2023 when she was announced as the new Colonial Heights Public Schools superintendent.

any kind of situation.”

Mr. Ridley was also a principal while Mrs. Ratliff was the assistant superintendent at the time.

Mrs. Ratliff has already been jumping into areas where she has to make those informed decisions. She has many focuses that she wants

to work on as superintendent.

“A big one is looking at mental health support: how we support students and staff across the division as they are very busy and things are stressful and helping them deal with those things,” said Mrs. Ratliff.

Mrs. Ratliff also wants to tackle the problem of chronic absenteeism, something schools are measured on for accreditation.

“There are some things with

the state with reading going on,” said Mrs. Ratliff. “We want to make sure that we’re keeping those moving forward.”

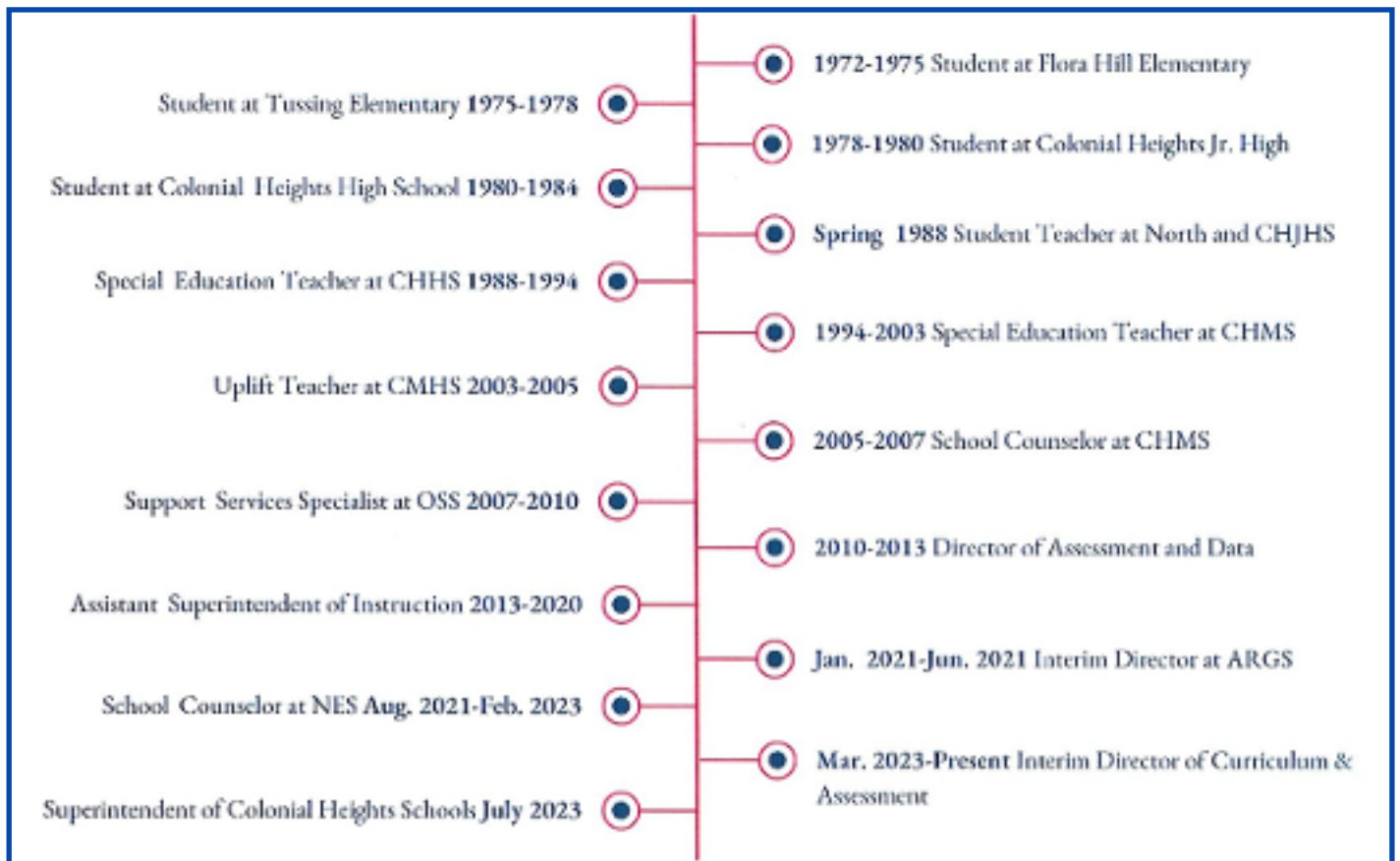
As busy and stressful the job of superintendent is, Mrs. Ratcliff likes to work. She enjoys going to Wawa in the morning for her daily coffee. In addition, she also enjoys the people she meets.

“I’ve taught here for so long,” said Mrs. Ratliff. “I always run into former students and parents, and I love that it keeps me connected.”

Mrs. Ratliff values students, teachers and the Colonial Heights community. With her experience, knowledge and team, she serves students and teachers across the city as the new superintendent.

“My mission is to make every decision based on what’s right for students, and I’m just so grateful for the opportunity,” said Mrs. Ratliff. “It’s something that I feel like it’s a gift to me, and I didn’t know that I was going to have this opportunity.”

Graphic courtesy of Haidee Ratliff



Spence returns to teach and coach in his hometown

by Heather Claytor

After attending and graduating from Hampden-Sydney College, Mr. Hunter Spence, paraprofessional and the CHMS football defensive coordinator, came back to his home roots.

"I had a couple options to go to a couple places across the country, coaching college football and teaching, and I just decided coming home would be best," said Mr. Spence.

Mr. Spence transferred to CHHS for his sophomore year of high school. Throughout his high school career, he played basketball and football all while taking challenging classes.

"I am a psychology major so I am really big on how people treat each other," said Mr. Spence. "Treat someone how you want to be treated, no matter the age gap."

Creating relationships with students is one of Mr. Spence's goals for the year.

Photo by Heather Claytor



Mr. Spence graduated from Hampden-Sydney College in Spring 2023. Mr. Spence planned to continue playing football in the fall, but due to his injury in the spring, he is not eligible to continue playing.

"He brings humor to the class in a positive way," said Tamiq Fields Francis, 12. "He always contributes and talks with other students to help."

Being a paraprofessional, Mr. Spence works in many different environments throughout the day with

students.

"Half the day I'm with freshmen, half the day I'm with seniors, so it is a really good balance of getting to know everybody," said Mr. Spence.

Throughout his years at CHHS, Mr. Spence has gained

many connections with the majority of the staff. Coming back, he has felt a warm welcome from everyone.

“People are really taking me in with open arms, not just as a student now but as a coworker,” said Mr. Spence.

Many of his teachers and coaches are very proud to see him grow as a person and come back to CHHS to coach and teach.

“Hunter was a great leader on the football field and in the locker room,” said Mr. Tracy Boyd, science teacher. “He understood the game. He hit hard as a safety on

Photo courtesy of Hunter Spence



Not only did Mr. Spence play football, but he also played basketball in high school.

defense!”

Outside of the classroom and football field, Mr. Spence loves to spend time with his family, including his 1-year-old son. Hanging out

with his family is his number one priority.

“I love spending time with him,” said Mr. Spence. “That is my favorite thing to do outside of school and football. We love to get in the pool and swim and ride the lawn mower.”

To continue his career, Mr. Spence’s goal is to get his teaching license in special education over the next year, and then he intends to be a special education teacher until he completes his master’s for counseling and supervision. Down the road he wants to be a school counselor and or a principal.

Photo courtesy of Hunter Spence



On and off the field, Mr. Spence’s first priority is his family. Mr. Spence has a 1-year-old boy and a baby girl on the way.

Tyrrell trains students for tech future

by Lamoni Jordan

Mr. Matthew Tyrrell, the new Tech Foundation and Tech Transfer teacher from Jacksonville, Fla., is rebranding and expanding technological education at CHHS. He plans to make the program updated and generational.

“He is able to help students understand the past, current and future technology trends,” said Mr. John Thomas, assistant principal and CTE director.

Mr. Tyrrell would describe his teaching style as “laid back” while still keeping everything in order. He tries “giving them the responsibility to keep themselves on track.”

Sophomore students in Mr. Tyrrell’s class are already finding his teaching methods helpful.

“It’s useful and makes you think,” said Aiden Ackerman, 10.

“Tech transfer has been good so far,” said Javere

Wesson, 10. “My favorite design.”
thing has been drawing and
planning the Ford F-150

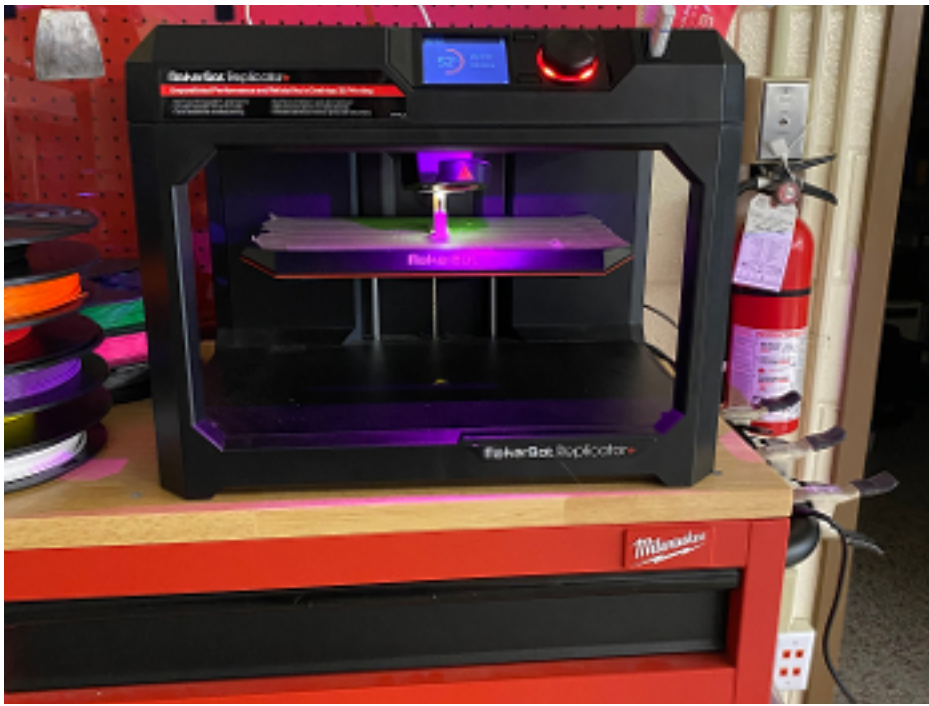
Mr. Tyrrell spends his free time fishing and spending

Photo by Lamoni Jordan



Mr. Tyrrell, the new Tech Foundations and Tech Transfer teacher, plans to update and expand CHHS’s technology education courses. By studying technology trends from the past, he hopes to prepare his students for the future.

Photo by Lamoni Jordan



Mr. Tyrrell's Tech Foundations students learn to use a 3-D printer for various projects.

time with his family, including his 4-month-old son. He also loves collecting vintage technology items.

"I am a collector of retro and vintage video games and computer consoles," said Mr. Tyrrell. "My collection currently has over 100 consoles and nearing 3500 games."

Mr. Tyrrell has many different goals in life that he

wants to accomplish. One of his biggest goals in life is to be the best father he can be to his son.

"I plan to achieve that by being there for him and doing my best to make sure he is successful," said Mr. Tyrrell.

Growing up Mr. Tyrrell was raised by his mother in a single-parent household. Most of his time was spent outdoors finding activities to

do. In high school he didn't play any sports because he was already invested in technology.

"I was very into the outdoors and spent a lot of time exploring," said Mr. Tyrrell. "I was very into my high school's Television Production Club."

Back in his hometown, he attended Florida State University in Jacksonville, because his mother wanted him to get the best education possible. His wife, Mrs. Leigh Daniel-Tyrrell, inspired him to pursue teaching.

Mr. Tyrrell's hero is Satoru Iwata, former president of Nintendo, because "he helped bring the game back into success," and "he was passionate."

Villeponteaux strives to be the next step in the future of CHHS

by Landon Lopez

Everyone is always petrified and nervous about the first day of school, having to look for their classes, obtain the right supplies, and, most importantly, make it on time.

But what about the teachers? They, too, have a story that led them to their first days of school.

A first-year history teacher, claiming the name of Mrs. Mary Villeponteaux, has recently started teaching in many different classrooms, showing her hard work and dedication to her job whilst projecting inspiration and hustle to improve students' productivity and keep their minds sharp.

"I hope that my enthusiasm sparks interest and challenges my students to think about our history in ways they have not before," said Mrs. Villeponteaux. "I want to give back to and serve my community, and teaching is my way of doing that."

Mrs. Villeponteaux floats

around several classrooms, leaving a trail of determination wherever she walks and distributes inspiration and knowledge in

Photo courtesy of Mary Villeponteaux



Mrs. Villeponteaux's students and mentor Mrs. Major believe she is off to a great start in her first year as a history teacher.

a very relatable and easy way for all students to understand perfectly.

"She's a nice teacher, and I like how we are hands on and very productive," said Brayon Mendoza, 11, a student in Mrs. Villeponteaux's US/VA History class.

Many first-year/new teachers can be nervous and think that they're not teaching in a way that benefits the

students whilst providing a poor example for the school, but, in reality, it's all in their head.

It's the first day for everyone, which is a good opportunity for everyone to share some facts about them and learn more about each other as the year goes on. Mrs. Villeponteaux never let those thoughts control her day or overall personality.

Mrs. Villeponteaux is not only hardworking and inspirational, but also very careful and driven by integrity.

"Mrs. V. checks in with me every day to make sure she's on the right track with her lessons and assessments and cares deeply about making sure she's giving students what they need to be successful," said Mrs. Christina Major, AP Government and VA/US History teacher. "It's tough being a first year teacher, but Mrs. V. is doing it with determination and enthusiasm!"

Providing everything she

needs whilst walking her through this semester so she can rise up as a hero and role model for students, Mrs. Major serves as a mentor for Mrs. Villeponteaux.

Mrs. Villeponteaux went through many different positions whilst investing in her teaching career and struggled with her decision to

The realization that she achieved something for a job that she didn't want to pursue, which stressed both her and her family out, was impactful.

"About seven years ago, I reevaluated where I was in my life and realized that I needed to return to my very first love, history," said Mrs.

Mrs. Villeponteaux understands that students need breaks by not overwhelming them with new work; she's simply inspired by relatable and pieced-together work that she plans out the day beforehand to get the best and fastest result for her class.

"Mrs. Villeponteaux brings everything and more to the table when it comes to teaching here," said Mendoza. "Her efforts and persistence in both her work and student's motivation will not be wasted."

Mrs. Villeponteaux experienced many different schools consisting of a variety of grade levels whilst jumping into very diverse careers, but through all the obstacles she faced, she has found her true passion and won't let it go again.

"I don't want to teach anywhere else," said Mrs. Villeponteaux. "My husband and my daughters are all CHHS graduates, and my experience as a parent with the Colonial Heights Public School system was fantastic."

Photo by Landon Lopez



Mrs. Villeponteaux teaches both simply and efficiently to give students the best possible way for them to learn and pass their semester.

do what she loves most: history.

"I took a job at Virginia State University as an assistant dean of undergraduate admissions," said Mrs. Villeponteaux. "From there I would move to Mary Washington College and then the University of Richmond."

This job included a lot of traveling, which caused a lot of stress for her, and she eventually made a decision recommended by a friend.

Villeponteaux.

After all that struggle, keeping quiet and doing exactly what she was told, her eyes opened as she rose up in her life, now investing in a career providing support, love and absolute determination for both the staff and students.

"Mrs. V. is incredibly passionate about history and brings a unique perspective to teaching," said Mrs. Major.

Warwick's passion reaches the school community

by Logan Buck

With a new school year comes new teachers. Ms. Sarah Warwick, American History and Western Civilization teacher, accepts the warm welcome with open arms.

Ms. Warwick was born in Melbourne, Fla., and attended the University of South Florida for their anthropology and history courses. She has been living in Virginia for nine years now.

While volunteering back home in Florida, Ms. Warwick discovered she enjoys working with teenagers. As a result, she pursued a career as a teacher to combine her passion for history and talent for working with young adults.

Her journey began working with special education students and eventually transformed into teaching American History. Ms. Warwick is now entering her eighth year teaching and her first year teaching at CHHS.

Previously, she worked in a

Chesterfield County middle school. She decided she wanted to move back to a high school, so when the opportunity arose, she took it eagerly.

Photo by Logan Buck



Ms. Warwick is teaching the inaugural semesters of both Dual Enrollment American History and Western Civilization classes.

"Mr. Nelson talked about potentially starting dual enrollment for American History, and that's something I've been very interested in, very excited about, so I readily accepted the job because I love history and I want to teach dual enrollment," said Ms.

Warwick.

Along with her excitement for being a teacher at Colonial Heights, Ms. Warwick also looks forward to implementing dual

enrollment histories into this school.

"[My goal is] definitely to get Dual Enrollment American History going and Western Civ., because I know dual enrollment hasn't happened here yet for those subjects," said Ms. Warwick. "Also, to just get connected with the

community, and hopefully, make this my final school that I stay at."

Mrs. Paola Jones, Spanish teacher, worked with Ms. Warwick a few years ago at Prince George High School. Now, they are reunited, and Mrs. Jones is looking forward to working with Ms. Warwick again.

"I think she is wonderful, and I am so excited that we get to be together in Colonial Heights," said Mrs. Jones. "We went from one school being together to another, so I am so excited that I get to work with her again."

Blanche Koudalo, 11, is a student of Ms. Warwick's. Although Ms. Warwick hasn't been here for long, Koudalo enjoys the class and believes Ms. Warwick brings something students don't always see.

"[She adds] a passion for American history we haven't seen before," said Koudalo.

Aside from her love of history, Ms. Warwick also enjoys incorporating anthropology in her lessons

Photo courtesy of Sarah Warwick



Ms. Warwick enjoys partaking in many activities outside of school, including hiking.

as she believes it's essential to learn about.

"I also like adding in the aspect of culture anthropology and how much culture affects how we understand history and what happens in history," said Ms. Warwick.

Other than being a history fanatic, Ms. Warwick enjoys partaking in many activities outside of school.

"Obviously, I'm a history nerd, but I like to kayak, hike, read, go out to music places with friends, and I like to chill," said Ms. Warwick.

Ms. Warwick came from a large county, so she knew coming to Colonial Heights would be different; however, she was optimistic about the differences.

"I knew coming to Colonial Heights was going to be a lot smaller, closer-knit, and I was kind of excited to kind of have that small family, small community feel again," said Ms. Warwick.

Ms. Warwick's passion for history leads her to learn about new topics frequently. Her passion has not only reached her students but other teachers, as well.

"I just think she's incredible," said Mrs. Jones. "I love that she continues to study, and I love that she just got her second master's degree. I think she is incredible. She is like a long-life learner, and I love that about her."