

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ANNOUNCES TOP FIVE CONTENDERS FOR COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Expert educators vie for prestigious title

The top five finalists for the 2019 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.



Rebecca Martinek, *North Harford Middle School*
Science Teacher

Rebecca Martinek is an enthusiastic Biology teacher with 15 years of experience teaching middle school Life Science. Ms. Martinek has a bachelor's degree in Biology and a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Notre Dame of Maryland University. She is passionate about generating engaging and meaningful classroom discussions and experiences for all her students. Ms. Martinek is a driving force behind students being actively engaged in science and participating in a schoolwide Science Fair. As a former scientist in a neurology lab, she brings real life experiences into the classroom to share with her students.



Paige Milanoski, *Havre de Grace High School*
English Teacher

Paige Milanoski is a 20-year veteran of the teaching profession, 19 of which have been completed in Harford County Public Schools. Ms. Milanoski has enjoyed being an English, Strategic Reading, and Drama I teacher for all high school grade levels. Ms. Milanoski earned a Bachelor of Arts in English, with a concentration in Secondary Education, from Elizabethtown College in 1999, and a Master of Arts Equivalency in Reading in 2009 after completing coursework at both Towson University and University of Phoenix. In addition to teaching, Ms. Milanoski actively sponsors the Havre de Grace High School chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions (S.A.D.D.).

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Kristie Smith, *Edgewood Middle School*
Science Teacher

Kristie Smith began her career with Teach for America in 2012 before returning home to Harford County to teach science at Edgewood Middle School. Leading environmental initiatives at Edgewood Middle has fueled her passion for empowering students. Ms. Smith has served as Science Department Chair and member of the School Performance Achievement, Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, and curriculum teams. Her accomplishments include being named Green Teacher of the Year, receiving a citation from the Maryland General Assembly, successful naming of Rams Creek, and presenting in the HCPS Ignite Showcases. Ms. Smith earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Salisbury University in 2010 and a Master of Science in Education from Johns Hopkins University in 2017.



Kathleen Thompson, *Ring Factory/Joppatowne Elementary Schools*
Gifted and Talented Teacher

Kathleen Thompson is in her 19th year as an accomplished fifth grade teacher and is currently the Gifted and Talented teacher at Ring Factory and Joppatowne elementary schools. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education in 2000 and Master of Science in Instructional Technology in 2005. She also obtained Middle School English Language Arts Certification in 2007, National Board Certification in the area of Middle School Generalist in 2011, and Administrator I Certification in 2014. She leads National Board Candidate Support Sessions and presents school- and county-based professional development. She won the HCPS Curriculum Award consecutively in 2017 and 2018. Mrs. Thompson is a very proud alumni of NASA's Space Camp for Educators.



Dawn Zipay, *Ring Factory Elementary School*
Music Teacher

Dawn Zipay is a National Board Certified Instrumental Music Teacher at Ring Factory Elementary. She holds a Bachelor of Music from State University of New York Potsdam (1997) and a Master of Science from The College of Saint Rose (2002), both in music education. Her passion for students, music, and teaching extends throughout the county as she directs musical and variety shows, serves on the School Performance and Achievement Team, Scheduling Committee, and Music Program Committee. Outside of school, she is Principal Horn of the Susquehanna Symphony and Nova Ensemble and is an adjunct faculty member at Harford Community College.

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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 2019 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, April 3, 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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