



Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.  
Interim State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD • msde.maryland.gov

**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.  
**DATE:** May 24, 2016  
**SUBJECT:** Recognition of Maryland's 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

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**PURPOSE:**

To recognize Maryland's newly named 2016-2017 local Teachers of the Year who will represent their school systems in the state and national Teacher of the Year competitions.

**BACKGROUND OF THE PROGRAM, SPONSORS, AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Maryland has fully participated in the National Teacher of the Year Program for twenty-six years. The National Program is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The Maryland program is sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education with its presenting partners, Comcast, the Maryland Automobile Dealers Association, McDonalds Family of Greater Baltimore, and Northrop Grumman along with platinum sponsors: BGE, Lockheed Martin, NTA Life and Whiting Turning Contracting.

We are proud that in the last ten years, Maryland has had three National Teachers of the Year and an additional national finalist, an achievement which tops the record of teacher selection across the United States.

The objective of both national and state programs is to draw public attention to the teaching profession and the contributions of our outstanding teachers. The Maryland Teacher of the Year represents the thousands of teachers in the public schools of our State and when selected for the State Award, enters the National Teacher of the Year competition. National Teachers are accorded celebrity status and spend one year out of the classroom, traveling across the country bringing an education message to thousands of people. Maryland's Kim Oliver Burnim, Michelle Shearer, and Sean McComb have been selected as National Teachers and went on to represent over three million teachers in America.

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Maryland's Teacher of the Year, while not fully removed from the classroom, generally has a partner teacher assigned by the local school system in order to spend many days in speaking engagements and professional development programs at state conferences, college graduations, ceremonies, and other events. He or she is also invited to be part of prestigious panels and education committees. The National Teacher is recognized by the President at a White House Ceremony and participates in several International Tours. Each year, all 24 local Maryland Teachers of the Year are honored at a large Gala held at Martin's West. The teachers are also honored by the Maryland General Assembly, Maryland's Congressional Delegation, the Baltimore Orioles, the Ravens and others.

**STATE BOARD CEREMONY:**

Approximately 100 guests of the teachers are expected to attend the Board Ceremony, including parents, children, and other family members, local superintendents, principals, and business partners.

**ACTION:**

The Interim State Superintendent and State Board President will present each Teacher of the Year with a State Board of Education Citation. An inscribed portfolio will also be presented and commemorative pictures will be taken.

**An Honors Luncheon Immediately Follows the State Board Honors Ceremony**

# TEACHERS OF THE YEAR 2016 – 2017

Allegany	Tania R. Pressman
Anne Arundel	Katrina Griffin
Baltimore City	(Sia) Athanasia Kyriakakos
Baltimore County	Corey Carter
Calvert	Donna M. Miller
Caroline	Marcia R. Porter
Carroll	Brendan Gallagher
Cecil	Anne Highfield
Charles	Jillian M. Durr
Dorchester	Jennifer Wingate
Frederick	Scott T. Strait
Garrett	Lorie W. Burdock
Harford	Sharalyn R. Heinly
Howard	Shalonda Holt
Kent	Rebecca Bigelow
Montgomery	Michael V. Williams
Prince George's	Amanda Espina
Queen Anne's	Tamara M. Forte
St. Mary's	Alison Sayers
Somerset	Kolby Noble
Talbot	Annie J. Mewborn
Washington	Kyle Dingle
Wicomico	Christy Briggs
Worcester	Kristina L. Belcher

# Maryland's 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

## **Allegheny County – Tania R. Pressman, Cresaptown Elementary School, General Education, Grade 4**

Tania Pressman received a Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood/Elementary Education in 2003 and a Master of Education degree in Reading in 2013 from Frostburg State University. During her twelve years as an educator in Allegheny County, she taught kindergarten for seven years and is currently a fourth grade teacher at Cresaptown Elementary School. Tania serves on the School Improvement Team and is the chair of the Climate Action Team. She also sits on the Allegheny County Teacher/Principal Evaluation Committee as the elementary teacher representative and serves on the Board of Directors of the Allegheny County Education Association. Mrs. Pressman resides in Cumberland with her family.

## **Anne Arundel County – Katrina Griffin, North County High School, German, Grade 9 – 12**

Katrina is the 2016 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Teacher of the Year and a national Foreign Language Teacher of the Year finalist. As a nationally recognized leader in her field, she is a prolific presenter on topics such as student engagement and STEM and is passionate about creating interdisciplinary connections for students. She is the Treasurer for the American Association of Teachers of German, an AP College Board Consultant, and the department chair for World and Classical Languages at her school. Katrina earned a Master's in German at Middlebury College in 2007, and B.A. degrees in International Politics and German at Penn State University in 1999.

## **Baltimore City – Athanasia (Sia) Kyriakakos, Mergenthaler Vocational Technical High School, Art, Grade 9 – 12**

*Passion, resilience, perseverance,* are the outcomes of the relationships Ms. Kyriakakos builds with her students. Athanasia Kyriakakos earned her MFA degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2000, her teaching certification from Central Connecticut State University in 1995 and her BFA degree from The Maryland Institute, College of Art in 1991. While teaching in Baltimore, she has been a member of the Instructional Leadership Team, an SLO ambassador and a member of the American Federation of Teachers, Teacher Leaders program. As a world-renowned artist, she represented Greece in the 50<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, and received a Fulbright.

# Maryland's 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

## **Baltimore County – Corey Carter, Old Court Middle School, Science, Grade 6**

“Teaching is its most rewarding when students see what they have taught me,” says Corey who has a Bachelor’s degree in Biology and a Master’s in Secondary Science Education from University of Maryland Baltimore County. He is a Grade Level Team Leader, curriculum writer for BCPS, and a member of the Instructional Leadership Committee. Corey developed a student-led lyrics club focusing on literacy and reading fluency. This club produced "Freddie Gray" a social commentary song. He also co-founded the My Brother’s Keeper after-school mentoring program and in 2015, helped create and carry out Old Court’s first all-male symposium.

## **Calvert County – Donna Miller, Windy Hill Middle School, Science, Grade 7 – 8**

Donna Miller received her Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction in 1996 and Administrative I Certification in 2009 from McDaniel College after receiving her Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Houghton College in 1982. She is a SMECO Outstanding Science Teacher awardee. As a Maryland Master Teacher her commitment to empower teachers begins in her classroom as she engages students in science and engineering practices to build conceptual understanding. She infuses real world science applications from her work as a NASA Goddard STEM coordinator and Northrop Grumman Teacher Fellow. Her passion for teaching transcends her classroom as she leads teachers in applying innovative and technology-based lessons that build student success in 21st century skills.

## **Caroline County – Marcia R. Porter, Lockerman Middle School, Library Media, Grade 6 – 8**

Marcia combines her passions of reading and technology in the media center, where students and teachers feel free to come read, learn, and create. A National Board Certified Teacher, Marcia earned her B.S. in Elementary Education from University of Maryland in 1986 and M.S. in Educational Technology from Towson University in 2008. She was named by PBS LearningMedia as 2016 Lead Digital Innovator for Maryland, chairs the Black-Eyed Susan 6-9 State Book Award Committee, and is a board member of Edcamp Maryland. Marcia is the Lockerman Maker Club advisor and serves as Technology Support Facilitator for her school.

# Maryland's 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

## **Carroll County – Brendan Gallagher, Carroll County Career and Technology Center, Project Lead the Way Biomedical Sciences, Grade 11 – 12**

Brendan earned a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Towson University in 2003 and a Master's Degree in Microbiology from James Madison University in 2006. He is a member of the School Improvement Team, the JMU Graduate Program External Review Board and the American Society of Microbiology. He is a mentor MSDE Project Lead the Way Trainer, Professional Development Coach, Exam Writing Team/Trainer, and Master Teacher and among 18 teachers nationwide to participate in the 2014-2015 National History Day Teacher Institute. Brendan's work received recognition leading to a presentation to Congress. His program is the first fully certified school in Maryland.

## **Cecil County – Anne Highfield, Cecilton Elementary School, General Education, Grade 4**

A committed advocate for public schools with 26 years of teaching experience, Anne Highfield has served a variety of educational roles including library media specialist, instructional coach, and MSDE Master Teacher. She enjoys hosting classroom visitations for new teachers and facilitating professional development for her school, county, and state. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History selected Anne as the 2015 Maryland History Teacher of the Year. She earned Bachelor's degrees in Elementary Education and Library Science from Slippery Rock University in 1990, and a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from McDaniel College in 1997.

## **Charles County – Jillian M. Durr, Dr. James Craik Elementary School, General Education, Grade 3**

"Every child will learn to read and write, but getting a student to love learning is my proudest accomplishment." Jillian Durr earned a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Misericordia University in Dallas, Pennsylvania in 2007 and is working on a Master's Degree in Curriculum/Instruction and Administration from McDaniel College. Jillian serves as team leader as well as chairperson of the Relay for Life Children's Team and Just Say No Club. Jillian was recognized in 2012 as an Exemplary Employee and works every day to make a difference in the lives of the children she teaches.

# Maryland's 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

## **Dorchester – Jennifer Wingate, South Dorchester School, General Education, Grade 1**

Jennifer Wingate is a Dorchester county native, and earned her Bachelor's Degree from Frostburg State University with a dual major in Elementary and Early Childhood Education, with a minor in Spanish. She studied in Spain while at Frostburg, has obtained her ESOL certification through the University of Phoenix. Ms. Wingate is pursuing her Masters of Education with a concentration in Teaching Strategies for the 21st Century Learner through LaSalle University, and is on track to complete in the spring of 2017. She was nominated First Class Teacher of the Year in 2010, has assisted with drafting first grade science curriculum with the Next Generation Science Standards, and is a member of the Student Improvement Team. Jennifer is also facilitating the community's - Race to Erase PTSD.

## **Frederick County – Scott Strait, Brunswick Middle School, Social Studies, Grade 8**

Scott Strait is an award winning teacher-leader who makes history come alive for students. Scott earned a bachelor's degree in Social Studies Education from the University of Pittsburgh in 2001 and a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Hood College in 2005. Scott serves as Social Studies department chair, eighth grade instructional team leader, and as a CSI team member. Community minded, he is a member of Leadership Frederick County. Scott has been twice named Maryland History Day Teacher of the Year for Frederick County and was named the DAR Outstanding Teacher of American History for Maryland in 2011.

## **Garrett County – Lorie W. Burdock – Northern Middle School, Science, Grade 6**

Lorie Warne Burdock, a 1993 graduate of Frostburg State University, began teaching for Garrett County Schools in 1994. She has taught fourth grade, seventh grade language and mathematics, and --currently-- sixth grade science. Lorie is a Maryland Association of Student Councils advisor, FIRST LEGO League coach, and FIRST Robotics Competition mentor. For her students, Lorie has garnered thousands of dollars in grants and donations, including MAC and CONSOL Energy grants. "The greatest contribution I can make is empowering my students," she says. "My goal is to foster a love of our earth, experimentation, leadership, STEM, and life-long learning."

# Maryland's 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

## **Harford County - Sharalyn R. Heinly, North Harford Middle School, Mathematics, Grade 7**

Sharalyn Heinly earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education in 1984 from Lipscomb University and a Master of Education in Deaf Education from McDaniel College in 1985. She creates and presents countywide professional development, participates in MSDE Item Reviews, and has served as an adjunct faculty member at Harford Community College for over 26 years. Mrs. Heinly has been the St. Jude Math-a-thon coordinator at her school since 2008 and the Race Director for the One World Run since 2010. She has been nominated for Who's Who Among America's Teachers four times and is the recipient of the 2015 Harford County Public Schools Service Learning Star.

## **Howard County - Shalonda Holt, Centennial High School, Biology, Grade 9-12**

Shalonda Holt believes in the importance of building caring relationships with students. "Mrs. Holt is my sanity and my anchor. She has helped me through some of my most challenging situations," says one student. She is passionate about using the flipped classroom to create a student-centered environment. She is co-sponsor of the Delta Scholars, co-sponsor of Eagle Ambassadors, and founder of NEST. Holt is the 2016 Washington Post Teacher of the Year. Holt received her B.S. in Biological Sciences from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County in 2007 and her master's in Curriculum and Instruction from McDaniel College in 2012.

## **Kent County - Rebecca Bigelow, Worton Elementary School, General Education, Grade 4**

Fourth-grade teacher, Rebecca Bigelow, had no idea she would discover her true passion, until she began volunteering in an elementary summer program eighteen years ago. While working as a substitute teacher and then as an instructional assistant, she graduated summa cum laude from Salisbury University in 2007, earning dual degrees in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. Rebecca has served as mentor to pre-service teachers at the high school and college level. She currently serves on her school PBIS team and crisis team. In addition, Rebecca has been an EMT with the Rock Hall Volunteer Fire Company for the last ten years.



# Maryland's 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

## **Montgomery County – Michael V. Williams, John F. Kennedy High School, Social Studies, Grades 9-12**

Michael Williams is committed to education, equity, and issues of social justice. He earned Master's degrees from Johns Hopkins University (2003) and Northwestern University (1994) and a bachelor's from Howard University (1992). Currently a Social Studies Resource Teacher, Michael is one of the founders/coordinators of the Minority Scholars Program, a student-driven initiative that tackles the opportunity/achievement gap and has spread to 15 Montgomery County Public Schools. He is a youth soccer coach and a consultant for AHEAD, Inc. and Hope 4 Life, Inc., continuing his passion for underserved communities and developing leadership in youth. His multiple awards include the MLK Humanitarian Award (2014).

## **Prince George's County – Amanda Espina, Benjamin D. Foulois Creative & Performing Arts Academy, Visual Arts, Grade K – 8**

Amanda received a B.A. in Art Education and Master's Certificate in Arts Integration from University of Maryland, College Park. She currently teaches visual art at Benjamin D. Foulois K-8 Creative and Performing Arts Academy in Suitland, Maryland. As a strong advocate of inquiry-based learning she involves her students in cross-disciplinary activities, often exploring the concepts of visual literacy and identity. Amanda has been a mentor teacher, team leader and professional development presenter throughout her ten years as an educator. She serves as Art Show Coordinator for PGCPs, and is a member of the Maryland and National Art Education Associations.

## **Queen Anne's County – Tamara Forte, Church Hill Elementary School, Kindergarten**

For over eleven years, Tamara Forte has strived for excellence. She graduated summa cum laude from Susquehanna University with a B.A. Degree in Elementary Education and English in 2005 and earned a M.A. Degree in Education from Gratz College in 2011 with a concentration in the Diverse Classroom. Tamara is a Washington College Student Supervisor, a Student Mentor, the Social Committee Treasurer, and a Home & Hospital teacher. She and her students positively impact the world daily by holding clothing drives, fundraising for hospitalized children, and helping first responders in need.

# Maryland's 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

## **St. Mary's County – Allison Sayers, Fairlead Academy 1, English, Grade 9**

Allison Sayers received her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education Science from Eastern Michigan University and later her Master's Degree in School Counseling from Johns Hopkins University. She has been employed with St. Mary's County Public Schools for ten years. During this time Allison has taught at Spring Ridge Middle School in Lexington Park, MD as a Reading/Language Arts teacher for 6th and 8th graders, an Instructional Resource Teacher, as well as, a Science teacher for both 6th and 8th graders. She currently teaches 9th grade English, as well as, Foundations of Technology at the Fairlead Academy 1. She has been an integral member of the Maryland Writing Project, assisting in the organization and implementation of the Invitational Summer Institute in Southern Maryland.

## **Somerset County – Kolby Noble, Deal Island Elementary School, Math and Science, Grade 4 – 5**

Collecting \$4000 for childhood cancer—just one of the challenges Kolby Noble's students accomplished this year. Through the use of national challenges, her students apply their math, science, and STEM skills. She has taught math and science for eight years and was the winner of the 2012 Tawes Award for a clean environment. She received her Bachelor's Degree in 2008 and Master's Degree in 2015 from Salisbury University and is a published author, identifying factors of science teacher self-efficacy. As a SIT leader at two schools, she worked to increase parental involvement. Kolby initiated a project at her local hospital that provides care packages to children and their families when they are transported in emergency situations.

## **Talbot County – Annie Mewborn, Easton Middle School, English Language Arts, Grade 8**

A former Army sergeant and Gulf War veteran, Annie Mewborn is an 8th grade English teacher who has a career-long passion for reading and technology. She earned a BS in Business Management from Thomas Edison State University and a M.Ed. in Learning and Technology from Western Governors University. At her school, Annie is department chair, anti-bullying co-chair, faculty advisory committee member, and Student Government and Color Guard advisor. She also serves on the technology, curriculum writing, and grading committees with her district. In the community, Annie is Education Director with the Frederick Douglass Honor Society and a Juneteenth planning committee member.

# Maryland's 2016-2017 Teachers of the Year

## **Washington County – Kyle Dingle, Maugansville Elementary School, STEM, Grade 5**

Kyle Dingle received his Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Towson University in 2005 and will be receiving his Master of Education degree from Wilson College in May of 2016. Kyle has served as the intermediate STEM Team Leader and on the Instructional Design committee, which is responsible for coordinating school-wide efforts to meet the needs of students through different methods of implementing instruction. Kyle is an active member of Young Life, an organization that helps adolescents grow in their faith and Labor of Love, and an organization that helps grieving families cope with pregnancy and infant loss.

## **Wicomico County – Christy Briggs, Bennett Middle School, English Language Arts, Grade 6**

Christy has been teaching for 19 years. She obtained her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Salisbury University and is National Board Certified. Christy has been an ILT Chair, facilitator for after school professional development and mentor teacher. Throughout her career, her love of literacy has inspired her to implement a student book club, an annual Family Read In and an after school reading program. Through her leadership in school partnerships, she planned the Back to School Carnival and Hope for the Holidays outreach program to support her school community. Her passion is to inspire her students to become life-long readers.

## **Worcester Co. – Kristina L. Belcher, Stephen Decatur High School, English, Grade 9 – 10**

Kristina Belcher graduated from Stephen Decatur High School and attended Salisbury University, earning a Bachelor of Arts in English/Secondary Education and a Master's Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language. She began teaching at Stephen Decatur High School in 2003 where she is a ninth and tenth grade English teacher and READ 180 instructor. Kristina has high expectations for her students and challenges herself to create learning experiences that are captivating and memorable for them. Kristina is Nationally Board Certified, Special Education certified, a Professional Development Site Coordinator, and is ardently involved with the Eastern Shore Writing project.