

2014

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

Thursday, April 10, 2014

BWI Marriott Hotel

Linthicum Heights, Maryland



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Please Note

The *Excellence in Education* Awards Ceremony is a time to celebrate outstanding teachers and education/business partnerships and to socialize with friends and colleagues. To provide each teacher and business honoree with the dignity and recognition they deserve, we ask that you refrain from talking at your table during the awards ceremony.

Thank you for your cooperation.

2014
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

Awards for

*Anne Arundel County Public Schools
Teacher of the Year*

*Anne Arundel County Independent Schools
Teacher of the Year*

*Anne Arundel County
Business Partnerships of the Year*



Excellence in Education
PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Reception/Registration - 6:00

A time for fellowship with colleagues and friends

Seating for Dinner - 6:30

Welcome & Greetings

Brad Bell, *Maryland Reporter, ABC7/WJLA-TV*

Master of Ceremonies

Dinner - 6:45

Awards Ceremony - 7:30

Honoring Educators

Teresa Milio Birge, *President, Board of Education*

Mamie J. Perkins, *Interim Superintendent of Schools*

Dr. Jane R. Snider, *Chair of the Chamber Education Committee*

Recognizing Excellence

Brad Bell, *Maryland Reporter, ABC7/WJLA-TV*

Jodie Hogan, *2013 Anne Arundel County Teacher of the Year*

Presentation of the 2014 Teacher Honorees

2014 Public School Finalists

Christina Houstian, *Broadneck High School*

Susan Marie Sheehy, *Millersville Elementary School*

Jennifer Swiech, *Meade Middle School*

Brad Wray, *Arundel High School*

Excellence in Education
PROGRAM SCHEDULE

2014 Independent School Finalists

Amy Brunner, *Archbishop Spalding High School*

Erin Kolarik, *St. Martin's Lutheran School*

Matthew Martelli, *St. Mary's High School*

Promoting Partnerships

Presentation of Business Partnership

Nominees and Awards

Presentation of the Teacher of the Year Award

2014 Anne Arundel County

Independent Schools Teacher of the Year

2014 Anne Arundel County

Public Schools Teacher of the Year

Closing



Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists



Christina Houstian

Broadneck High School | Social Studies

Christina Houstian is a dedicated art historian and experienced museum curator. Yet, she is neither the chair of Broadneck High School's art department nor does she teach art courses. Instead, she leads the school's social studies department, where she has masterfully combined her passion for art with her deep knowledge of history and humanities.

Such fusion is apparent in her involvement in the county's History Day program, through which students are charged to present their perspectives on a historical theme through various types of media. Houstian not only supports and encourages students at her school to participate, but she also trains the judges who carefully deliberate over the projects.

Recently, she shared her love for art and history with her peers through a professional development session she planned around the topic: the author's point of view. In the lesson, Houstian challenged her colleagues to use works of art to fuel the discussion. "This session was directly linked to the implementation of the Common Core curriculum and was very useful to teachers in all content areas... Ms. Houstian is an exceptional instructional leader who nurtures and inspires her colleagues, enabling them to more fully meet the needs of their students," said Broadneck High School Principal David Smith.

While her art background speaks loudly, her civic conscience shows why social studies is also a natural fit that extends beyond the classroom. The 12-year veteran is the faculty advisor for Broadneck's Key Club, engaging some of the school's most compassionate students to reach farther and dig deeper to aid the community through projects such as Relay for Life, Polar Bear Plunge, Harvest for the Hungry, and gift card collection for the school's homeless students.

Houstian has also proven to be unselfish among her colleagues. "Realizing that enrollment had dropped and an art teacher would lose her position, she gave up teaching AP Art History to save that teacher's position," Smith said. "I have called on her to lead many times. She always responds with intelligence, creativity, compassion, and professionalism."

"All students deserve inspired teaching. They deserve not only data-driven lessons, a shared curriculum, and common assessments, but they also deserve the uncommon. They deserve each 'teachable moment' to be extended and quickened. They deserve to feel that each lesson is important and worthwhile."

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists



Susan Marie Sheehy
Millersville Elementary School | 4th Grade

Fourth-grade teacher Susan Marie Sheehy has made learning her passion. For nearly 10 years she has taught children at Millersville Elementary School, though if you talk to her she will tell you she can't believe how fast time has flown by. Her work behind the scenes, however, is where she has truly strived to become a lifelong learner.

Sheehy, who is enthusiastic about science, continuously attends seminars and workshops in order to expand her breadth of knowledge in instructional areas such as the implementation of STEM in the classroom. She earned the highest credential in the teaching profession — National Board Certification — in 2012.

Over the last decade, Sheehy's expertise in elementary science instruction has been tapped by the AACPS Science Office to aid in the design and implementation of quarterly professional development workshops for fourth- and fifth-grade teachers across the county. Last summer alone, she was even involved with helping to align the current science curriculum with the Common Core Standards.

In addition to her classroom commitments, Sheehy serves as Millersville's Lead Science Teacher. In this position, she provides professional development and support to her colleagues and she spearheads the school's overall STEM efforts, including organizing a STEM night to further engage parents and community partners to share the school's innovative STEM culture.

"By implementing STEM, (we) are learning to communicate, cooperate, and create while addressing real-world issues," she said. To her colleagues at Millersville, she is "the heart of our science progress; without her guidance, her compassion, her drive, STEM-centric learning would not be the same," said Principal Tammy Scott.

"As much as I have learned from her, the children are the clear winners here," said fellow Millersville Elementary School teacher Julie Sauer. "She spends the entire school year inspiring our students to learn, question, extend, and apply their skills. It has been amazing to be a part of her team."

"I believe that my responsibility as an educator is to teach children academically and to nurture them emotionally. It is in my classroom where my students can feel comfortable taking risks knowing that we are a family and we look out for each other."

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists



Jennifer Swiech
Meade Middle School | AVID

As the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) site coordinator at Meade Middle School, Jennifer Swiech shows a relentless resolve to be an outstanding instructor to her students, exemplary educator to her peers, and passionate leader in her school community.

Swiech keeps detailed portfolios for each of her students to quickly and accurately assess their performance and address their needs. She even shares the discipline principles from the AVID program and promotes them school-wide to help all students put forth their best efforts for achievement.

As a National Board Certified Teacher, Swiech has earned a place among an elite group of educators who are striving for excellence and respect for their profession. Such ambition shows in her work as a member of her school's leadership team, where she fervently delivers her message about diversity.

"Classrooms need to be inclusive, safe places where students are comfortable collaborating and showing vulnerability," she said. "I push students to challenge stereotypes through courageous conversations and Socratic seminars on race and culture. These activities allow students to safely connect their emotions and experiences to the classroom while bridging disparities between cultural, racial, and social acceptance."

In addition to her classroom commitments, Swiech has been essential to the school's community outreach efforts. She provides home school services to area students who need it, and maintains a web page and e-mail distribution list to share tips on how to be successful in school and help keep more than 200 families informed about school activities.

"I have three core beliefs that drive my instructional practice and weigh in every decision I make. First, teachers are committed to student learning... Second, teachers must deliver lessons that are relevant, rigorous, and engaging... Third, but no less important, diversity should be celebrated."

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists



Brad Wray

Arundel High School | Social Studies

Bill Gates once said, “Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is the most important.” Throughout his career, Brad Wray has made amazing use of technology to mobilize his students at Arundel High School toward civic and academic achievement.

From using robots to illustrate psychology principles to blogging, Wray has used technology to speak to his students on their terms. Looking to bridge a communication gap that otherwise seems to widen, he’s affected the exact change that has threatened to disengage students.

“My goal in the classroom is to model a process of fascinated creativity,” he said. Such resolve has led to an impressive 20 percent increase in performance by his students on AP exams.

Since one of his degrees involves computer systems management, Wray has put his technological savvy to work as a county-appointed technology liaison, creating and conducting professional development courses for his colleagues such as, “Using Wikis in the Classroom,” “Introduction to iPads in the Classroom,” and “Introduction to Edmodo.” Wray even wrote curriculum for the U.S. History “flipped classroom” as part of the BioMedical Allied Health magnet program’s ninth-grade sequence.

But Wray’s random access memory (RAM) extends well beyond the technology realm. After all, he teaches AP Psychology, AP U.S. History, and other social studies courses for a reason: “I want my students to be solving modern, relevant, real-world problems,” he said.

Such desire led to the formulation of a course on leadership where Wray challenges students’ creativity and decision-making by selecting community/social issues to address, e.g., researching texting while driving, implementing a recycling program at an assisted living center, or creating a web-based forum for posting and solving local problems.

Wray has also solved a few problems of his own. Impassioned to help AP students do their best, he created the Arundel Peer Program, a tutoring program for AP students. He also encourages aspiring world leaders as part of the school’s Model UN club.

“From the student’s perspective, high school subject matter too often feels uninteresting or intangible, summed up by the age-old question, ‘When will I ever use this?’ With this question in mind, I feel that it is my job to relate subject matter enthusiastically and dynamically to issues in my students’ present and future lives.”

honorees continued

Anne Arundel County Independent Schools Finalists



Amy Brunner

Archbishop Spalding High School | Computer Science/Engineering

Many educators grow accustomed to using acronyms, and Amy Brunner appreciates a good one. So much so, that a simple one is the basis of her teaching philosophy. She follows the code of EEEEE: Engineering Education through Experience, Empowerment, and Excitement. Although her students strive to earn letter grades far above the letter “E,” Brunner believes that her approach has been essential to her success throughout her short, yet impactful seven-year career.

Brunner adds even one more “E” to describe her professional attitude. “Above all, I do everything with ... enthusiasm,” she said.

Such energy led to the establishment of the engineering program at Archbishop Spalding High School. Starting with just one lab and 40 students, the program now boasts 130 students and two labs. Even more rewarding and personal for Brunner is the fact that the number of female students participating in the program has tripled since its inception.

Drawing from her previous career as a computer programmer, Brunner is firmly committed to melding technological concepts with effective instruction. Her hands-on, problem-solving approach has challenged students to design and build elevators, solar-powered cars, catapult devices, bridges, cable cars, recycling plants, chess sets, and golf courses, among other things.

Brunner’s influence is not contained to the classroom. Not only did she organize the first FIRST Robotics team at Spalding, she coached it through a winning inaugural season. She’s also committed to exposing younger students to engineering. Last summer, she planned, organized, and managed two sessions of a summer engineering camp for middle school students where her high school students served as camp counselors.

“As educators, we must understand and embrace new social mainstreams... Even if we do not have the technology in our classrooms, we can still discuss the impact of technology on moral issues such as cyberbullying, cyberstalking, etc... Technology is an amazing thing, and can be a teacher’s greatest asset.”

Anne Arundel County Independent Schools Finalists



Erin Kolarik

St. Martin's Lutheran School | Mathematics & Science

Erin Kolarik is more than a teacher. Paying homage to the many teachers in her life who went beyond subject lessons to aid in her personal development, Kolarik aims to be a mentor to the students at St. Martin's Lutheran School. She has made it her goal to "not just cover math and science curriculum, but also teach character education, instill life skills in her students, and help them grow spiritually."

While her innate compassion helps drive her mentoring efforts, Kolarik is also equipped with a master's degree in psychology, which enables her to stay in tune with her students.

"I have learned how to read a child's face, and adjust instruction based on whether or not that child understands the lesson," she said. "I have learned to praise my students for all that they do correctly so that confidence grows and the belief that they can't be successful diminishes. Most importantly, I have learned to incorporate humor into my lessons so that each student walks away with a smile."

Beyond the classroom, Kolarik has shared her love of running by coaching the school's Girls on the Run program for the last three years. Providing a chance for role modeling, the program uses running to build character. Although Kolarik strictly teaches middle school students, the Girls on the Run program has helped expand her mentoring reach since it's designed for young ladies in grades three through five.

With such resolve, Kolarik has to maintain a high level of energy. After all, she teaches seven completely different courses each day. In addition, she believes that she must tear down "a seemingly indestructible wall ... when it comes to the possibility of learning practical skills and actually enjoying" learning. To do this, she finds out as much as she can about her students and incorporates what they love into her lessons.

"I have horseback riders, singers, aspiring teachers, nature lovers, inventors, pet owners – the variety of interests is endless," she said. "I don't see this list as activities that kids take part in... Instead, I see three-dimensional hay bale volume math problems (or) the science behind voice control and sound wave travel. As a result, those seemingly indestructible walls... begin to disappear. If I can accomplish that, I have done my job."

"I am saddened when I hear that teacher accountability today is not based on the success of our students as they enter into new chapters of their lives... Teachers have the power to increase not just test scores, but (also) self-esteem, and make a child feel important and cared for. How can such accomplishments be measured by a standardized test?"

honorees continued

Anne Arundel County Independent Schools Finalists



Matthew Martelli
St. Mary's High School | English

With a firm belief that he is fulfilling his calling, Matthew Martelli always knew he was destined to do one thing: teach. Teach English and language arts courses. Teach theatre. Teach young people to be empowered. Teach his students that he cares. Teach others about valuing each other. Teach his peers to lead and role model with unwavering focus on each individual child. Teach excellence.

For Martelli, teaching is synonymous with sharing, as he reaches deeply within his faith to “love and serve all people.” In doing so, he balances precise mechanics in his lessons with an unrivaled compassion.

“I have founded a one-to-one peer-tutoring program, revised the school’s graduate profile, implemented an honors-level tracking policy, and instituted a variety of ministry initiatives,” he said. “However, I count as my greatest success that some 600 students have made it through my classroom – and every one of them has heard me say, ‘You are loved. You are not alone. You matter.’ ”

Finding one of the few colleges – DeSales University – where he could combine education and theatre as a comprehensive major, Martelli’s vision has always been precise. He relies on his “flair for performance and love for teenagers” to be an effective educator, and the results are clear.

“When I ask students about their classes with Mr. Martelli they invariably reply with variations on the same theme: ‘Mr. Martelli cares,’ they say. ‘He makes you want to learn,’ they say. ‘He’s demanding and fair and really smart.’ It’s all true, of course,” said St. Mary’s High School Assistant Principal for Academics Chris Morgan.

“Every person matters.’ This adage must be the foundation of every educator’s philosophy. Without a firm belief in the inalienable dignity of every student, a teacher is bound to fail (and) is likely to wound his or her students... As teachers, we must believe that every student has a potential, a purpose, and we must help them find it.”

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Semi-Finalists



Rebecca Bittman

North County High School | English

"The focus I had when I developed a teaching philosophy at age 22 has been sharpened by my real life connections made with students in my classroom, not the student scenarios outlined in a textbook."

Rebecca Bittman is a conduit for learning. She uses her natural leadership skills to not only command respect and accomplishment in her classroom, but also to support the growth and achievement of her peers. As the English department chair at North County High School, "she has created a cohesive and instructionally-focused department whose main goal is to create student-centered and rigorous learning environments," Principal Julie Cares said.

Embracing the importance of supporting her school community, Bittman, along with a few student leaders, chartered the school's first Key Club four years ago. As the advisor, Bittman challenges students to contribute more than 1,500 hours of community service. That included the adoption of nearby Hilltop Elementary School, where each child is given warm clothes and books during the holidays.

As much as Bittman has sought to be role a model to her students, however, their resiliency and compassion have ultimately been her example. "I've worked with students that live in circumstances I could never imagine surviving in," she said. "These same students are reading to elementary school children, sorting food at the food bank, attending senior citizen proms... continuously expressing how good it feels to do things for people... They are why I do what I do."



Julie Ciotola

Glendale Elementary School | 3rd Grade

"I believe that every student who enters my classroom can and will be successful regardless of the barriers in their educational lives."

All ten years of Julie Ciotola's teaching career have been enthusiastically spent guiding the primary grade students at Glendale Elementary School. During that time, she has held true to her vision of maintaining a learning community where she and her third-grade students are partners in achievement.

"In order to support students so that they strive to reach college and career readiness expectations, an effective teacher provides her students with the opportunity to actively participate in lessons and activities that address their learning styles," Ciotola said.

Ciotola's learning community includes parents, her colleagues, and community members, but it also extends to the many aspiring teachers she mentors as the Professional Development Site Coordinator for Towson University.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Semi-Finalists



Rachel Fitzgerald

Marley Middle School | Mathematics

"My philosophy of education aligns with our school system's goal of elevating all students and eliminating all gaps... I want to instill the values of striving for excellence and overcoming adversity to all of my students."

Recognizing the importance of grabbing the attention of the current generation of learners now filling 21st Century classrooms, Rachel Fitzgerald speaks to her students through HEAT: Higher order thinking, Engaged learning, Authentic connections, and Technology use. Through this method, her students are actively engaged as they create human number lines, solve math problems, and participate in a geometric game of body twister.

As the e-Coach at her school, Fitzgerald expands her role to deliver essential instructional support and staff development to her peers, including frequently sending helpful tech tips to staff members.

"Her greatest contribution is her 'open door' and willingness to help any teacher with technology," Principal Kevin Buckley said. "She has helped elevate instruction in many ways."

Fitzgerald is also a recognized instructional leader across the county. She is regularly called upon to conduct professional development for her middle school math teaching peers. In addition, she helped write and edit the seventh-grade curriculum to align with the Common Core Standards.



Susan Grieve

Folger McKinsey Elementary School | Mathematics/Social Studies

"I believe that teaching is an honored profession... What consistently guides my instruction is the hope that my students will remember me as a teacher who inspired a love of learning and demonstrated a genuine caring for all students."

Susan Grieve is the go-to math guru at Folger McKinsey Elementary School. With more than 27 years as an educator, she has earned the title outright. Yet, she comes to work every day humbled by the opportunity to touch children's lives.

"As a skilled math teacher, Mrs. Grieve is seen as a leader in the school and is respected by students, staff members, and parents," Principal Susan Bachmann said. "She is respected not only for her knowledge, but for her overall attitude and actions... (She) has something that great teachers possess – the ability to make every student feel good about his or herself."

Grieve uses such respect to impart a love for math throughout the entire school. Four years ago, she created the popular "Got Math" program, a homework initiative where families of all grade levels play games to learn and reinforce basic math facts. The program has positively empowered parents to support and encourage their children's learning needs and it has helped the school maintain consistent and exemplary proficiency ratings on state tests.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Semi-Finalists



Jessica Howell

Manor View Elementary School | 1st Grade

"In my daily work, I provide my 21st Century learners with resources to find and fuel their educational passions. I believe that children who follow their passions and connect their learning to real life will remember their discoveries and expand their knowledge for a lifetime of learning."

As a first-grade teacher at Manor View Elementary School, Jessica Howell is charged with meeting the needs of not only a dynamic group of 6- and 7-year-olds, but one further challenged by the complexities of military life. While such challenges may seem daunting, Howell brings a sensitivity and optimism that belies her six years of teaching.

"I believe that each learner is a gift and deserves that utmost respect, the best educators, and tools and resources necessary to inspire a passion of lifelong learning," she said. Although her audience is quite young, Howell's respect for her students sets the tone for their performance.

"As I educate students and guide them to meet and exceed first grade standards, I work to help students learn about themselves. I demand my students put forth their best effort and in turn demonstrate the true range of their capabilities," she said.

Just as she has set high expectations for her students, she has been sure to set lofty goals for herself. Howell was among this year's impressive class of AACPS National Board Certified Teachers.



Stacy Kearns

Corkran Middle School | Language Arts

"Teachers (should) portray a positive message to students that their thoughts and feelings are of considerable worth. To do this, educators need to make time in their packed day to allow opportunities for students to express themselves, ask questions, and share personal triumphs and tribulations."

By title, Stacy Kearns is a sixth-grade language arts teacher and interdisciplinary team leader at Corkran Middle School. And while she passionately and professionally fulfills the duties of the position, she views her responsibility as an educator in more global, far-reaching terms.

"Teachers (should) portray a positive message to students that their thoughts and feelings are of considerable worth," she said. "To do this, educators need to make time in their packed day to allow opportunities for students to express themselves, ask questions, and share personal triumphs and tribulations. These occurrences often extend beyond the traditional class period into lunch or after-school hours, but are always worth the results."

Devoting that extra time led to the establishment of the We Say So club that supports struggling readers. In its short inception, the club helped 90 percent of its participants increase their performance on the Gates-MacGinitie reading test.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Semi-Finalists



Dianne Lloyd

Davidsonville Elementary School | 3rd Grade

"I work each day to ignite the spark of curiosity in each of my students, and set them on a path for success in school and in life. I have a direct opportunity to make a difference, to change the future, and to impact a child's life forever... My hope is that I inspire (my students)."

Through 16 years of on-and-off teaching assignments that span over three decades, Dianne Lloyd adheres to three pillars to be an inspirational teacher: collaboration, instruction, and scholarship.

Through not only strategizing with her colleagues to employ effective, seamless strategies in the classroom, Lloyd also reaches out to the parents of her students for their direct feedback and even taps the students to be actively involved in how they are taught. "Every teacher has individual strengths, just like students, and I value their input as I plan my lessons," she said.

Such teamwork helps the other two mainstays to align perfectly for success. Through differentiated instructional techniques and consistent professional development, Lloyd has created a perpetual path that not only ensures the individual success of each of her students, but also dictates her own achievements.



Suzanne MacLeod

Linthicum Elementary School | Music

"My belief in sound research supports the findings that music integration prepares students who are college-bound and helps eliminate the achievement gap for all children."

Suzanne MacLeod's music classes at Linthicum Elementary School fully encompass the meaning of arts integration. From filling glasses with different levels of water and using the scientific method to determine how sound waves impact volume and pitch to converting whole, half, and quarter notes into their fractional counterparts to create rhythmic patterns, she carefully and skillfully plans lessons that impart her love for music while making key connections to other subjects.

Heavily focused on research that promotes the complete engagement of a child, MacLeod employs instructional strategies that take into account gender and other demographical, social, and physical factors. For example, MacLeod has learned that boys have more dopamine in their bloodstream and are therefore more likely to learn through movement. Thus, she uses dance and other mobile activities to teach rhythm or note values.

"Analysis of data allows Ms. MacLeod to plan lessons that not only incorporate a variety of learning modalities, but are also tiered, thus keeping the students engaged at their level of learning and fostering a belief in themselves and their potential," Principal Fran Nussle said.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Semi-Finalists



Robert Mauro

Lindale Middle School | Science

"I passionately believe in and work hard to stir the innate curiosity every child has about the world around them. I strive to give every student I teach the opportunity to be a thoughtful, reflective, and independent thinker with the ability to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world."

Robert Mauro makes science happen at Lindale Middle School. Through the use of technology and weekly lab activities, he puts science into the hands of every one of his sixth-grade students.

"I attempt to give my students as many tangible, real-world experiences as possible, and I also want to continually improve my professional practice," he said. In his pursuit to expand his knowledge and provide unique experiences for his students, Mauro took the necessary coursework through the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Arlington Echo to make his classroom an official Chesapeake Connections site. Such designation has led to field trips that involve canoeing, seining, and testing the water quality to support the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem.

While his dedication to instruction is unquestioned, Mauro is also sure to reach students in other parts of the school. He is an instrumental player in the school's Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) committee efforts and volunteers his time on Saturday mornings to mentor a group of boys to encourage their success at the school.



Amy Mueller

Marley Elementary School | Physical Education

"As an educator, I value the rewards that I receive from my students' love for learning."

Amy Mueller has fully immersed herself into the Marley school community. While efficiently handling her duties as the charismatic physical education instructor at Marley Elementary School, she has generously extended her talents right next door to the students of Marley Glen School.

"I teach students of all abilities and I believe that it is important for me to create a classroom where every student is successful and accepted," she said. "Her attitude sets a great example for her students as she conducts weekly classes where students from both schools participate together in various physical activities. Mueller also created the annual Marley Invitational where students from Marley Elementary, Marley Glen, and the Multiple Intensive Needs Classes (MINC) at Shipley's Choice Elementary partner and enjoy a full day of fun and movement.

Mueller has also proven to be a leader among her peers. Not only has she been called upon to deliver professional development across the state, but she is also currently pursuing National Board Certification.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Semi-Finalists



Stacey Walczak

Seven Oaks Elementary School | 4th Grade

"A successful teacher needs to create a positive and safe environment and set a positive example of learning. Most importantly, I think that a successful teacher creates an environment where learning is student-centered and students take ownership of their education."

Stacey Walczak puts her students first. Her teaching philosophy is completely focused on how deeply invested her fourth-grade students at Seven Oaks Elementary School can become in their own discoveries and development. By prioritizing her students' growth she is able to teach perseverance and resilience along with the necessary subject matter.

"Creating an environment where it is safe to explore and learn is an important part of the learning process," she said. "Students need to feel safe to explore options that may be risky and feel comfortable to not be successful. I want students to understand that it's OK to make mistakes and learning comes from what we do with our mistakes."

Since her school's instructional culture uniquely combines arts integration with STEM, her students are afforded many opportunities to investigate. Such opportunities have spilled outside of the classroom through afterschool clubs such as Sea Perch robotics, Lego robotics, and Terrapin Connection.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Nominees



Lyniper Al-Os

Annapolis High School

Grades: 9 & 10

Subject: Mathematics

Teaching Experience: 16

"I believe that all children can succeed; no exceptions. This is sadly not a philosophy that all of my students arrive with. Through detailed student-appropriate lessons and acting as a role model, I (am) successful in (my) chosen field. I work to inspire and elevate all students every day."



Kenneth Baker

Bodkin Elementary School

Grade: 5

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 14

"Connections are the basis of my educational philosophy. Those connections are between teacher and student, parents and teacher, and curriculum and life... I make a concerted effort to know each student as a complete person, understanding their weaknesses and uncovering new strengths."



Michelle April Ballenger

Georgetown East Elementary School

Grade: 4

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 8

"I take personal accountability for the academic and social growth for each of my students. They are people with whom we will interact in the greater community as they become adults. I instill in them that they are our future leaders, inventors, and problem solvers; and pride myself in my part to ready them for these roles."



Jane Bounelis

Arnold Elementary School

Grades: K-5

Subject: Physical Education

Teaching Experience: 39

"I recognize the importance of my role as a physical educator; I know that for some of my students, my class is the most active they may be all week... I never stop moving, so neither do my students."



Brad Bower

Crofton Middle School

Grade: 6

Subject: Mathematics

Teaching Experience: 12

"The phrase 'you are my favorite teacher' is one that works wonders. It makes the lesson planning, small group instruction, grading, and dozens of other tasks that a teacher performs daily seem worthwhile."

honorees continued

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Nominees



Alyson Bradford

Odenton Elementary School

Grades: 2 & 5

Subject: Special Education

Teaching Experience: 17

"I became a teacher because I believe in the dream – the dream that all people can succeed as productive members of their community and contribute to the greater good... education is the key to that success. (I have a) passion for working toward equality through education."



Shannon Brown

Jones Elementary School

Grade: 4

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 7

"As a teacher, I believe in giving students the capacity to reach their personal best and creating an environment where each student knows they belong and feel valued. Students should know that they matter and their ideas are important."



Julie Castillo

Lothian Elementary School

Grade: Kindergarten

Subject: Early Childhood

Teaching Experience: 16

"I am enthusiastic and express confidence in my students' abilities to be successful. I specialize in motivating students, especially those with significant learning challenges, to achieve their fullest potential."



Jamie Chestnut

Oakwood Elementary School

Grade: 4

Subject: Math/Science

Teaching Experience: 16

"Students need unwavering encouragement, especially those students who continually experience failure. I believe encouragement empowers students to develop the self-confidence necessary to face challenges. To that end, I feel strongly that the simple act of greeting students, as they enter the building or walk through hallways, communicates to them that they are valued."



David A. Christopher

Old Mill Middle School North

Grade: 7

Subject: Science

Teaching Experience: 15

"My philosophy of teaching stems from positive teacher/student relationships. On many occasions I have had students say, 'You really do care about us.' When I hear that, it brings back into the forefront of my mind why I became a teacher."

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Nominees



Laura Christopher

Brooklyn Park Elementary School

Grade: Pre-kindergarten

Subject: Early Childhood

Teaching Experience: 25

"...as a child's first teacher and school experience, I am responsible for setting the stage for a lifetime of school success. Playing such an important role in the lives of my students is my inspiration."



Carol Cox

George T. Cromwell Elementary School

Grades: 3-5

Subject: Instrumental Music

Teaching Experience: 6

"A master teacher is very much like a professional musician. Both spend their entire careers striving to overcome external obstacles and personal imperfections to give consistent performances – performances that are simultaneously sublime and abstract, yet tangible and effective."



Michael Cservek

Severna Park Middle School

Grade: 7

Subject: Language Arts

Teaching Experience: 44

"...I have been extremely fortunate to work with numerous gifted educators who have always been willing to share their ideas with me... Yet, my true blessing has been and continues to be the wonderful young people whom I have taught. Their creativity and the wonderful work they have produced has always astounded me. It really does make my job a real pleasure."



Allison Ellis

Glen Burnie High School

Grades: 9-12

Subject: Social Studies

Teaching Experience: 7

"I believe that one of the greatest titles that can be held is that of a teacher, and that is because the teacher has a purpose in their career that is far more important than many others. The teacher's role is to help others reach their greatest potential."



Damian Ferragamo

Old Mill High School

Grades: 9-12

Subjects: Health/PE

Teaching Experience: 15

"... a teacher's role is to eliminate the obstacles to learning that exist and create an atmosphere where students not only learn content but how to grow as individuals... Students deserve to be taught utilizing the most current research. Failure to adapt and change is a failure to make learning relevant to the students."

honorees continued

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Nominees



Jennifer Figueroa

Chesapeake High School

Grades: 9-12

Subject: FACS

Teaching Experience: 10

"The teacher I am today is a reflection of the teachers that have taught me, the countries and cultures that have shaped me, and the dedicated group of faculty I work with every day..."



Joanne Francis

Severn River Middle School

Grade: 7

Subject: Language Arts

Teaching Experience: 14

"Teaching is the combination of ideas, strategies, and learning styles that an educator brings to his or her classroom. Each year brings about new techniques, innovative practices, and political road blocks that teachers must embed into their already jam-packed curriculum. When I reflect on how or why I do this job it comes down to one basic element: the kids."



Vanessa Gilbert

Freetown Elementary School

Grade: 3

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 13

"I understand that teaching is not a job, but a gift and an honor that is given and cannot be ignored... It's not about me. It's about serving as a facilitator in order for children to reach unparalleled success..."



Lindsey Hammond

Quarterfield Elementary School

Grade: 1

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 8

"My sole reason for becoming a teacher was because I genuinely love kids, I wanted to surround myself with them every day, and I wanted to build such a strong relationship with each of them that they would always remember me."



Rose Catharine Hammond

Ruth Parker Eason School

Grades: K-5

Subject: Special Education

Teaching Experience: 5

"... all students have the ability to learn; they just need someone who believes in them and who will give them the opportunity to succeed."

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Nominees



Linsey Haughton

Windsor Farm Elementary School

Grade: 2

Subject: Early Childhood

Teaching Experience: 10

"It is my passion to work with children and make a positive impact in their lives... Teaching isn't just a job. Teaching is life-changing."



Elizabeth Hewitt

Jessup Elementary School

Grade: 4

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 6

"Every day I am their teacher, but some days I am the parent, the friend, the mediator, the counselor, the nurse, and their hero. Outstanding teachers take those roles into consideration when educating the students because wearing all those hats is the only way to truly understand a child and help them be successful in school and life."



Cynthia McNeel Jacoby

Severna Park Elementary School

Grade: 2

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 29

"Children learn by example. Showing students how I have solved both academic and personal problems establishes a rapport where students are willing to share and take risks. My philosophy has been simple: be respectful to students, never sarcastic, and admit when you have made a mistake."



Eileen Keck

Richard Henry Lee Elementary School

Grades: K-5

Subject: Vocal/ Music

Teaching Experience: 7

"...I use many teaching techniques from highly-regarded music education theorists so that I might be able to reach a wide variety of learners. I try my hardest to give my students every opportunity to go beyond what they thought was possible and to strive for dreams that may seem out of reach."



Rachel Long

Wiley H. Bates Middle School

Grade: 6

Subject: Social Studies

Teaching Experience: 5

"As an educator, I view myself as a facilitator for my students to learn the way that they learn best... It is my philosophy that every child is capable of learning, and it is my job to find out about each student and provide them with the scaffolding they need to excel."

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Nominees



Jill Manning

Mary E. Moss Academy

Grade: 9

Subject: English

Teaching Experience: 22

"Yes, my curriculum matters, but my students are the element that matters most, and they are the ones who are constantly evolving and changing... If I am a truly outstanding teacher, it is because I have maintained (a) desire to be valuable to each student who enters my classroom."



Amanda Mays

Lake Shore Elementary School

Grade: 1

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 13

"Within my classroom, my students are able to share ideas freely, ask questions, take risks, and try new things without hesitation. Throughout the year, I remind my students that we are like a family. We encourage each other, care for each other, help each other, and treat each other with kindness and respect. My students feel a sense of belonging and this allows them to focus on reaching their highest potential."



Patricia Medeiros

Tracey's Elementary School

Grade: 5

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 14

"... Respect is the cornerstone of the classroom. When I show respect for the ideas, questions, and concerns of my students, I have promoted an understanding of what respect looks like. By following my example, the students begin encouraging and guiding each other. They begin to take risks and work together as a team... The class becomes a community..."



Jennifer Suzanne Mobley

Mayo Elementary School

Grade: 5

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 10

"During the school week, I spend more time with some of my students than they do with their own parents. I can't forget that, so I believe teaching is parenting as well... I need to encourage independence and problem solving. Responsibility and organization are daily topics. Respect for adults and classmates are musts in my classroom."



Jane Newton

Southern Middle School

Grades: 6-8

Subject: Foreign Language

Teaching Experience: 21

"... love them first, and teach them second... Especially in middle school, not looking foolish in front of peers dominates classroom interactions. From the beginning, I try to put all students at ease. I crack silly jokes, and am quick to laugh at myself. I have a bit of a math phobia, and I share that to show students that despite our academic insecurities, we can all achieve success in different areas."

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Nominees



Jessica Nolan

Frank Hebron-Harman Elementary School

Grade: 3

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 7

"My job has shifted to that of facilitator, one who gives students the necessary tools to find out things for themselves, not give information... students need to grapple with information and find a way to connect it to their lives outside of the classroom. By offering students the chance to apply new concepts and knowledge to real-world experiences, they are creating meaning for themselves and internalizing instruction."



Melissa Norwood

Southern High School

Grades: 9-12

Subject: Dance

Teaching Experience: 8

"An effective 21st Century educator is genuinely committed to the emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth and development of his/her students... student engagement is not content dependent, it is teacher dependent... I am a mentor, a counselor, a coach, a big sister, and a role model for my students."



Rebecca Pope

Crofton Elementary School

Grade: 2

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 9

"When I think about my teaching, one word comes to mind: family. Not only does my teaching reflect family values, but my students and my coworkers are all treated like family... Teaching can be stressful yet rewarding, hard though always heart-warming, challenging but inspiring – just like family."



Colette Preis

Central Special School

Grades: K-12

Subject: Special Education

Teaching Experience: 34

"The teaching-learning process is not a contest or isolated event. It happens when we collaborate to work together for the benefit of our students. For those individuals with the most significant disabilities, we must constantly strive to modify instruction so they both learn and can express their knowledge."



Benjamin Thompson

George Fox Middle School

Grade: 7

Subject: Science

Teaching Experience: 11

"(I moved to the district in which I teach)... This move triggered within me a profound resolve to help build the capacity of my school... I have sought to help make my school a learning environment in which I will proudly enroll my own children in coming years."

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Nominees



Sherise Webb

North Glen Elementary School

Grade: 3-5

Subject: Math

Teaching Experience: 14

"I attempt to stay on the cutting edge of education through reading books, watching teacher tube videos, discussing strategies with colleagues, attending workshops/trainings/classes, and prayer. Through these tools, I can present to my students a glow, a daily smile that shares with them that it is OK to take academic risks, fully engage in learning, and trust that as they have to keep an open mind to education, I do as well."



Joshua Webster

Solley Elementary School

Grade: 5

Subject: Elementary

Teaching Experience: 16

"Without an inviting classroom learning is increasingly difficult, perhaps impossible... a teacher must first establish a caring, respectful, and honest rapport with students... This relationship must encourage risk taking in a safe environment where children feel open to being vulnerable because they feel protected and safe. Ultimately, they are able to lay themselves on the line and challenge their thinking and abilities."



Jacqueline Wilford

Northeast High School

Grades: 11 & 12

Subject: AVID

Teaching Experience: 7

"I pride myself on helping underserved, non-traditional students go to college... I offer my students the opportunity to try all assignments and get feedback so that they have what they need to continue to improve, just as I welcome student feedback to improve my craft as an educator."

Business Partnership Awards

C2 Education

Jinsel Kim

Nominated by: Darryl Gonzalez, North County High School

C2 Education has provided funds to establish a North County C2 Education Center. The center is committed to being the hub of the school by providing the latest information to support the school's curriculum through the use of technology and print resources. In an effort to improve North County High School students' SAT scores, C2 has agreed to offer affordable SAT prep courses for both evening and daytime students. This program has been offered twice a week for the past two years.

Annapolis Bowl, Greenway Bowl and Severna Park Lanes

Wally Hall & Mike Hall

Nominated by: Walter R. "Skip" Lee, AACPS Coordinator of Health, Physical Education and Dance

Hall Bowling approached Anne Arundel County Public Schools in 2005 to offer professional development, curriculum, and equipment to integrate bowling into the unit offerings for students. Not only has the program expanded from 9,000 students to 40,000 students, but the curriculum has been revised to include Common Core mathematical practices. The in-school bowling program in Anne Arundel County Public Schools now serves as a national model and presents years of promising opportunities ahead. It is estimated that Hall Bowling has donated 300 years of service over the past nine years and in-kind contributions of approximately \$100,000.

Little White Fashion Truck

Shelly Sarmiento

Nominated by: Joann Brack, Severna Park High School

Shelley has been instrumental in developing Severna Park's Business, Innovation, and Leadership signature program. She saw the value in the program and was eager to lend her expertise. She has also become a member of the Integrated Community Stakeholders Team, which has spearheaded the development of the program. Shelley is always busy, whether it is developing curriculum, leading financial literacy advisories, presenting at an entrepreneurial fair, providing field trip opportunities, or appearing as a guest speaker. Severna Park is grateful for her efforts.

Business Partnership Awards

Watershed Stewards Academy

Juliet Page

Nominated by: Michelle Weisgerber, Broadneck High School

Juliet began working with Broadneck High School's Environmental Literacy Signature Program five years ago. As an integral part of the Integrated Community Stakeholders Team, Juliet continues to work as a liaison between Broadneck and local river organizations to ensure that the program continues to meet the needs of the community and provides students with opportunities that relate to both career and service. Last April, Juliet chaired a Project Clean Stream site through the Alliance of the Chesapeake Bay in which 68 bags and nearly 100 pounds of trash were removed from four areas along Cat Branch Creek.

ShopRite (a.k.a. Wakefern, Inc.)

Howie Herbert

Nominated by: Jason Williams, Northeast High School, and Toni Carr, Sunset Elementary School

The vision of ShopRite Supermarket's Young Consumers Program initiative is community-based education involving students, parents, educators, local businesses, government, and community service groups. ShopRite's local program includes Northeast High School and Sunset Elementary School. Carol Boyer, ShopRite's Associate, and Howie Herbert, Educational Consultant, collaboratively train Northeast High School students on how to implement the program with Sunset's fourth-grade students. While at ShopRite, students participate in problem-solving stations to complete critical thinking activities related to food and money. They will be assessed on budgeting skills, solving critical thinking problems, and communicating effectively. This program benefits both the elementary students and the Northeast High School's Human Performance Signature Program.

Excellence in Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Judges for the 2014 Teacher of the Year

Richard Benfer, *President of the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County*

Deb Consugar, *2013 Anne Arundel County Independent Schools Teacher of the Year
from The Summit School*

Martha Gardner, *2012 Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teacher of the Year
and Right Start Advisor*

Laura Groo Carter, *2011 Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teacher of the Year,
and 2011 Maryland State Public Schools Finalist*

Monique Jackson, *Director of School Improvement, Anne Arundel County Public Schools*

Dr. Jane Snider, *Founder of The Summit School, Chairperson of the Annapolis and Anne
Arundel County Chamber of Commerce Education Committee*

Dr. Diana Strohecker, *Director of School Improvement, Anne Arundel County Public Schools*

Jeremiah Thomas, *Annapolis Middle School Student*

Eric Zhao, *Meade High School Student*

Judges for the 2014 Business Partnership Awards

Lise Foran, *Anne Arundel County Public Schools*

David Reilly, *Reilly Benefits*

Chuck Yocum, *Anne Arundel County Public Schools*

** Please note: Any judge who has worked with or been taught by a nominee in the last three years
was recused from judging that nominee.*

Excellence in Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special Thank You to our generous gift bag donors:

A & G Management Company	Elements Therapeutic Massage
A'la Mode Intimates	Embassy Suites at BWI Airport
All American Steakhouse	Four Seasons Grille Waugh Chapel
Annapolis Marriott Waterfront Hotel	Gold's Gym Crofton
Annapolis Symphony Orchestra	Godiva Chocolates Westfield Annapolis Mall
Anne Arundel Community College	Hair Cuttery
Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation	LG-TEK – Lingual Information System Technologies
Anne Arundel Medical Center Foundation	Living Health Integrative Medicine LLC
Arundel Golf Park	Lord & Taylor Cosmetics Westfield Annapolis Mall
ATI Physical Therapy	McCrone, Inc.
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra	Medieval Times
Banner's Hallmark	National Teachers Associates
Barnes & Noble Booksellers	Olive Garden – Hanover
Ballet Theatre of Maryland	Paladar Latin Kitchen
Bello Machre	Paper Source
Big Vanilla	Partners in Care
Blanca Flor	Patient First
Buddy's Crabs & Ribs	P.F. Chang's Annapolis Towne Centre
California Pizza Kitchen	Port Discovery – Children's Museum
CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield	Salazar Catering Services – Café Riva
Cedar Hill Florist	Sam's Club Store #6357
Chevys Fresh Mex	See's Candies
Chick-fil-A Waugh Chapel	Severn Savings Bank
Cleo's Fine Oils & Vinegars	Southwest Airlines Company
Cold Stone Creamery	St. John Properties, Inc.
Compass Rose Theater	Squisito Pizza & Pasta
Crabtree & Evelyn	Talbots Annapolis Town Centre
Crofton Yoga	Terrapin Adventures
Daly Computers	The Arc Central Chesapeake Region
Delegate Theodore J. Sophocleus	The Greene Turtle
The Maryland House of Delegates	The Nautilus Diner
Denny's Annapolis	The Rams Head Group
Double T Diner	Whole Yoga & Pilates
Double Tree Hotel	Yankee Candle Marley Station Mall
Eastern Mountain Sports	Zoës Kitchen

The Excellence in Education Committee would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following people for their time, talents, energy, and support of this event and tonight's program:

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE STAFF

EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2014 JUDGING PANEL

AACPS DESIGN AND PRINT SERVICES

AACPS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

AACPS PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

We are very grateful for their dedication to the educators of Anne Arundel County.

Former AACPS Teachers of the Year

1986-87 *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Richard Wiles, Physical Education Teacher
Millersville ES

1987-88

Penny Vahsen, Science Teacher
Magothy River MS

1988-89 *(also Maryland Teacher of the Year - 1990)*

Patricia Neidhardt, Science Teacher
Broadneck HS

1989-90

Art Smelkinson, Drama Teacher
Old Mill HS

1990-91 *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Olin Yoder, Art Teacher
Meade HS

1991-92 *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Virginia Crespo, Social Studies Teacher
Broadneck HS

1992-93 *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Jane Daugherty, Music Teacher
Broadneck HS

1993-94 *(also Maryland Teacher of the Year - 1995)*

Linda Adamson, Elementary Teacher
Mayo ES and Jessup ES

1994-95

Thomas Cordts, Physical Education Teacher
Windsor Farm ES

1995-96

Kandace Chase, Special Education Teacher
Ruth Eason School

1996-97 *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Priscilla Ward, Pre-K Teacher
Germantown ES

1997-98

Bruce Villwock, Physical Education Teacher
Broadneck HS

1998-99 *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Diane Gerrior, Instrumental Music Teacher
Severn River MS

1999-00

Denise Levitine, Art Teacher
Piney Orchard ES

2000-01

Anthony Berard, Social Studies Teacher
Glen Burnie HS

2001-02

Mattie Procaccini, English Teacher
Old Mill HS

2002-03

André Jones, Social Studies Teacher
Severna Park MS

2003-04

Michael Bell, Art Teacher
Southern HS

2004-05

Walter "Skip" Lee
Physical Education Teacher
Chesapeake HS

2005-06 *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Susan Casler, Language Arts Teacher
Crofton MS

2006-07 *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Alicia Appel, English Teacher
Southern HS

2007-08

Clayton Culp, Mathematics Teacher
Broadneck HS

2008-09

Donna McCallister, Language Arts Teacher
George Fox MS

2009-10

Erin Sullivan, ESOL Teacher
Glen Burnie HS

2010-11 *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Laura Groo, Language Arts Teacher
Southern MS

2011-12

Martha Gardner, Elementary Teacher
Belvedere ES

2012-13

Jodie Hogan, Spanish Teacher
South River HS