Prince George’s County Public Schools has begun the application process for students to enroll in specialty programs and charter schools, and will host a Specialty Program and Public Charter School Showcase to share information with the community. The showcase will be held on Wednesday, January 20, from 6-8 p.m. at Dr. Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School, located at 12650 Brooke Lane in Upper Marlboro.

“Specialty programs and public charter schools provide opportunities for students to take part in unique programs based on their educational priorities and areas of interest,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. William R. Hite, Jr. “We have made incredible strides in offering students and parents high-quality academic programs. Expanding opportunities is part of that effort.”

Representatives from each program area and public charter school, as well as the Biomedical and International Baccalaureate programs, will be available at the showcase to share information. Brochures and applications for the Specialty Programs and Public Charter Schools 2010-2011 lottery will also be available online at www.pgcps.org and in schools, offices, and public libraries by mid-January.

Currently, there are five specialty program areas offered in the school system: Biotechnology, Creative and Performing Arts, French Immersion, Montessori, and Talented and Gifted (TAG). There are currently four charter schools – EXCEL, Imagine-Foundations, Imagine-Lincoln, and Turning Point Academy – with two new charter schools scheduled to open for the 2010-2011 school year: Possibility STEM Preparatory Academy and Sojourner Truth Preparatory.

Space is limited, and participation in the programs is through an annual lottery process. (Participation in the Creative and Performing Arts program also includes an audition process.) Applications must be submitted to the Department of Pupil Accounting and School Boundaries by 5 p.m. on March 24 to be entered into the lottery drawing on April 15.