



2023 Excellence in Education Awards

Thursday, April 20, 2023





Excellence in Education

Program Schedule

Registration · 5:00 – 6:30 pm

Reception · 5:30 – 6:15 pm

Seating for Dinner · 6:15 pm

Student Performances · 6:20 – 6:35 pm

Program Begins · 6:35 pm

Master of Ceremonies

Ziz Abdur-Ra'oof, Author, Performance Coach, and AACPS Alumnus

Speaker

Charles Whittaker, AACPS Teacher of the Year 2022

Welcome & Honoree Processional

Dinner

Please refrain from speaking during video presentations and remarks. Thank you.

Awards Ceremony

Mark Hoffman, President, The Education Foundation of AACPS
John Conwell, Senior Director, Government & Regional Affairs, Comcast
Joanna B. Tobin, Ph.D., President Board of Education
Mark T. Bedell, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

Excellence in Education

Program Schedule

Teacher of the Year Honorees

Principal of the Year Honorees

Teacher of the Year Semi-Finalists

Education Support Professional of the Year Honorees

Independent Schools Teacher of the Year Finalists

Pamela Hernick, St. Mary's High School

Coral Shreve, St. Paul's Lutheran

AACPS Teacher of the Year Finalists

Nea Baker, Lindale Middle School

Ian Burns, Arundel High School

Mary Kay Connerton, Annapolis High School

Alexis Cutler, Tyler Heights Elementary School

Courtney Kenney, South Shore Elementary School

Christine Colli McCallister, Magothy Middle School

Presentation of the Teacher of the Year Awards

2023 Anne Arundel County Independent Schools Teacher of the Year

2023 Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teacher of the Year



Nea Baker

Spanish | Lindale Middle School

"Every day, I aim to leverage each student's cultural background to stimulate curiosity, renaissance thinking and engage in experiential learning. I aim to encourage an enriched quality of life and empower them to solve real-world issues which elevate how students see, think, and act in the world".ents see, think, and act in the world".



Nea Baker, a 15-year teacher veteran, is a model educator committed to "raising the bar" of every single one of her students. "Ms. Baker possesses an impressive depth of knowledge of instructional and technological best practices, which has enhanced student engagement," in addition, "Ms. Baker has a persistent drive to help students overcome challenges," says John Nash, Principal at Lindale Middle School. With student achievement and growth in mind, Baker uses data, small-group instruction, and a "culture of high expectations" to drive her instruction and make tough decisions needed to keep her students as the "North Star."

Ms. Baker is committed not only to her students but to the betterment of her colleagues. She is a fierce leader in the building, serving in many leadership capacities. She has spearheaded several workshops and community outreach initiatives to help improve family connections with the school. One of these initiatives was a collaborative work of staff and students organizing a clothing drive, which collected over 2,200 clothing items to be donated. All this hard work earned Ms. Baker and Lindale's World Language Department the Distinguished Service Award from the Happy Helpers for the Homeless organization.

As Principal Nash shares, Ms. Baker "is a true servant leader as cannot only be witnessed by my interactions, but by the reviews of others within the school building. Her passion for leadership and learning is infectious. Ms. Baker is truly an asset to the Lindale Middle School community."

Ian Burns Instrumental Music | Arundel High School

My goal as an educator is to empower students to make professional content while connecting with others, and I know they leave my classroom with the inspiration to become leaders and ambassadors of the arts as we create meaningful ways to engage the community."



One of the most rewarding acknowledgments to educators is hearing they are "the best teacher I have ever had," For Samuel, and many other Arundel High School students, Ian Burns is simply that. Principal Gina Davenport states, "Mr. Burns is an extraordinary musician and music educator who takes on every challenge with confidence and determination." Burns has been a high school band and orchestra director for 12 years; he is a role model for his students, allowing them to use their strengths to develop leadership skills. According to a few of his students, Burns' favorite quote is "Choose Success." Students Samuel says Mr. Burns "gave us a motivational speech at the beginning of the marching season in 2021, and he said we must choose success and work hard to win the state championship." Under the direction of Burns, the Arundel High School Marching Band won the State Marching Band Championship in 2021, their 4th State title overall.

Burns is also a role model to his coworkers, "his support in that he has put a major fire under me, even after 26 years of experience to do better. It is a privilege to work with him," shares teacher Bob Abbot. His perseverance, compassion, and creativity are abundant in all his endeavors. Burns' positive influence has a ripple effect within Arundel High and AACPS. He is always available and willing to implement any new ideas that come his way, even serving as the school's E-coach.

An innovative mind, Burns has also created new Music and Theater curricula at different AACPS schools. His passion for music and his want for the success of students and staff members are at the forefront of his work. As stated by Principal Davenport, "students are attracted to Ian Burns' enthusiasm and kindness; they stay for his creative and innovative instruction. He exemplifies Excellence in Education."

Mary Kay Connerton

Wellness Coordinator | Annapolis High School

"It is imperative to take a holistic approach to education and consider the whole student, staff member, or parent/guardian for their success to be limitless. This approach truly encompasses the all means all mentality. I teach the importance of the relationship with oneself to nurture healthy relationships beyond the walls of our schools, homes, and community, and that has made all the difference."



A few words that describe Mary Kay Connerton are relentless, committed, energetic, innovative, visionary, and transformative. Annapolis High School Principal Patrick Gelinis states that Connerton is a "rare few of those teachers whose daily energy, vision, and innovation help transform a school and a school district. As the Wellness Coordinator for Annapolis High, Mary Kay Connerton helps infuse wellness in multiple content areas to support student health and well-being."

Connerton utilizes a whole-school approach to connect with teachers, administration, school counselors, social workers, and community partners to lead monthly "target counseling groups such as monthly trauma-informed yoga sessions for specific student needs (Pre and Post Natal/Anxiety/Grief/Incarcerated/Addicted Family Members). She also facilitates PD for teachers that focuses on the health and wellness of students," says Principal Gelinis.

She is a leader in her school and, among many initiatives, has created and led the school's Trauma-Informed Leadership Team. According to Principal Gelinis, this team "focuses on supporting the impact that trauma has on the mind and body as well as how to support the academic success of students suffering from trauma and creating innovative methods for supporting the wellness of students who are in our DMR classroom."

Connerton's advocacy, practices, and impact are proof of her undoubtful commitment to students and their well-being beyond the Annapolis High community. She extends her influence, creating a curriculum for the Stretch Your Wellness class available to students throughout the county. She works with the Health, Physical Education and Dance central office and facilitates professional development for county-wide teachers so they can start teaching Stretch Your Wellness at their schools. Principal Gelinis recognizes Connerton's positive influence and proudly shares that she "has become widely recognized around AACPS as a respected and sought-after voice."

Alexis Cutler

2nd Grade | Tyler Heights Elementary School

"It's important that my students see me as a co-learner within our learning community. I work daily to speak and understand my student's native language, Spanish. While not always perfect, I demonstrate perseverance and vulnerability as I make mistakes and learn from student critiques. I hold myself and my students to high yet achievable expectations."



Alexis Cutler is a well-rounded teacher whose goal is to make a difference for her students and the entire Tyler Heights Elementary School community. Her commitment to her growth and professional development is as commendable as the strong relationships she builds with families and colleagues. One parent says, "there are no words to describe how grateful we are that our son was in her class. She loves the children with all her heart and gives them life experiences for their future".

A true example of "Team Tyler," Cutler leads the STAIR program and the Homework Mentoring Club. She also promotes access to "learning opportunities, even out of state, like when she sent a student and his family to the National Young Scholars Program in New York," adds Principal Julia Walsh.

Cutler is a leader within the school, serving on the School Improvement team and as the school's Equity Liaison, and is a member of the PBIS and Equity Committees. Principal Walsh says Cutler's "passion drives her work and inspires the work of others" and that she is regularly sought "as a model classroom for teaching techniques and equitable strategies."

She has thrived in the teaching profession and has built her capacity to teach diverse and multilingual learners with various levels of English Language Proficiency. She strives to give students the most positive experience in her second-grade classroom. Principal Walsh shares that Cutler is "determined to provide them with a high-quality education through maintaining high expectations, engaging instruction, equity for all, and a culture of student self-worth."

Courtney Kenney

Physical Education | South Shore Elementary School

"I strive to make my gymnasium a positive, engaging, enjoyable experience for my students. They are challenged, encouraged to be creative and make inquiries, motivated to be physically active and accomplish their goals, and emboldened to be themselves in an environment where they feel safe."



South Shore Elementary School has two mottos: "Just Do It" and "South Shore Pandas ROCK," and according to Principal Tamba Elliott, Courtney Kenney is their "Just Do It Rockstar." A true delight to be around, Kenney always welcomes her students into her classroom with a "genuine and infectious smile," says Principal Elliott. A superb physical education teacher, Kenney implements a cross-curricular approach to her lessons by providing students with supplemental literacy support and reinforcing math concepts.

A dedicated team player, Kenney is proactive and often supports her colleagues ahead of her own needs. She is the first one to volunteer or take on challenges. Principal Elliott also shares, "she is a mastermind with planning schedules or school-wide events."

Kenney's impressive commitment to the South Shore community shows through the academic part of her work and the impeccable extra-curricular activities she plans or is involved with. She led the school to earn the Wellness School of Distinction status, implementing the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS). Successfully planning field days and family fitness nights are additional examples of Kenney's dedication. "She undertakes each of these tasks with incredible attention to detail, efficiency, and an unshakable calm confidence," says 2019-2020 Maryland State, AACPS Teacher of the Year, and Kenney's colleague, Teresa Beilstein. "She is the ultimate team player, and most of all, she is a teacher her students will remember forever for the confidence she builds in them, the talents she nurtures, and the lasting experiences she creates for them day in and day out."

As a model educator for her 7-year career, Kenney exceeds expectations when providing accommodations for students with disabilities and ensures they can participate in the physical education lessons "in ways that best fit their unique needs," says Principal Elliott. "She provides a supportive environment for students to take risks and participate in various ways." Kenney also coaches the Old Mill High School Varsity Field Hockey Team and South Shore's Girls on the Run club. Principal Elliott adds that Kenney "is an irreplicable member of South Shore."

Christine Colli McCallister Science | Magothy River Middle School

"I enjoy listening to students' excitement, thought processes and promoting them to become life-long learners, critical thinkers, and problem solvers who are persistent in their goals. I instill in them that learning will not always be easy, but they will persevere and succeed if they call on the strategies they have learned. My enthusiasm and love for teaching science spread to my students. Risk takers, problem solvers, and scientists are created in my classroom through collaboration."



Christine Colli McCallister just might be one of the most enthusiastic and passionate Science teachers. Magothy River Middle School Principal John Noon shares, "you will often find Ms. MacCallister dressed in her lab coat accessorized with the required safety equipment to pique the students' interest as soon as they enter her classroom." McCallister's carefully individualized lessons aim to engage all learners, meeting their unique needs and maximizing their growth.

Excitement is certainly one strategy McCallister uses. Assistant Principal Hanne Denney shares that she "is full of positive energy, which is reflected in her students' high level of engagement. Students know that if she is wearing her white lab coat, it is hands-on, collaborative learning on the agenda and that alone creates anticipation and enthusiasm." One of McCallister's former students shared, "Ms. McCallister is an amazing science teacher. She always makes sure we are comfortable and understand what we are learning. Also, she lets us give her feedback about her teaching so everyone's learning can be as easy as possible."

McCallister's energy and enthusiasm also radiate to her colleagues, and her leadership skills are recognized throughout the school building. She is an extraordinarily gracious and collaborative professional eager to share her knowledge and talents. She welcomes her colleagues into her classroom, leads professional development, and is a member of the School Improvement Plan.

Lauren Ebersberger, a sixth-grade science teacher, says, "her endless drive, positive mindset, and passion for learning and growing to be the best inspires us every day. Through her dedication and leadership, she has taught her students and colleagues the importance of helping others and the power we have to make a difference." McCallister's impact goes beyond the school walls. As the sponsor for the National Junior Honor Society, she has assisted the student members in taking part in many community-service projects. "As important as the service projects are for those in need, they are also models for students of the positive impact they can have on others," says Principal Noon. "Ms. McCallister is a priceless asset to our school and an example of everything you would hope for as a representative for AACPS."

Pamela Hernick

Social Studies | St. Mary's High School

"As a social science teacher and environmental educator, my role provides me with unique opportunities to explore the most relevant topics, including current events, research, and cultural phenomena, focusing on connections with their personal lives."



Highly regarded by students, alums, parents, and colleagues, Pam Hernick has been an asset to St. Mary's High School for 16 years. Though her role is to teach Sociology, AP Human Geography, and Psychology, Hernick "provides her students with tools to take care of their emotional, psychological, and social well-being, which is more critical than ever these days," says St. Mary's High School Principal Mind Imes.

Hernick's passion for using a whole-student approach to teaching led her to complete a master's degree in Yoga Therapy, allowing her to improve her classroom performance. She also shared her expertise with her colleagues in professional development sessions so that staff members could utilize this new tool to benefit their students and their own well-being. From speaking with alumni, Principal Imes shared that "the biggest takeaway I hear from her students is that they understand more about the world around them because Pam challenged them to think, and the lessons they learned in her classes changed them. Pam's classes are primarily electives, and there are waitlists for every class she teaches."

An active member of the community, Hernick is very passionate about the environment, and according to Principal Imes, every year, she chaperones a trip with a group of students to stay in remote areas of the Chesapeake Bay "marsh mucking, crab scraping, oyster dredging, and star gazing." Hernick also leads the Model United Nations Club and the Yoga Club.

Regardless of her role, Hernick is an inspiring educator. "She dedicates all her gifts and talents to inspire her students to love Social Science, become socially conscientious leaders, and act as change agents in our environment and world," says Principal Imes. "She is committed to supporting our mission to educate the whole child, mind, body, and spirit."

Coral Shreve

PreK-4 | St. Paul's Lutheran School

"Developing relationships with my students and their families is very important to me. These relationships allow the families and I to have informative conversations about their child, ensuring that we provide the best possible learning for their child. If I get to know my students and families and show the love and support that my students deserve, I get the results from each of them that I know they are capable of."

Coral Shreve is a beloved member of St. Paul's Lutheran School. According to Principal John Maxwell, the 26-year teaching veteran, "Coral Shreve has dedicated her life to serving as our Early Learning Director, Director of our Before and After Care program, and Summer Camp Director. St. Paul prides itself on being a family."

Shreve truly makes it her mission to ensure the school staff, her students, and her families see themselves as a family. When a student in her class was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, she "rallied the entire school to pray for the student, purchased special t-shirts to support the student, and we wore them every Friday," says Principal Maxwell. "Many times, the mother told me she could not have gotten through this school year without the school support, especially from Coral as her daughter's teacher."

Shreve is a kind, experienced and dynamic teacher who has her students in their daily routine with impeccable ease. "Her class runs smoothly, and instruction is flawlessly presented. She never has to raise her voice to get the class's attention, and they love what they do," says Principal Maxwell. "St. Paul's would be a much different community without the loving service of Coral Shreve as our Early Learning director."



Excellence in Education Semi-Finalists

Erin Few

Social Studies, Crofton High School

"I believe learning is an inherently social enterprise requiring direct engagement with the environment, peers, or a teacher. It is important to me that students are aware of their strengths and successes as much as they are aware of areas for growth. My greatest desire is for students to leave my classroom with transferrable social and cognitive skills necessary for success in any circumstance they might encounter after high school."

Erin Few is an inspiring educator and dedicated instructional leader. She is a mentor, relationship-builder, empathetic, passionate, and selfless. Crofton High School has two core values, "connectedness" and "community." As the Service Club advisor, Erin Few shares her commitment to Service Learning, allowing students to discover and engage in the joys of helping their community. One of Mrs. Few's students shared, "because of her compassionate and hardworking way of teaching, we have been able to give back to our Crofton community."

Few's commitment to her students' learning is proven by the innovative, rigorous, and engaging lessons she delivers and the relationships she builds. She gets to know who her students genuinely are. "I've seen first-hand how she truly cares for her students, not only supporting us academically but mentally as well, prioritizing our mental health above all," says a student. A parent shares, "Mrs. Few has been nothing short of magic for my daughter...I am so proud of the attributes Mrs. Few has drawn out...learning to speak up, speak out, and advocate for herself and her friends. Mrs. Few is everything I could ever imagine or ask for in an educator and mentor for my child." Principal Feuerherd proudly states, "I'm lucky to have Mrs. Few on my staff, profoundly and positively impacting our students daily."

Whitney McCann

1st Grade, George Cromwell Elementary School

"Relationships are the most important part of my teaching philosophy. Whether it be a student, their family, a coworker, or a person within our community, getting to know someone and helping them feel valued and listened to makes more of an impact on others than many realize! The relationships I have cultivated have not only benefitted my students, but they have also made me a more empathetic and relatable teacher."

In the twenty-six years teaching in AACPS, Whitney McCann has acquired the highest regard from her students, families, and colleagues. George Cromwell Elementary School Principal Michelle Morgan says, "her students arrive at school each morning eager to learn and excited to see what Mrs. McCann has planned for them that day," moreover, "her constant smile and endless energy enables everyone to feel happy and valued when working with her."

McCann's positive impact on her colleagues is no secret, "one can always find teachers in Mrs. McCann's room seeking advice and ideas on the best ways to instruct students," says Principal Morgan. Her incredible competency is shown by the trust and love that parents bestow upon her, and she has earned the trust of the families whose students she has not even taught. Principal Morgan states, "Every year, parents request her to be their child's teacher; they consistently seek her advice and counsel on how to help their students best."

Whitney McCann is the epitome of community support. From enlisting fathers to volunteer at the school, coordinating school-wide community barbeques, being an active PTA member, and being a bridge between the PTA and teachers, McCann does it all. Principal Morgan shares, "I have learned so much from her, and so have many others who have had the privilege of having her as a teacher, colleague, and friend."

Excellence in Education Semi-Finalists



Michelle McCarty

Drafting Technical Drawings/CAD, CAT-North

"By providing a sturdy foundation for my student's learning, facilitating supportive teamwork among their classmates, and motivating students to visualize their best selves in their careers, I hope to provide a positive and productive launch pad for my student's futures."

Michelle McCarthy is "one of the most passionate teachers I have had the opportunity to work alongside in my career," states Center of Applied Technology North Principal Joe Rose. An enthusiastic educator contributing to countless aspects of the school and beyond, McCarty intentionally approaches her instruction with high expectations for her students while providing the needed support and celebrating students and cultures. One of McCarty's former students shares that "she is very supportive of our academic endeavors and us as people. She makes sure that we are and will be successful in what we do. In addition, she ensures that we feel like we are all included and have something to contribute; nothing is too small or insignificant."

McCarty's classroom is the perfect example of her intentionality. Principal Rose states, "it is evident why so many students are engaged in the lesson and working diligently on drafting and design activities. Students are assessed, grouped, and challenged to meet the outcome through any means necessary." As a school leader, McCarty is equally remarkable. She has impressed upon the staff the importance of using data while planning and implementing the curriculum, serves as a Department Chairperson, plans professional development sessions for staff on how to implement different strategies into their teaching methods, and is the CAT-North's Equity Liaison, presenting innovative ways to implement equitable teaching strategies, change staff members perceptions and instructional practices. As Principal Rose puts it, Michelle McCarty is "a true champion for her students, CAT North and AACPS!"



Jennifer Richards

Library Media, Jacobsville Elementary School

"As a teacher, I value having relationships with my students. The library must feel like a safe place to take risks and be a valued stakeholder, where students see themselves mirrored in the literature surrounding them and feel the compassion and the respect I show them."

In twenty years of teaching in AACPS, Jennifer Richards has proven to be much more than a Media Specialist, or "Librarian," as she calls herself. There is so much attention to interests and details in every lesson Richards delivers, whether for Pre-K students or 5th graders. Richards craftily develops lessons that engage and excites students. Jacobsville Elementary School Principal April Umile says, "her students were giddy with excitement as they eagerly prepared to enjoy a 'Book Tasting,' an elegant table setting with a tin tray filled with an assorted selection of books adorned with flowers for students to sample." Her efforts certainly paid off according to one student, "she pays attention to us and what we like, especially picking out the right book."

As a techie Media Specialist, Richards uses her instruction to expose students to many technology opportunities. Students code human robots or video games, work with different applications to make music, create adaptative tools for their friends, and bring engineering to life through stem challenges. Richards goes above and beyond to equip her space with inclusive, diverse books and flexible, adaptive seating. Richards embodies the AACPS 'All means all' motto by promoting acceptance and engaging "all her students, especially our students with mobility and sensory needs," affirms Principal Umile. "While the Media Center is the center of the school, Mrs. Jennifer Richards is the heart of the school."

Excellence in Education Honorees



Alexa Bashaw

Marley Middle School

Grades: 6–8

Subject: Music—Choir and Guitar

Years of Teaching Experience: 5

“You have earned your spot here, and you belong here. Don’t let anybody make you feel like you don’t”. These words said to me by my high school guitar teacher stuck to my 16-year-old psyche and finally gave me a niche to fit into—music. The consistent support I felt is something I share with my students every day they step through my classroom door—that they belong here regardless of where they come from or how well they can sing or play guitar”.



Adam Bellarin

Old Mill Middle School North

Grades: 6–8

Subject: Physical Education

Years of Teaching Experience: 6

“My teaching philosophy is simple, “every student, every day.” Turning those words into a mindset has made me the teacher I am today. Empowering relationships foster positive experiences. Building relationships with students, colleagues, parents, etc., is pivotal to building trust as a successful teacher.”



Cailin Berman

Brooklyn Park Middle School

Grades: 6–8

Subject: Instrument Music—Band

Years of Teaching Experience: 10

“One of the most rewarding aspects of being a band teacher is the teamwork I witness among budding student musicians. I strive to provide a place where students are accepted as a part of our community—the band community”.



Devon Caton

Bates Middle School

Grades: 6–7

Subject: Math

Years of Teaching Experience: 8

“Acknowledging the different paths students will take is the first step in enabling students’ understanding of each other’s unique perspectives. Teaching students to be respectful communicators and listeners enables them to collaborate with and learn from their peers.”

Excellence in Education Honorees



Angela Coulston

Southern Middle School

Grade: 6

Subject: Math

Years of Teaching Experience: 10

"My goal is to make all my students feel respected. I get to know them personally and take an interest in their lives outside the classroom. I strive to create a safe space for all my students, where everyone feels like they belong. I let my students know I can not only teach them math; I can be a safe place for them in this world."



Tricia Fisher

School: Broadneck Elementary School

Grades: 4

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 26

"When parents tell me their child is eager to attend school and is happy, my goal has been accomplished. To achieve this excitement for school, I work to build a safe, trusting environment where they can grow as independent learners. I know my students have discovered their spark to learn when they make choices and take charge of their learning."



Margaret Garcia

School: Rippling Woods Elementary School

Grades: 1

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 5

"I pride myself on creating a classroom environment where my students want to wake up every morning and come to school, where they want to take risks, and where they feel loved and supported."



Annalee Garland

St. Martin's Lutheran School of Annapolis

Grades: 3-8

Subject: Choir/General Music

Teaching Experience: 8

Excellence in Education Honorees



Emily Grey

North Glen Elementary School

Grade: 2

Subject: **Elementary**

Years of Teaching Experience: 7

"When my students know I care about all facets of their lives, our classroom becomes a shared space where we can make mistakes and grow together. When my students feel respected and safe to be themselves in our classroom, they can reach their goals and celebrate their growth and successes."



Michael Hall

Old Mill Middle School South

Grade: 7

Subject: **Social Studies**

Years of Teaching Experience: 28

"My philosophy of education is based on the belief that anyone can learn. I feel like I am part scout master, part game show host, and part school dad. We become like a school family, a safe place where students want to come. As a result, they are more engaged in the lessons."



T. Anne Kee

Crofton Middle School

Grade: 8

Subject: **Language Arts**

Years of Teaching Experience: 23

"My teaching philosophy is simple. First, relationships are everything; I want my students to know I value them as a person and am invested in ensuring they know they are supported in all aspects of their lives. Second, all kids can learn; our job is to help and further develop them. Lastly, students deserve authentic experiences and social learning opportunities; they crave interactions with peers and want to know why they need the skills they are taught."



Aaron Kleffman

Arundel Middle School

Grade: 7

Subject: **English**

Years of Teaching Experience: 15

"I believe that the most important aspect of teaching is building a strong sense of community within the classroom, the school building, and the neighborhoods we serve. Teaching allows me to make a difference, and in the end, I hope that my students not only feel appreciated but celebrated."

Excellence in Education Honorees



Lindsey Klunk

Crofton Elementary School

Grade: 3

Subject: **Elementary**

Years of Teaching Experience: 6

"Being a teacher means I am part of a team whose sole purpose is to help grow an awesome human. In my classroom, our community comprises high expectations, accountability, respect for others and ourselves, collaboration, and many opportunities for creativity."



Ashley Lacey

Edgewater Elementary School

Grade: 2

Subject: **Elementary**

Years of Teaching Experience: 20

"My teaching philosophy is to create an environment where students thrive as life-long learners—successful learners not only academically but socially and emotionally. I provide all my students with the support and enrichment they need to make them feel supported, safe, and happy—I want them to feel that there is no other place they would rather be."



Tracy Larkins

Meade Middle School

Grades: 7–8

Subject: **Math**

Years of Teaching Experience: 23

"All children are unique and need a stimulating environment where they can learn, thrive, and be nurtured. My role as the teacher is to assist each child in developing their potential according to their learning style."



Kjeld Lauritzen

School: Old Mill High School

Grades: 9–12

Subject: **AVID**

Years of Teaching Experience: 12

"The trust in education is the most important factor to student growth. Creating students who are bold and willing to take risks on their own after they have left us and who continue learning and growing are marks of success. We must challenge them, then champion and then support them."

Excellence in Education Honorees



Crystal Loetz

Broadneck High School

Grades: 9–12

Subject: Spanish

Years of Teaching Experience: 17

"As a Spanish teacher, I often remind my students that I was once as intimidated as they were in learning another language. I work hard to ensure that my students have the same experience, and I continue to make my classroom a safe place for them to make mistakes, improve, and push themselves harder than they ever have."



Lindsey MacQuilliam

Folger McKinsey Elementary School

Grade: 2

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 15

"Every child has unique strengths that help them become successful members of our classroom community. Empowering my students to see themselves through my eyes helps to break previous behavior patterns and have a fresh start."



Angela Mangum

North County High School

Grades: 9–12

Subject: French

Years of Teaching Experience: 12

"In my French classroom, I teach my students to be willing to try new experiences. Speaking a new language is about making yourself vulnerable and having the courage to overcome it. My students' strength encourages me to push my own boundaries by using new teaching techniques."



Patricia Mauro

Severn River Middle School

Grade: 8

Subject: Science

Years of Teaching Experience: 9

"It is my job to build a relationship with each student that allows them to have a safe space to share their personal experiences. I strive to provide ample opportunities for all students to engage in collaboration, reflection, and inquiry at an appropriate level that is relative to their world."

Excellence in Education Honorees



Kellie Metter

Tracey's Elementary School

Grade: Kindergarten

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 27

"First and foremost, I believe teaching is an innate skill that not all possess. It's being able to read and reach a child from the inside first before any academic learning can be successful. Building a trusting bond with each child is of utmost importance. If a child feels safe and secure with you, they will be more likely to love rushing in the door to see you each day, ready to learn."



Lisa Moylan

Annapolis Elementary School

Grade: 5

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 23

"Through positivity, perseverance, and high expectations, I "coach" my students to maximize their potential every day. Most of my students face a great deal of adversity at a young age. I believe I owe my students the consistency and structure that allows them to make sense of the school environment."



Kathy Murphy

Ferndale Early Education Center

Grades: Prek-4

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 29

"My passion for working with young children has always been a part of who I am. I am drawn to their curiosity, inquisitive nature, desire to please, honesty, silliness, and laughter. This passion for nurturing the next generation's minds drives my passion for teaching."



Christina O'Shaughnessy

Corkran Middle School

Grades: 6-8

Subject: Family and Consumer Science

Years of Teaching Experience: 8

"My number one goal as a teacher is to make students feel safe, important, and capable of reaching their goals and high expectations. I am lucky to teach a subject that enables me to have students over the course of all 3 of their middle school years and allows me to focus on building relationships and a classroom community that is engaging and encouraging and allows students to take risks."

Excellence in Education Honorees



Bradley Ogle

Germantown Elementary School

Grade: 4

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 9

"As a teacher, every instructional decision I make is for the benefit of the children in my classroom. I want my students to treat others with kindness, persevere in facing challenges, and develop a love for learning. I work every day to model these attributes for my students."



Tricia Page

Hilltop Elementary School

Grade: Kindergarten

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 25

"Children should be provided opportunities to grow academically, emotionally, and socially. Equipping children with the skills to regulate emotions, solve problems, and resolve conflicts are just as needed as instruction in core subjects."



Dyan Rosdail

Arnold Elementary School

Grades: 1-5

Subject: Special Education

Years of Teaching Experience: 14

"Strong teacher-student relationships help to encourage student motivation, increase work production, maximize individual performance, solidify retention of information, make connections to real-world experiences, and provide a deeper understanding of the curriculum. With positive teacher-student relationships, I can set high expectations that my students will feel inspired, confident, and supported to achieve."



Zachary Stone

Pershing Hill Elementary School

Grade: 4

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 10.5

"I believe the ability to build and maintain rapport with students is a skill that takes hard work, patience, time, and care. It involves taking an interest in who students are both inside your classroom and outside of it. When students feel known and accepted by their teacher, they can take the necessary educational risks that lead to growth."

Excellence in Education Honorees



Allison Waite

Davidsonville Elementary School

Grade: **3**

Subject: **Elementary**

Years of Teaching Experience: **14**

"As an elementary educator, I firmly believe that my role far surpasses what can be taught in books or is addressed in state standards. Students need to be accepted, loved, and met where they are academically, emotionally, and socially."



Elizabeth Wilson

St. Mary's Elementary

Grades: **Prek-5**

Subject: **STEM**

Years of Teaching Experience: **23**

"As a STEM teacher, I aim to guide students to the wonders of STEM in a collaborative environment. My philosophy is that connecting with students, setting clear expectations, empowering students, and continuing to develop professionally are essential to be an effective teacher."



John Zelezen

South River High School

Grades: **9-12**

Subject: **English**

Years of Teaching Experience: **20**

"I plan every lesson with the goal of achieving four objectives: to develop a sense of community, to create clear paths to success, to make the class interactive and enjoyable, and to challenge the students with academically rigorous yet personally engaging assignments and activities. My philosophy of education is to harness the alchemy of these four stimuli to transform any classroom tedium into an invigorating and empowering educational experience."



Kayla Zipp

Brooklyn Park Elementary School

Grades: **Prek-5**

Subject: **Title I Math**

Years of Teaching Experience: **8**

"My philosophy of education is multifaceted, but most importantly, revolves around building relationships with the school community. I believe it truly takes a village to raise a child, and I am honored to work in a school community that exemplifies this belief."

2022-23 George Arlotto Leadership Award

Richard Rogers Mills-Parole Elementary School

"One of the greatest influencers of my leadership philosophy was my grandfather. I marveled at how he interacted with others. Every interaction that I witnessed was transformational. He made others feel heard, valued, and important. Transformational leaders are in the work, not above it. Being a principal can be a challenge, but I build and pour into others and see them as partners, not subordinates. I believe in being very deliberate in building relationships with others."

A veteran educator with diverse experience in public, private, and charter schools, Richard Rogers served as a principal in Washington, D.C., public schools for 11 years before coming to Anne Arundel County Public Schools in 2017. He served as principal at North Glen Elementary School in Glen Burnie from 2017 to 2020 before moving to Mills-Parole Elementary School.

"I can attest to Principal Richard Rogers' awesome leadership and performance as a principal," one parent wrote in an endorsement of Mr. Rogers' nomination. "I witnessed firsthand how he charismatically led his staff to embrace students and perform with excellence while also treating each child with care and giving them a reason to smile."

Jolyn Davis, Regional Assistant Superintendent for the Annapolis cluster, wrote in her nomination letter: "Mr. Rogers has focused intensely on growing teachers and leaders at Mills-Parole and his focus has yielded strong results. He is masterful at providing teachers and leaders with all levels of experience feedback and support to help them grow and succeed."



2022-23 Education Support Professional of the Year

Devon Sanders Ruth Parker Eason School

*F*or two decades, Devon Sanders has consistently demonstrated unwavering dedication to the students, staff, and community of Ruth Parker Eason School. Devon is an exemplary paraprofessional and school leader whose extensive expertise is equally matched by an undeniable love for her students. Combining her skills with such passion fosters growth and success for all students.

She is an excellent paraprofessional who leads with optimism, a quality that enables her to conquer any adversity that comes her way. Sanders' positivity is contagious, and leaves a lasting impression on the students, staff, and families that work with her. She inspires those around her to persevere and never give up. The work Sanders does takes compassion, knowledge, and commitment—all of which she demonstrates each day.



Principal of the Year Finalists



Lisa Koennel

Richard Henry Lee Elementary School

*L*isa Koennel has faithfully served the students of AACPS for 28 years, holding to true to one philosophy, “teachers have the power to make an incredible impact on a child’s life, and that every day with our students is an opportunity to make this positive impact.” This approach drives Koennel to build a strong school community. A parent shared as part of Koennel’s nomination, “It didn’t matter if I was running photocopies, helping on picture day, or planning an event—I knew the work I was doing was genuinely appreciated. As a volunteer this meant everything and kept me coming back eager to help in any way I could.”



Colleen McFarland

Glen Burnie Park Elementary School

*W*ith experiences ranging from preschool to coaching high school to principal, Colleen McFarland has always done what is best for students. Her efforts to support student success made her an AACPS Teacher of the Year finalist in 2005. She is a National Board Certified Teacher and highly respected by fellow educators. A teacher described her as “the true definition of a leader who breaks barriers... From pushing teachers out of their comfort zones, to putting student SEL first, and building a school community, Colleen can do it all.” Another teacher said, “She holds herself to high expectations and that encourages me to be a better teacher, advocate, and community member.”



Alexis McKay

Nantucket Elementary School

*A*lexis McKay has served students and families in many different communities across AACPS for 28 years. Literally leading by love, McKay has created a sense of family among all of the members of her school community. A staff member says, “Mrs. McKay is a perfect example of a leader who guides with grace and balance. In times of turmoil or not, her leadership reflects important qualities that keep you at peace and give you the invisible hand that helps you realize you are not alone, and that we are all a family. There are many things that she does and happen in the background, perhaps things we don’t see but perceive, and are evident in the school atmosphere, staff morale, and student performance.”

Excellence in Education

Rising Stars

Anne Arundel County Public Schools Rising Stars are educators in their 2nd – 5th year of teaching, who consistently meet the needs of students by using instructional best practice. One day, these stars could possibly compete for AACPS Teacher of the Year. Their Regional Superintendent and Principal have recognized them as a ‘Rising Star’ for their excellence in education.

Tyrice Brown

Broadneck High School

Subject: English

Years of Teaching Experience: 2

Kayla Lugo

Seven Oaks Elementary School

Subject: Kindergarten

Years of Teaching Experience: 1

Cherith White

Central Special

Subject: Special Education

Years of Teaching Experience: 2

Lorna Harris

Point Pleasant Elementary School

Subject: Elementary

Years of Teaching Experience: 2

Rebecca Meyer

Brooklyn Park Elementary School

Subject: Kindergarten

Years of Teaching Experience: 3

Brandon Woodroffe

Edgewater Elementary School

Subject: 5th Grade (Math/Science)

Years of Teaching Experience: 2

Stephaen Hood

Bates Middle School

Subject: Dance

Years of Teaching Experience: 2

Dalen Parker

Tracey's Elementary School

Subject: Special Education

Years of Teaching Experience: 1.6

Sabrina Hooper

Glendale Elementary School

Subject: 1st Grade

Years of Teaching Experience: 3

Jamar Turner

Marley Elementary School

Subject: Special Education

Years of Teaching Experience: 2

Excellence in Education
Selection Committee



Dr. Nuria Williams
Director of School
Performance
Lead Judge



Patrick Gelinas
Principal



Katrina Griffin
2016 AACPS Teacher
of the Year



Dwight Jefferson
Principal



Dr. Zipporah Miller
Director of
Organizational Learning



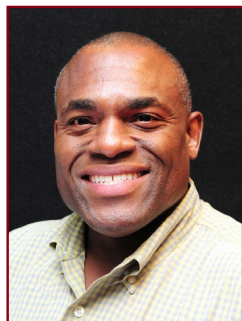
Vanessa Rivera
Anne Arundel
County Council of PTAs



Elizabeth Ruddy
Teachers Association of
Anne Arundel County



Kristy Snyder
Principal



Eugene Whiting
Principal

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

Thank you to our 2023

Headline



COMCAST

A+



Educational Systems
Federal Credit Union

RICOH
imagine. change.

Academia


ARUNDEL MILLS®
A SIMON CENTER

Brawner
BUILDERS



TAAAC
EST 1920

Excellence in Education Sponsors

Table



Gift Bags

Arundel Mills Mall
Bowie Baysox
Burger Grilled Right (BGR)
Cabot Cheese
CareFirst
Chick-fil-A
Daly
Development Facilitators Inc. (DFI)
ESFCU
Graduate Annapolis Hotel
Halo
Jostens/Allgrads, Inc.

Medieval Times
Mission BBQ
Nicholas P. Pipino Associates, Inc.
Nothing Bundt Cake
Office Depot
Rams Head Group
Ricoh-USA
Rudolph Supply
The Blackwall Barn & Lodge
Wildflower & The Petal Pusher

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:

Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Communications Office

Design and Print Services

Logistics & Mail Services

Partnerships, Development, and Marketing Department

Visual Arts Office

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



*To enjoy the 2023 Excellence in Education
Awards Event anytime, please go to:*

www.aacps.org/EIE2022



Posting to social media?

Be sure to tag your photos and videos with...

#AACPSTOY #EiE2023 #TOY2023 #AACPSAwesome

Former Anne Arundel County Public Schools Teachers of the Year

2021–22

Charles Whittaker

HVAC | Ctr. of Applied Technology – North
Maryland Finalist

2020–21

Jing Dai

Chinese | Meade High School
Maryland Finalist

2019–20

Emily Davis

Language Arts | Brooklyn Park MS

2018–19

Teresa Beilstein

3rd Grade | South Shore ES
Maryland Teacher of the Year—2020

2017–18

Heather Carnaghan

8th Grade | Monarch Global Academy
Maryland Finalist

2016–17

Josh Carroll

English | South River HS
Maryland Teacher of the Year—2018

2015–16

Katrina Griffin

German | North County HS
Maryland Finalist

2014–15

Jennie J.L. Merrill

5th Grade | Severna Park ES
Maryland Finalist

2013–14

Christina Houstian

Social Studies | Broadneck HS

2012–13

Jodie Hogan

Spanish | South River HS
Maryland Finalist

2011–12

Martha Gardner

Elementary Teacher | Belvedere ES

2010–11

Laura Groo

Language Arts | Southern MS
Maryland Finalist

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

Alicia Appel

English | Southern HS
Maryland Finalist

2005–06

Susan Casler

Language Arts | Crofton MS
Maryland Finalist

2004–05

Walter “Skip” Lee

Physical Education | Chesapeake HS

2003–04

Michael Bell

Art | Southern HS

2002–03

André Jones

Social Studies | Severna Park MS

2001–02

Mattie Procaccini

English | Old Mill HS

2000–01

Anthony Berard

Social Studies | Glen Burnie HS

1999–00

Denise Levitine

Art | Piney Orchard ES

1998–99

Diane Gerrior

Instrumental Music | Severn River MS
Maryland Finalist

1997–98

Bruce Villwock

Physical Education | Broadneck HS

1996–97

Priscilla Ward

Pre-K | Germantown ES
Maryland Finalist

1995–96

Kandace Chase

Special Education | Ruth Eason School

1994–95

Thomas Cordts

Physical Education | Windsor Farm ES

1993–94

Linda Adamson

Elementary | Mayo ES and Jessup ES
Maryland Teacher of the Year—1995

1992–93

Jane Daugherty

Music | Broadneck HS
Maryland Finalist

1991–92

Virginia Crespo

Social Studies | Broadneck HS
Maryland Finalist

1990–91

Olin Yoder

Art | Meade HS
Maryland Finalist

1989–90

Art Smelkinson

Drama | Old Mill HS

1988–89

Patricia Neidhardt

Science | Broadneck HS
Maryland Teacher of the Year—1990

1987–88

Penny Vahsen

Science | Magothy River MS

1986–87

Richard Wiles

Physical Education | Millersville ES
Maryland Finalist