

# 2015

# EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

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*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.*

*2015*  
**EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS**

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*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*

Stacy Korbela, *President, Board of Education*

George Arlotto, Ed.D., *Superintendent of Schools*

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

*Recognizing Excellence*

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

Christina Houstian, *2014 Anne Arundel County Teacher of the Year*

*Presentation of the 2015 Teacher Honorees & Semi-Finalists*

*2015 Public School Finalists*

Meredith W. Claborn, *Broadneck Elementary School*

Iris Crankfield, *South River High School*

Kristen Duffy, *Bodkin Elementary School*

Christine Colli McCallister, *Meade Middle School*

Jennie J.L. Merrill, *Severna Park Elementary School*

*Excellence in Education*  
**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

*2015 Independent School Finalists*

Catherine Klase-Markey, *Archbishop Spalding High School*  
Virginia Ready, *St. Martin's in the Field Episcopal School*

*Promoting Partnerships*

*Presentation of Business Partnership  
Nominees and Awards*

*Presentation of the Teacher of the Year Awards*

*2015 Anne Arundel County  
Independent Schools Teacher of the Year*

*2015 Anne Arundel County  
Public Schools Teacher of the Year*

*Closing*



## *Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists*



### *Meredith Claborn*

*Broadneck Elementary School | Kindergarten*

**M**eredith Claborn, a National Board Certified teacher, embraces the responsibility of teaching kindergarten and making a lasting impression on the youngest of students as they embark upon their academic journey. Claborn hopes to indelibly shape positive and empowering attitudes towards learning with enthusiasm and compassion. She utilizes a multitude of strategies to engage her students in creative, fun, and meaningful instruction based upon their individualized learning styles.

“Upon entering ‘My Adventure to Learning’ classroom door each morning, I envision the joys, challenges, and endless opportunities to facilitate the children’s ability to discover, grow, and shine,” explains Claborn.

Teamwork is the most important theme in Claborn’s instructional approach. She builds a strong foundation for academic success by sharing personal anecdotes to which her students can relate, incorporating group work that emphasizes the importance of collaboration, and inviting parents and administrators to be a part of her lessons.

“Mrs. Claborn’s love for learning is contagious,” says Emily Fisk, a parent of one of Claborn’s former students. “You can’t watch her teach without wanting to be a part of her class.”

*“It’s imperative for me to remember that a smile, a pat on the back, or even a big round of applause motivates the children. I have found success and enjoyed celebrating individual differences while teaching my students to work as a team. Inspiring children to learn is a gift that I feel humbled and grateful to share.”*



## *Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists*



*Iris Crankfield*  
*South River High School | English*

**A**s a rhetoric, composition, and journalism teacher, Iris Crankfield has high expectations for students to leave her courses as effective, passionate, and ethical communicators. Through several approaches that include interaction, collaboration, and reflection, the National Board Certified teacher has created an environment that breeds achievement. More importantly, she's created a world where she and her students can be vulnerable and human, sharing the “struggles and victories” of learning.

“I want my students to understand that learning is a process requiring growth and change,” she says. “The environment in which that happens is a classroom that feels like success—a classroom that provides a combination of content knowledge, respect, patience, and humor.”

Crankfield’s magnificent mix of practicality with pleasantry allows her to affect a diverse array of students. She practically casts spells that lead students to love learning.

“Iris draws you in – and quickly,” says South River High School Principal Will Myers. “She is masterful with her instructional planning and strategies to reach all students... (she) is equally outstanding teaching students in an Advanced Placement class as (well as) a co-taught English class... She is truly special.”

Her reach also extends to her colleagues who often seek her advice and recipe for engaging students.

“It is not just Iris’ creativity which sets her apart; it is her passion for teaching,” says South River High School English Department Chairperson Gail Snyder. “This passion shows in the unique ideas she develops to impart curriculum and ultimately excite her students to learn.”

*“I believe that good teaching depends upon the intellectual exchange between teacher and student—an exchange that develops by building relationships and facilitating knowledgeable instruction that adjusts to the pace and depth of students’ understanding.”*

## *Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists*



*Kristen Duffy*  
*Bodkin Elementary School | First Grade*

**F**irst-grade teacher Kristen Duffy personifies teaching. Impassioned by the words of Jim Henson, she enters her classroom every day thinking, “Kids don’t remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are.”

She is a facilitator. She is a liberator. She is a diplomat. She is a visionary. She is, as most teachers are: dedicated and committed to unleashing and harnessing the potential of young people.

Through her role modeling, students begin to embody the qualities it also takes to be strong contributors to the world. “As teachers, we believe in the outcome of every student. It is our job to challenge and push our students to take risks and persevere,” she proclaims.

“Upon meeting Mrs. Duffy, the first thing you will notice is her vibrancy,” say Bodkin Elementary School PTA President Jennifer O’Sullivan and member Jennifer Mace. “She has a high-energy, positive personality and an authentic adoration for her work, her students, and, in her words, her ‘world.’ ”

Duffy’s ‘world’ extends beyond her classroom. She is also a leader in the Bodkin Elementary School community, spearheading the school’s overall environmental efforts as the key organizer for both the Green School Committee and as the teacher liaison for the Bodkin Environmental and Cultural Fair. Through such work, every student is exposed to environmental stewardship through grade-level appropriate lessons. Each grade even has its own garden to maintain and Green School initiatives to fulfill.

*“For the six hours that our students are entrusted into our care, they should feel that they are the center of our world; that they are surrounded by enthusiastic dedication to not just the best educational experiences, but also to their overall well-being.”*



## *Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists*



### *Christine McCallister*

*Meade Middle School | Science*

Throughout her 22-year career in education, 16 of which have been at Meade Middle School, Christine McCallister has learned to equally embrace the trials along with the triumphs that come with the academic and social growth of middle school students. Facing such reality has only yielded better outcomes for her and her students.

“Learners that struggle with academic motivation are engaged and excel in my class because of the many creative strategies I incorporate in my lessons,” she explains. “I instill in them that learning will not always be easy, but to call on strategies they have learned in order to persevere and succeed.”

McCallister also links student achievement to respect for and from her students. Through honest and encouraging connections with the students, she is able to affect their classroom performance and hopefully their personal perspective.

“She knows the importance of building positive relationships with students and parents, and it is apparent in how students respond to her,” says Meade Middle School Principal Christine DeGuzman. “When you walk into her classroom, you know that students want to be there and want to show her what they are capable of.”

*“My daily goal is to go above and beyond to meet the needs of every student in my class. My passion and love of teaching is inspired by the students I teach every day.”*

## *Anne Arundel County Public Schools Finalists*



*Jennie J.L. Merrill*

*Severna Park Elementary School | Fifth Grade*

Teaching is a gift that Jennie Merrill cherishes. Fueled by the unimaginable promise of her students, the 15-year veteran educator seeks to provide the best learning environment conducive to extraordinary success. Such efforts have even led to her achieving National Board Certification.

“It is my job to believe in each student and look for that spark inside of them that makes them special or ‘gifted,’ ” says Merrill. “I believe that each child has a spark somewhere inside of them that shines brighter than any other and when you unlock it, it can lead to a new world of possibilities.”

But in order to ignite a spark, it may be argued, the lighting agent must have a spark of its own. According to her colleagues, it appears that Merrill brings plenty of fireworks to the classroom – including an alter ego known as Professor Labcoat, a mathematician with a funny accent who appears periodically to present a particularly difficult concept.

“While Mrs. Merrill cannot be measured or quantified... what she does is alchemy!” says Severna Park Elementary School Principal Lynn Birus. “She brings an unparalleled energy, love, and enthusiasm for her students and her subjects... She exudes a drive that is contagious and her presence helps shape the school culture.”

*“...giftedness comes in all shapes and sizes. It can be mathematical, written language, musical, kinesthetic, leadership or drama, or so much more. As a teacher it is my job, duty, and privilege to unlock a child’s gift every day.”*

## *Anne Arundel County Independent Schools Finalists*



*Catherine Klase-Markey*  
*Archbishop Spalding High School | Social Studies*

Catherine Klase-Markey has shown herself as someone who can bring a lesson to life in the classroom and fully engage her students. Whether the student has learning challenges or is one of her Advanced Placement students, they have all been able to excel in her classes. Students clamor to get into her AP Government classes and they have a near-perfect rate of passing because their engagement leads to higher learning rates and involvement.

An 11-year veteran of Archbishop Spalding High School, Klase-Markey was previously a Teacher of the Year award winner at Bowie High School. Her passion for social studies and civics helps bring the lessons to life and helps her students become active, informed citizens.

“Instilling an ‘I can do it’ attitude in my students is probably the most important thing I do in the classroom,” she says. “I believe that most students want to learn. They have a natural curiosity. They want to do well. Believing in them and motivating and encouraging them to take risks is important to their overall success in the classroom. I expect a lot from them. And, the majority of the time, they rise to the challenge.”

Klase-Markey is the chairman of the Social Studies Department at Spalding, co-moderator of the National Honor Society, coordinates the Maryland General Assembly Page Program for seniors, and served on Comptroller Peter Franchot’s Education Committee as the private school representative. She has been an A.P. U.S. Government and Politics “exam reader” for the College Board since 2006, and coordinates and teaches each summer in the “Skills for Success” program for incoming freshmen.

*“My teaching philosophy includes three important elements – passion for what I teach, modeling respect, and the belief that students will rise to a teacher’s expectations. Enthusiasm and excitement are contagious. I work to make my classroom a safe, yet challenging environment through interaction, discussion, and debate. I love my students. I love the curriculum. I love teaching.”*

*honorees continued*

## *Anne Arundel County Independent Schools Finalists*



### *Virginia Ready*

*St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal School | Middle School Science*

Virginia “Ginny” Ready is known as a master teacher in her field and uses her skill to help create a love for the sciences in her middle-school aged students. She believes that the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) program at St. Martin’s – which she started at the school – will develop future leaders who are able to problem-solve and innovate within their chosen fields.

She develops ways to bring lessons to life with an annual “Punkin’ Chunkin’ ” contest for seventh- and eighth-graders. For that contest, students design, build, and test catapults and trebuchets to see how high and far they can toss pumpkins.

Environmental stewardship is another of Ready’s many passions, and she passes that responsibility on to her students. For the past seven years, she has taken eighth-grade students on a three-day trip with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation that includes marsh mucking, oyster restoration, water-quality testing, canoeing, and hiking.

“From ‘Stargazing in the Field’ for sixth-graders, to an “Hour of Code” for second- through eighth-graders, to the capstone project, Ginny is a caring, imaginative, and engaging science teacher who helps our students experience science as a way of understanding the world,” says Jamey Hein, Head of School at St. Martin’s.

Ready has earned a Distinguished Faculty Award in the Towson University Psychology Department. She is a member of the National Science Teachers Association, Animal Behavior Society, and the International Society for Human Ethology.

*“Examining the order and beauty in the way everything interrelates enables students to enlarge their world view by looking more closely. Through careful observation, elementary and middle school children begin to appreciate the wonder found in everyday life.”*



## *Excellence in Education Semi-Finalists*



### *Bethany Husak*

*Marley Middle School | Mathematics/AVID*

*"...the most passionate teachers are lifelong learners."*

**"M**y parents spent a lot of time with me developing my vocabulary and reading skills before I even started pre-school," says Husak, who teaches math and AVID classes. "This early exposure to education led to my falling in love with learning. This passion is and always will be the foundation of my teaching style."

Throughout her nearly ten-year career, Husak has taught at both the elementary and middle school levels. Such experience has allowed her to expand the reach of sharing her passion. Consistently acknowledged as a favorite among students, she is known to love them just as much as learning. She regularly attends events in the school community to not only show support for her students, but also to emphasize that a love for learning is nurtured through personal connection.

"My strong relationships with students, parents, teachers, and community members reinforce my passion for learning," she says. "To instill this same passion for learning in my students, I build relationships with them and guide them in building relationships with each other."

Husak's involvement with the school community extends to her being the PTSA teacher liaison and the Volunteer Coordinator for Marley Middle. Outside of school, Husak shares her passion as the Marketing Director for Bike to the Beach Baltimore, a century bike ride to raise money and awareness for local and national Autism charities.



### *Kimberly Ann Mason*

*Windsor Farm Elementary School | Art*

*"My philosophy of instruction is formed from my 'digital native' children, who were linked in the beginning of the technology surge... It can make capturing and engaging attentions during project demonstrations in an active art room a challenging feat."*

**K**imberly Ann Mason is an award-winning art educator. From video contests to traditional visual art competitions, her students have won countless awards through various mediums. But Mason's influence goes well beyond simple art instruction. She has created an all-encompassing art program at Windsor Farm Elementary School.

In support of her school community, she sponsors a before-school art club that donates artwork to support charities like the SPCA. Her 'Positive Pinwheels for Peace' project helps to set a creative tone of unity among all of the school's partners. These efforts beyond the classroom are further examples of how Mason uses her passion for art to educate beyond her students.

"An infectious enthusiasm for art, the remarkable results she produces, the magical quality with which enthusiasm spreads, the tremendous gift for lessons that shine, and an extraordinary effect to unlock the artist in every one of us – this is how (she) teaches art," says Windsor Farm Elementary School Principal Jason Otte.

To make instruction relevant and relatable to her students, Mason uses technology as a large part of her program. From incorporating QR codes into artwork, to creating digital presentations for online art exhibits, to producing demonstration videos to aid instruction, Mason's efforts match the accolades of her students. She also shares the wealth of her approach with other AACPS educators by conducting presentations on integrating arts and STEM instruction.

*honorees continued*

## *Excellence in Education Semi-Finalists*



### *Judy Medeiros*

*The Summit School | Elementary Mathematics*

*“For any child in a learning environment, self-esteem is the key to success. This has always been my mantra ... to help a child understand who they are, what strengths and challenges make them special, and to embrace and celebrate these differences.”*

Judy Medeiros understands that different learning styles can be a challenge, but there’s always a reward in watching students succeed academically in ways they never had before. Most of the students at The Summit School have complex learning profiles and respond best under the guidance of a highly skilled teacher who uses a variety of teaching strategies for a hands-on and multisensory approach.

In addition to her own lifelong learning, Ms. Medeiros teaches every day and serves as the Lower School Math Coordinator. She has been teaching at The Summit School since 2006 and was a kindergarten teacher for 25 years before that.

“She is a highly valued veteran who brings experience, expertise, joy of teaching and learning, and wisdom to the job she clearly loves,” says Dr. Joan Mele-McCarthy, executive director of The Summit School.

For Medeiros, a good school day begins with a good attitude: “I approach each day with a positive attitude, a smile on my face, and a verbal recognition of every student who crosses the threshold into my classroom.”

Medeiros began her career in California as a special education instructor before coming to Maryland and earning an advanced professional certificate in special education for grades one through eight.



### *Rachael Morrison*

*Southern High School | Science*

*“I believe I can be a change agent. I can be the light a student is seeking in a dark time. I can be the spark that ignites a fire or interest for them to pursue. I can be the nudge that they need for that moment, that day, that year, or for their future. These beliefs cause me to be a teacher of purpose.”*

With a meditative spirit, Rachael Morrison enters her science classroom at Southern High School reminding herself to be patient and understanding – focused on the needs, achievement, and circumstances of her students. Such altruism, she believes, is an avenue for student and professional success. Daily reminders to remain focused on the needs of her students helps Morrison to never take her students or job for granted.

“I believe every lesson, every conversation, every opportunity... matters because every day is an opportunity to reach a student who matters,” she explains. “As a science teacher... I also have a unique opportunity to convey the complexity and beauty of life.”

Morrison’s giving nature cannot be contained to the classroom. As the school’s science department chair, she organizes the STEM fair, which connects students to industry-leading resources. She also serves as the adviser for the school’s Student Government Association and sponsors important efforts for Harvest for the Hungry, homecoming, and the Polar Bear Plunge.

“In addition to being an outstanding teacher, Rachael is an even better person,” says Southern High School Principal Dr. Kevin Hamlin. “She exemplifies the best of what we expect from teachers in Anne Arundel County.”



## *Excellence in Education Semi-Finalists*



### *Arthur Murphy*

*Annapolis High School | Social Studies*

*“Even though my class is challenging, my students have expressed the value of my engaging and enthusiastic teaching style. I push them to analyze history through multiple perspectives and draw conclusions based on their thoughts and findings. I consistently hear from parents about how their dinner conversations revolved around what their child learned in my class that day.”*

Arthur “Tripp” Murphy takes pride in providing a challenging instructional environment – so much so that he chose to take on equally high demands by teaching a course typically taught in Grade 11 to Annapolis High School’s youngest students.

Advanced Placement U.S. History “is among the most rigorous AP social studies courses and through Tripp’s student-centered and developmentally-appropriate teaching strategies, he gives 14-year-olds access to content typically not available to them,” says Annapolis High School Principal Sue Chittim.

Through lively debates where students become historical figures defending various political ideals, Murphy’s classroom is a virtual time machine – and a fun and engaging one at that. Despite the rigor, “students are not afraid to take his course because they know what an amazing teacher he is and what a great learning environment he creates,” adds Chittim.

“I think the most important thing to know about Tripp is students love him,” says his colleague Annica Langfield, social studies department chair at Annapolis High School.

“This is evident in their respect for him, in honoring his challenges, and often returning to see him each year just to say hello.”



### *Amanda Talbot*

*Linthicum Elementary School | Second Grade*

*“As a teacher, it is my job to nurture the innate curiosity within each student and within myself. My primary role ... is to create an environment in which every child’s natural curiosity can thrive and is not limited by the content of a worksheet, the expectations of a curriculum, or my own present knowledge.”*

Amanda Talbot’s classroom is the real world. Also known as Talbot Town, it’s a place where there is a mayor who is elected, business owners who sometimes go out of business and must have layoffs, a zoo that must be planned for and maintained, and a newspaper to which all of its citizens contribute articles. It’s a place where second-graders are in charge of their learning.

To be clear, Talbot Town is not an unorthodox approach to tackling Common Core or dealing with curriculum guidelines. It is one teacher’s creative and successful attempt to empower every student through learning and doing.

And what would a real-world experience today be without technology? Talbot consciously and carefully integrates technology into her lessons, making sure to address not only its usefulness, but also its challenges, value in the world, and unknown evolution. By exposing her students to top notch resources, she gives them the opportunity to help shape the future.

“I view technology and a global perspective as essential components of learning in today’s society,” she says. “The children I am teaching now will live in a very different world.”

## *Excellence in Education Nominees*



### *Robert Abbott, Jr.*

*Crofton Middle School*

*Grades: 6–8*

*Subject: Music*

*Teaching Experience: 18*

*“Looking back, there are many career highlights that bring me a great sense of pride, but what matters most are the experiences that we – my students and I – have achieved together.”*



### *Andrea Alcombright*

*Severna Park Middle School*

*Grades: 7–8*

*Subject: Spanish*

*Teaching Experience: 14*

*“Belief is essential in all aspects of teaching... I believe that I can make a difference not only in the system, but in the lives of students as well.”*



### *Valerie Bennett*

*Broadneck High School*

*Grades: 9–12*

*Subject: Music*

*Teaching Experience: 28*

*“I have learned that the most important teaching tool is the example you set. Integrity (purity of intention), reliability (creating respect), honesty (in thought and action), and sincerity (keeping friends) are all factors that I hope to instill in the students who grace my classroom.”*



### *Helen Bradbury*

*St. John the Evangelist School*

*Grade: 2*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 9*

*“There is not enough room on one page to explain and show just how passionate I am about my job as a teacher. I wake up and go to sleep excited about school and my goal is to make sure my students feel the same way.”*



### *Kelsey Burdette*

*Brooklyn Park Elementary School*

*Grades: K–3*

*Subject: Mathematics*

*Teaching Experience: 14*

*“There are many characteristics of an effective teacher, and I strive to possess as many of those as I can. I am flexible, organized, and caring, and these characteristics have allowed me to create a rich environment where students want to take risks, seek answers, and problem solve through challenging situations.”*

## *Excellence in Education Nominees*



*Tamara Chilipko*

*Solley Elementary School*

*Grade: 1*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 39*

*"The last two lines of the Kids at Hope pledge are 'I believe all children are capable of success – no exceptions.' These lines are very powerful to me and they have become my daily objective. It is my duty to accept nothing less than this for all of my students."*



*Koren Donnor*

*Jessup Elementary School*

*Grade: 1*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 8*

*"While I set high expectations for my students, I am quick to give hugs and words of encouragement to each child. I believe that the bond between students and teacher can be life changing and I want to be a positive role model in all of the children's lives, not just in my classroom, but across the whole school."*



*Wesley Emlet*

*Rippling Woods Elementary School*

*Grade: 3*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 8*

*"My philosophy of education can be summed up in two words: student engagement. Keeping students motivated to learn is an arduous process, but a well-structured and engaged classroom is something I strive to make come to fruition each day. I know what I am doing is making a positive difference in the lives of children."*



*Donna Fava*

*Chesapeake Bay Middle School*

*Grade: 8*

*Subjects: Language Arts/Social Studies*

*Teaching Experience: 26*

*"With (a strong and focused) belief system, I have entered the school building each day, never considering it a job, rather an opportunity... One that can offer new hope, self-belief, self-value, a listening ear, a support system and/or a bit of insight to those I will have the pleasure of standing with and for each day."*



*Jamie Gass*

*Van Bokkelen Elementary School*

*Grade: 2*

*Subject: Mathematics*

*Teaching Experience: 8*

*"As an educator, I believe in recognizing the uniqueness and exceptionalities of each individual student's distinct educational needs... By providing my students with a quality education, I feel that I will equip them with the tools necessary to be successful in life. One of my hopes is to instill my love for learning in my students."*

*honorees continued*



## *Excellence in Education Nominees*



*Clare Goggin*

*West Annapolis Elementary School*

*Grade: 4*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 24*

*"I cannot envision another career that offers the supreme satisfaction of those 'light bulb' moments and the chance to help a young child move down the path of reaching his or her potential. I am grateful that I was called to this profession."*



*Jeanne Green*

*Lothian Elementary School*

*Grade: ECI*

*Subject: Special Education*

*Teaching Experience: 28*

*"All children are unique individuals with specific needs and ways of learning. All children deserve to feel safe and cared for. All children need to feel self-worth while being part of a community. Collaboration with team members is powerful in becoming a catalyst for children's success. (These beliefs) create a solid foundation essential to children being able to learn."*



*Kara Holden*

*Richard Henry Lee Elementary School*

*Grades: K-5*

*Subject: Reading*

*Teaching Experience: 16*

*"I feel I achieve my best teaching when I listen to my students... I learned very quickly that less lecturing leads to more student involvement, which leads to the ultimate goal of student learning... Students can learn from other students just as much, if not more, than they can learn from me."*



*Katherine Jenkins*

*Woodside Elementary School*

*Grades: Pre-K-5*

*Subject: Music*

*Teaching Experience: 11*

*"As educators, we must begin with a compassionate commitment to knowing the whole child, recognizing and celebrating diversity within our school and school community. We need to create a school culture in which all members are equally valued and participate as both teachers and learners."*



*Karen Jones-Lantry*

*Tracey's Elementary School*

*Grade: 3*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 22*

*"I feel as though the teacher has the responsibility of getting to know each child and their interests so that learning can be related to their interests. Students will become excited about school and learning if they feel as though they are a valued member of the classroom community. Students always work harder with positive reinforcement in all areas. I believe that these qualities in a teacher are a gift we can give to our students."*

## *Excellence in Education Nominees*



### *Debbie Knight*

*Arnold Elementary School*

*Grade: 2*

*Subject: Elementary.*

*Teaching Experience: 35*

*"I love little children, and it is not a slight thing when they... love us." This quote by Charles Dickens has inspired my life's pursuit: to shape the lives of children in a positive way each day; to model, encourage, and develop kindness and respect toward mankind and nature; to nurture love for learning and books; and to celebrate the individual while fostering cooperation."*



### *Patricia McMahon*

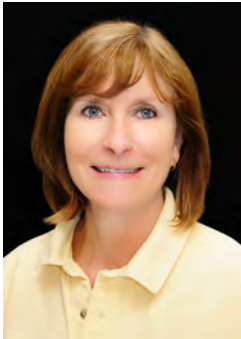
*Old Mill Middle School North*

*Grades: 6-8*

*Subject: Literacy*

*Teaching Experience: 22*

*"Be outstanding every day. Be strong in your content knowledge, and deliver it with confidence and enthusiasm. Share your love of books, of numbers, of mysteries, and of time and place. Be engaging and try new things. Challenge them, because you believe they can. Be a campaigner for the learner, especially for those who need a voice."*



### *Jean Melton-Koch*

*Wiley H. Bates Middle School*

*Grades: 6-8*

*Subject: Technology Education*

*Teaching Experience: 10*

*"I am committed to make my content interesting, relevant, and exciting so that students will be motivated to learn more... My goal is to inspire my students to look at the world a little differently than they did before they entered my classroom."*



### *Cathy Mitchell*

*Freetown Elementary School*

*Grade: 1*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 14*

*"A personal goal as a teacher is for my students to have a love of learning because I love to learn new things... My students are the reason I come to work every day. Never does it feel like a job, it is an amazing profession that I would not trade for anything."*



### *Sonya Muhitch*

*Belvedere Elementary School*

*Grade: Pre-kindergarten*

*Subject: Early Childhood*

*Teaching Experience: 23*

*"Teaching is a commitment from the heart. My philosophy of teaching begins with sharing my love and passion of learning with young children... Knowing each child and understanding what they need helps me give them the tools to develop into learners... Finding that little joy each day as they develop a deep sense of accomplishment enhances their love of learning."*

*honorees continued*

## *Excellence in Education Nominees*



### *Brenda Osborne*

*MacArthur Middle School*

*Grade: 6*

*Subject: Language Arts*

*Teaching Experience: 28*

*"A little imagination and fun will always aid in getting kids involved and interested in language arts... Other classes may appear more popular or even intriguing; but being able to hold the interest of 120 kids – day in and day out – who didn't realize that reading and writing could be so interesting, and even challenging and exciting... I'll take that job any day!"*



### *Meghan Parmino*

*Frank Hebron-Harman Elementary School*

*Grade: 1*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 7*

*"Teachers are instructional guides and mentors in the journey from being a student to becoming a critically thinking lifelong learner... Just like my students, I believe that teachers should be lifelong learners, always striving to do better for (our) students."*



### *Karen Pfarr*

*Monarch Global Academy*

*Grades: K-5*

*Subject: Kinesiology*

*Teaching Experience: 10*

*"Through imagination and play, I try to create an environment that fosters students' drive for their own learning... My philosophy of teaching is that there are infinite pathways to every student's journey of learning through play."*



### *Cher Ann Pitaniello*

*Chesapeake Science Point Public Charter School*

*Grades: 6-12*

*Subject: English/Language Arts*

*Teaching Experience: 8*

*"I've been told that there's an aura about my classroom when you enter. It's welcoming, inviting. You can feel the energy emanating from (me) and my students. Knowledge is wafting through the air and permeating all (of) the minds it can pervade. I impart this knowledge buoyantly and radiantly... with just the right touch of firm but fair. In the end, I'm not the one who makes me an outstanding teacher, my students do..."*



### *Kasey Poynton*

*Annapolis Middle School*

*Grade: 7*

*Subject: Mathematics*

*Teaching Experience: 7*

*"In my classroom one would never hear, 'I'm not good at math' or 'I can't.' When students enter my room, they transform their thinking into an 'I can' mentality. I prompt them with thinking and questioning techniques and model positive language. I yearn for my students to know the importance of math, not just for the sake of school but for life!"*



## *Excellence in Education Nominees*



### *Tamara Saxon*

*Mary E. Moss Academy*

*Grades: 9–12*

*Subject: Mathematics*

*Teaching Experience: 18*

*“I have always thought that throughout a student’s life there should always be one constant: the safety and security of my classroom (as) a stabilizing force. Students need to have a person that is caring and still provides structure and stability... I am glad when students ask me for extra help; it shows me that students trust me and find me to be approachable.”*



### *Deena Settinieri*

*Rolling Knolls Elementary School*

*Grades: K–5*

*Subject: Music*

*Teaching Experience: 20*

*“I teach music with passion and enthusiasm. My ultimate goal is to give everyone the gift of music so that any child who has experienced performing to music, dancing to music, or creating music will always treasure that valuable gift.”*



### *Toniann Shaffer*

*Quarterfield Elementary School*

*Grade: 4*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 11*

*“As a teacher I am a guide, not dictator, to knowledge. My classroom philosophy is rooted in a simple proverb: ‘Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.’ I often tell my students to ‘go fish’ in order to get them to think about what they can do to solve a problem.”*



### *Patricia Shryock*

*Shady Side Elementary School*

*Grade: Pre-kindergarten*

*Subject: Early Childhood*

*Teaching Experience: 21*

*“Learning should be passionate, lifelong, and fun. That is why I believe it is important for every student to start with the foundations of learning in an early childhood classroom...If I can provide just one thing to my young students, it is the love for school and learning.”*



### *Katherine Slomer*

*Lindale Middle School*

*Grade: 6*

*Subject: Mathematics*

*Teaching Experience: 7*

*“As a student, my most influential teacher was someone who knew me as a student and a person. This simple action resulted in me working harder and becoming a better student. Likewise, I believe that the extra time I spend on developing positive relationships produces the same motivation in my students that I felt as a young student.”*

*honorees continued*

## *Excellence in Education Nominees*



### *Greg Solomon*

*Northeast High School*

*Grade: 9–12*

*Subject: Special Education*

*Teaching Experience: 10*

*“My favorite story is about a kid named Ryan. His mother was a drug addict, and he was a very angry kid. I had him in Algebra and I built a strong relationship with him... Three years ago I got a call from a counselor at the school and I was told that I was the reason he graduated. I tapped into his potential through building a relationship with him. I recently found out that he is now a college graduate. It is great to see him having success.”*



### *Angela Speach*

*Glen Burnie High School*

*Grades: 10–12*

*Subject: English*

*Teaching Experience: 8*

*“I am the bridge which I invite my students to cross in their expedition in learning. That bridge may be challenging and unsteady at times, but I love seeing their joyous success knowing they are now able to go out and create on their own because they have learned the skills and knowledge they need. When they are open to learning, it is my role to not teach them what to learn, but how to learn.”*



### *Marina Thompson*

*Southern Middle School*

*Grades: 6–8*

*Subjects: Dance/Health/P.E.*

*Teaching Experience: 9*

*“Imagine what our schools would look like if, every day, every student walked through the doors with confidence and knew that they would be successful. The impact it would have on education and our world is unthinkable. This is my goal and why I have chosen to be a teacher.”*



### *Kevin Valenti*

*Severn River Middle School*

*Grade: 8*

*Subject: Mathematics*

*Teaching Experience: 17*

*“I believe the teacher in front of the room is the single most important factor in a child’s education. I love my job. I love coming to work every day. My students feel the passion I have for teaching. I love the challenge that teaching presents and look forward to helping each student in my class reach their full potential.”*



### *Patience Wells Windsor*

*Glendale Elementary School*

*Grades: 2–5*

*Subject: Special Education*

*Teaching Experience: 29*

*“When you travel this school journey with a positive attitude, when you gently and empathetically introduce them to skills, children are more apt to absorb what you are teaching. When you believe in them, your children begin to believe in themselves too. They begin to understand that learning can be fun and empowering at the same time.”*

## *Excellence in Education Nominees*



*Kristy Wiggins*

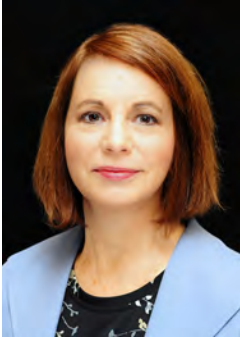
*Jones Elementary School*

*Grade: 4*

*Subject: Elementary*

*Teaching Experience: 12*

*"School is not just a place of teaching and learning, it must be a place where students feel safe, valued, and important. I want every student to leave school each day thinking they can be something amazing tomorrow, but knowing that they are already somebody amazing today."*



*Gail Wood*

*Central Special School*

*Grade: ECI*

*Subject: Special Education*

*Teaching Experience: 38*

*"My philosophy of teaching reflects the belief that all students can be motivated to learn to their full potential and that educators need to constantly strive for effective strategies to assist them. The exchange of insights, collaboration with other educators, sparks a motivation and creativity to provide the most innovative teaching techniques."*



## Business Partnership Awards

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### *a2x Consulting*

*Azizuddin Abdur-Ra'oof*

*Nominate by: Jacqueline Dunn, Northeast High School*

Azizuddin Abdur-Ra'oof has been giving back to Northeast High School since graduating in 1983. Through the years, he quietly visited the school upon the request of teachers to talk to students about how making good choices in life blessed him with successes in high school, in football at the University of Maryland College Park, and in playing football for the NFL. This year, Aziz became more involved with the Human Performance Signature Program and co-chaired the Integrated Community Stakeholders Team. He launched a Northeast alumni group who helped bring 65 alumni to talk to students about their college and career experiences. Aziz talks to students about how to set goals and how to use social media in a positive way and make valuable connections for college and career opportunities. He asks students to think about the messages they send in what they say, what they do, how they dress, and how they portray themselves on social media. He makes sure he knows students and teachers by name and typically spends one to three days a week at the school conducting small group discussions with at risk-students, minority students, and the scholars. In between classes and during lunch periods, Aziz touches base with students to find out how they are doing since his last visit.

### *Anne Arundel County District Courts*

*District Court Judge Shaem Spencer*

*Nominated by: Terry Poisson, AACPS Central Office*

Schools-in-Court is now in its 11th year partnering the District Courts of MD (with other supporting agencies such as the Anne Arundel County State's Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office and the Partnership for Children, Youth & Families) with Anne Arundel County Public Schools. This program promotes healthy decision-making while hosting approximately 120 high school students twice each year. The current program lead is District Court Judge Shaem Spencer, who brings a real-world courtroom experience to this fieldtrip. Students leave this courtroom moved by the highly interactive and engaging experience.

### *Anne Arundel Medical Center*

*Nominated by: Kevin S. Garner, Glen Burnie High School*

The BioMedical and Allied Health (BMAH) magnet program at Glen Burnie High School nominates Anne Arundel Medical Center (AAMC) as the 2015 Business Partnership for Excellence in Education. Each year, AAMC hosts 75–100 freshmen in Annapolis for two days of required job shadows. AAMC feeds and chaperones the students and donates approximately 24 hours annually toward these events, just from the human resources department for visit and coordination efforts. Additionally, they contribute at least 135 hours for each student who is placed for a required internship between his or her junior and senior year. The medical center has been a vital partner since the inception of the BMAH program four years ago.



## Business Partnership Awards

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### *CAM & Associates*

**Christopher Asher, First Vice President Wealth Management Advisor for Merrill Lynch**

*Nominated by: Linda Lamon, South River High School*

Chris Asher has been an essential member of South River High School's Community Advisory Board (CAB) since 2008, and is a founding member of the school's signature program Integrated Community Stakeholders Team (ICST). As a First Vice President Wealth Management Advisor for Merrill Lynch, Chris has an exceptionally full workload and yet, without hesitation, he always makes an effort to share his time, expertise, and generous spirit with the students and staff at South River. As a consummate professional, Chris brings years of business and life skills to the table; as a South River graduate, he also brings the unique perspective of a former student. Chris spearheaded the initiative that brought \$100,000 into the school to update the media center which had not seen any major improvements in nearly 30 years. In addition to his work on both the signature program and CAB, Chris volunteers his time every year for both student advisories and mock interviews, using his significant professional experience to update and enhance the advisories on resume writing, career planning, and financials. Board members, community members, parents, volunteers, and students agree that Christopher Asher is a vital part of our school and lives.

### *EW Designs and Consulting*

**Wes Stinchcomb**

*Nominated by: Meghan Hryniewicz, Southern High School*

EW Designs and Consulting is a company of one that specializes in graphic design and business consulting. Wes Stinchcomb is the founding owner of EW Designs and Consulting. Mr. Stinchcomb has been a loyal community partner to Southern High School for over two years working directly with Southern High School teachers and students. He has written curricula alongside teachers and worked with students to bring the real world into the classroom through project-based learning and guest speaking opportunities.

### *Fiber Plus, Inc.*

**Carl Strobel, Owner**

*Nominated by: Melissa Bajadek, Chesapeake High School*

Having served as a member of the Business Advisory Board and now as a member of the signature program's Integrated Community Stakeholders Team, Mr. Strobel has been a community partner for over a decade. Serving as a guest speaker, mock interviewer, and working at our open house events, Mr. Strobel donates over eight hours a month to Chesapeake High School students. His willingness to take student interns has been wonderful in giving our students real-world opportunities and a few of those internships have turned into permanent positions. Having a partner in the field of technology such as Mr. Strobel has afforded the students of Chesapeake High School numerous opportunities to learn both inside and outside the classroom.

## Business Partnership Awards

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### *Homeland Security and Criminal Justice Institute, Anne Arundel Community College*

*Nominated by: Mr. James Hopper, Meade High School*

The Homeland Security and Criminal Justice Institute of AACC consists of a staff of recognized experts in criminal justice, legal studies, and public service. With Dr. Tyrone Powers at the helm, this Institute and its staff have continued to support Meade High School and the Anne Arundel County Public Schools system in their academic initiatives and the goal to make higher education more attainable for our high school graduates. At the college level, the Institute's programs of study have ensured that students who enroll for courses within their area of interest receive instruction from a staff that consists of some of the most qualified and renowned attorneys, judges, police officers, and federal law enforcement and corrections administrators in the state. These experts engage their audiences in some of the most intriguing and most powerful issues and events in the nation about our justice system and systems throughout the world. Routinely, the Institute also sponsors public forums for interested community members and professional training open to all AACPS staff. It continues to serve as one of the leading public venues for compelling and critical information in the state.

### *Johns Hopkins Healthcare (JHHC)*

*Nominated by: Daniel Crankfield, Monarch Academy Public Charter School*

Johns Hopkins Healthcare (JHHC) has been an integral part of building and sustaining the Monarch Academy community. From the beginning, they have provided financial support and support through their presence in the school building. The partnership began when the school opened in 2010 with volunteers who came to read to students, and has grown to include a mentoring program, school supplies donations, and holiday assistance donations. Their presence in the school and unwavering support of the students and staff is unparalleled.

### *Kenya Connect*

*Nominated by: Sherri Billheimer, Arundel High School*

Sharon Runge of Kenya Connect has been a great volunteer and partner to Arundel High School as she has played a significant role in the mentoring of the students in the school's signature program for the past four years. Sharon has not only mentored a new group of students each year but has also helped build and sustain the vision of Arundel's signature program as a member of the Integrated Community Stakeholders Team. Sharon has a passion for education and loves to share her knowledge with others. Sharon is certainly a person that "walks the talk" and she truly believes in giving back to today's children so that they can be productive citizens of the 21st century.



## Business Partnership Awards

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### *Northrop Grumman Corporation*

*Hirsh Goldberg*

*Nominated by: Heather Sands, Lindale Middle School*

Mr. Goldberg has been the coordinator of AVID volunteers for Northrop Grumman. First serving as co-coordinator until his associate was no longer able to continue, Mr. Goldberg graciously took on the role of sole coordinator to keep the partnership going. As an AVID volunteer coordinator, Mr. Goldberg hosts a tutor training program for Northrop Grumman employees who wish to serve Lindale Middle. Prior to the training, he advertises, recruits, and motivates his co-workers. On the day of the training he generously provides lunch for all who attend.

### *Northrop Grumman Corporation*

*James Windgassen & Melissa Sandlin*

*Nominated by: Marie Hartman, Old Mill Middle School South*

Mrs. Sandlin has been instrumental in supporting the Old Mill computer technology initiative through her support in promoting coding with a focus on accruing computer skills along with introduction to programming. She hosted a teacher training workshop for interested teachers at the school to promote best practices and was instrumental in endorsing Old Mill Middle South as a recipient for a significant technology grant award by Northrop Grumman and the State Department of Education. Mr. Windgassen has supported the development and implementation of annual STEM project builds over the course of the last three seasons with Old Mill Middle South STEM magnet students. He has helped to foster an interest in electronics and engineering with about two hundred students through projects such as a crystal radio, an amplifier and a star sensor. Mr. Windgassen's time, energy and passion for engineering have played an important role in building our middle school engineering program. His enthusiasm and willingness to share his professional expertise in the field of electronics is helping to inspire the next generation of innovators.

### *Old Navy, Waugh Chapel*

*Andrea DePanise*

*Nominated by: Todd Stanzione, Nantucket Elementary*

Over the past two school years, at least ten employees from Old Navy Waugh Chapel have assisted Nantucket Elementary School. In particular, Sales Associate Aaron Moon, Service and Training Manager Jean Argabright, and Store Manager Andrea DePanise have helped to make the school climate more inviting and supportive. In August of 2014, the Kids at Hope art creation session helped to transform the main hallway to "Hope Hallway." Aaron continues to volunteer twice a week for two hours each time. He does an outstanding job mentoring students and is again planning on attending a Saturday field trip for the international families in April. Jean and Andrea are always checking in to see if anything is needed. They showed generosity over the holiday season when they sponsored a Nantucket family and donated several practical presents to make their New Year better. The school is so proud of their partnership, and is truly grateful for the efforts of Old Navy, Waugh Chapel. They have truly made the learning environment a better one.

## *Business Partnership Awards*

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### *Dr. Sara Via of the University of Maryland College Park*

*Dr. Sara Via*

*Nominated by: Michelle Weisgerber, Broadneck High School*

Dr. Via guest lectures and serves as an integral member of the signature program's Integrated Community Stakeholders Team. Since the fall of 2013, Dr. Via has amassed over 60 hours of volunteer time at Broadneck High School. Her innovative lecture ideas and her vision for our signature program provide our students with content that is rich in real-world application and relevance. Whether presenting to students or to our faculty, Dr. Via's enthusiasm for environmental literacy is evident in the level of preparation she puts into her work with the students and staff of Broadneck High School.

### *Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church*

*Tom Lerario, Director of Finance and Property of Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church*

*Nominated by: Joanne Brack, Severna Park High School*

Tom Lerario has fostered a strong and dynamic partnership with Severna Park High School, which began seven years ago and continues to this day. Community outreach is the cornerstone mission of Woods, and Tom exemplifies this practice by providing Severna Park High School with many resources. He works tirelessly to accommodate various requests and is a tremendous resource to Severna Park in helping us accommodate testing space for the many students who take Advanced Placement exams. Every year, 700–800 Severna Park High School students test, and we do not have the physical space at the school to accommodate this many students. For the last seven years, Tom has graciously offered meeting rooms at Woods Memorial Church for testing and has made the Advanced Placement testing process smooth and successful.

*Excellence in Education*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## *Judges for the 2015 Teachers of the Year*

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

Amanda Edmonds, *Principal, Waugh Chapel Elementary School*

Debra Einstein, *Annual Campaign Director, Y of Central Maryland, Greater Annapolis Family Center Y*

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

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

Erin Kolarik, *St. Martin's Lutheran School, 2014 Independent School Teacher of the Year*

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

Nuria Williams, *Principal, Crofton Middle School*

## *Judges for the 2015 Business Partnership Awards*

Jasmine Coleman, *Manager of Service Learning & Mentorship, Anne Arundel County Public Schools*

Lise Foran, *DoDEA Grand Project Manager, Anne Arundel County Public Schools*

David Reilly, *President, Reilly Benefits, Inc.*

Chuck Yocum, *Senior Manager of Business & Community Partnerships, Anne Arundel County Public Schools*

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

*Excellence in Education*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*A special Thank You to our generous gift bag donors:*

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Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

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Giant Food

*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

2015 JUDGING PANEL

AACPS DESIGN AND PRINT SERVICES

AACPS PARTNERSHIPS,  
DEVELOPMENT, AND MARKETING

AACPS COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

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

# *Former AACPS Teachers of the Year*

**2013–14**

Christina Houstian  
Social Studies | Broadneck HS

**2012–13** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Jodie Hogan  
Spanish | South River HS

**2011–12**

Martha Gardner  
Elementary Teacher | Belvedere ES

**2010–11** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Laura Groo  
Language Arts | Southern MS

**2009–10**

Erin Sullivan  
ESOL | Glen Burnie HS

**2008–09**

Donna McCallister  
Language Arts | George Fox MS

**2007–08**

Clayton Culp  
Mathematics | Broadneck HS

**2006–07** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Alicia Appel  
English | Southern HS

**2005–06** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Susan Casler  
Language Arts | Crofton MS

**2004–05**

Walter “Skip” Lee  
Physical Education | Chesapeake HS

**2003–04**

Michael Bell  
Art | Southern HS

**2000–01**

Anthony Berard  
Social Studies | Glen Burnie HS

**2001–02**

Mattie Procaccini  
English | Old Mill HS

**2002–03**

André Jones  
Social Studies | Severna Park MS

**1999–00**

Denise Levitine  
Art | Piney Orchard ES

**1998–99** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Diane Gerrior  
Instrumental Music | Severn River MS

**1997–98**

Bruce Villwock  
Physical Education | Broadneck HS

**1996–97** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Priscilla Ward  
Pre–K | Germantown ES

**1995–96**

Kandace Chase  
Special Education | Ruth Eason School

**1994–95**

Thomas Cordts  
Physical Education | Windsor Farm ES

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

Linda Adamson  
Elementary | Mayo ES and Jessup ES

**1992–93** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Jane Daugherty  
Music | Broadneck HS

**1991–92** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Virginia Crespo  
Social Studies | Broadneck HS

**1990–91** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Olin Yoder  
Art | Meade HS

**1989–90**

Art Smelkinson  
Drama | Old Mill HS

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

Patricia Neidhardt  
Science | Broadneck HS

**1987–88**

Penny Vahsen  
Science | Magothy River MS

**1986–87** *(also Maryland Finalist)*

Richard Wiles  
Physical Education | Millersville ES