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HCPS ANNOUNCES TOP FIVE CONTENDERS FOR COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Expert educators vie for prestigious title

The top five finalists for the 2016 Harford County Teacher of the Year award have been released and are listed in alphabetical order below. The judging panel had a difficult and unenviable task again this year with many outstanding teachers nominated for the award. Just to have been deemed worthy by a student, parent, administrator or community member to be Harford County's Teacher of the Year from among the nearly 3,000 teachers in the system is remarkable.

Amy Beighley, Darlington Elementary School

Special Education Teacher



Amy Beighley is a special educator with 18 years of teaching experience. For the past nine years, she has worked for Harford County Public Schools at Darlington Elementary in the self-contained autism (STRIVE) program. Mrs. Beighley attended La Salle University and Western Maryland College. Mrs. Beighley is also Teacher in Charge at Darlington Elementary. She is a member of the school Crisis Team and the School Improvement Team. Mrs. Beighley developed the "Learning Pals" program at Darlington Elementary, an award-winning curriculum designed to encourage appropriate social interactions and autism awareness among students with autism and typically developing peers.

Sharalyn Heinly, North Harford Middle School

Mathematics Teacher, Grade 7



Sharalyn Heinly received 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 received 30 credits beyond her master's focusing on science, mathematics and behavioral studies. Ms. Heinly is in her 22nd year of teaching with Harford County Public Schools and her 26th year of teaching American Sign Language classes at Harford Community College. Mrs. Heinly has been North Harford Middle School's St. Jude Math-a-thon coordinator for eight years, raising more than \$30,000 for the kids at St. Jude's Children Hospital. She is the Race Director for the One World Run since 2010, raising over \$18,900 for orphans in Kandaria, Kenya.

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**Kristine Jurgs, Southampton Middle School
Special Education Teacher**



Kristine Jurgs graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Special Education and a minor in Elementary Education from West Chester University of Pennsylvania in 1999. She earned her master's degree in Administration and Supervision from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland in 2009. Ms. Jurgs is a member of the intervention committee at Southampton Middle. She has led and coordinated community-based instruction and facilitated service-learning projects. As a teacher mentor, Ms. Jurgs has facilitated professional development sessions. Ms. Jurgs was honored as a Harford County Teacher of the Year top five finalist in 2013.

**Deborah Mateer, Havre de Grace High School
Mathematics Teacher**



Deborah Mateer received her bachelor's degree in Secondary Mathematics Education from Millersville University in 1996 and a master's degree in Mathematics Education from Towson University in 2003. A teacher at Havre de Grace High School for 20 years, Mrs. Mateer has served as mathematics department chair since 2000. She serves on the School Improvement Team, co-advises the National Honor Society, and assists the marching band. Mrs. Mateer has presented various professional development sessions at the county level to fellow mathematics educators. In October 2015, Mrs. Mateer was honored as an Everyday Hero by the Greater Excellence in Education Foundation.

**Kimberly Wheeler, Magnolia Elementary School
Teacher, Grade 4**



Kimberly Wheeler received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Salisbury University in 2005 and her Master of Science in Instructional Technology from Towson University in 2014. Ms. Wheeler has taught fourth grade at Magnolia Elementary School for 11 years. She serves on the School Improvement Team and facilitates the Community Collaboration Team. Ms. Wheeler strives to grow professionally; she attended the Ron Clark Academy, the International Society for Technology in Education conference and is piloting the integration of tablets in her classroom. Ms. Wheeler received the Greater Excellence in Education Foundation Every Day Hero award in 2012.

This year's Teacher of the Year Judging Committee reviewed and scored all nomination packets to determine a pool of candidates that participated in an interview with a panel of seven judges. The judges narrowed the pool to the top five finalists, one of which will be crowned the 2016 Harford County Teacher of the Year.

A surprise announcement of the winner will take place at the annual Harford County Teacher of the Year Banquet to be held on Wednesday, March 16, at the Bayou Restaurant in Havre de Grace. Again this year, the banquet is being provided by the Bayou Restaurant and HAR-CO Credit Union, with many outstanding gifts for our finalists donated by local Harford County businesses!

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