



## Harford County Public Schools

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CHRISTINA O'NEILL NAMED 2012-13 HARFORD TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

*Bel Air Middle Language Arts teacher to vie for state title*



Christina O'Neill language arts teacher at Bel Air Middle School, was named the 2012-13 Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Teacher of the Year during a surprise announcement at the Harford County Teacher of the Year Banquet donated by Har-CO Federal Credit Union on Thursday, March 29, 2012, at the Bayou Restaurant in Havre de Grace.

Board of Education of Harford County President Dr. Leonard Wheeler, along with Superintendent of Schools Robert M. Tomback, Ph.D., made the announcement on Thursday evening during the program that included guests County Executive David R. Craig, members of the Maryland senate and delegation and the county council, as well as school administrators, educators, students, family and friends.

"Mrs. O'Neill and all of our finalists represent the high quality teaching and instruction that the students of Harford County are afforded," said Superintendent Tomback. "Our teachers are passionate, dedicated and inspirational professionals that set high expectations for our students and help them achieve those goals by making them career and college ready. I am proud of their accomplishments."

The love of playing with school supplies and pretending to be a teacher from a young age, Mrs. O'Neill later realized that she was destined to educate and inspire. Her passion, selflessness, enthusiasm, and creativity led her to put the right book in a child's hand, to inspire each student to find their voice and use it, and to give her love of learning away each day.

"Master teachers are innovative, flexible professionals who understand how to maximize student achievement using research-based, proven instructional techniques," said Bel Air Middle School Principal Sean Abel, who nominated her for the award. "Christina O'Neill exhibits all of the characteristics of a master teacher with one exception: I have learned so much more from her about teaching, about reading, and about guiding development of students than she could ever learn from me."

Mrs. O'Neill has served as a teacher, reading specialist, and literacy leader with Harford County Public Schools since 1994. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in English from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland in 1993, Master of Education from Loyola College in 1997, and an administrative certificate from Towson University in 2003.

During her tenure at Bel Air Middle School, Mrs. O'Neill has dedicated her time to promote an atmosphere of academic excellence and community literacy. This dedication also translated to colleagues in her building through the weekly job-embedded staff development that she initiated which still exists today. She also volunteers her time and talent to support service learning projects and global school initiatives. In addition to her role in the classroom, she teaches first graders each Sunday at her church and she holds the parent

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liaison position for Monkton County Day Care. Both positions allow her to work with programs that assist economically-challenged women in our community, as does her work with the Maryland Food Bank. She has also mentored several student teachers as well as HCPS colleagues.

“I had the pleasure of working with Mrs. O’Neill at both Edgewood and Bel Air middle schools; as an administrator at both schools, I had the opportunity to observe her on many occasions in a wide variety of settings,” said Board Member and former administrator Mrs. Nancy Reynolds. “Mrs. O’Neill has played a vital role in the success of both schools and she exemplifies all of the positive characteristics of Harford County Public Schools teachers and will serve as an outstanding representative of our school system.”

As the Harford County Teacher of the Year, Mrs. O’Neill will receive free use of a brand new 2012 Kia Forte for one year courtesy of Jones Junction, a Dell laptop computer, a watch from Saxon’s Diamond Centers, a Kindle reader courtesy of Freedom Federal Credit Union, an engraved apple and a plaque; in addition, she will be awarded many dinner and bank gift certificates, local merchant gift cards and \$1,200 from HAR-CO Federal Credit Union provided to all five finalists.

Mrs. O’Neill will also compete for the title of Maryland Teacher of the Year to represent teachers across the state as an education spokesperson. The state winner will be announced at the Maryland Teacher of the Year Gala in October.

Visit [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org) for more information on 2012-13 HCPS Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Christina D. O’Neill, as well as the top five Harford County Teacher of the Year finalists.

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