HARFORD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dyann R. Mack, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
102 S. Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, Maryland 21014
Office: 410-838-7300 • www.hcps.org

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
Jillian Lader, Manager of Communications
410-588-5203, Jillian.Lader@hcps.org

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Forest Hill Elementary School Earns National Recognition on the Leader in Me Lighthouse Academic Honor Roll

Forest Hill Elementary School has earned a national honor for fostering student leadership, cultivating a positive school culture and achieving strong academic success. FranklinCovey Education, the organization behind the Leader in Me Program, has named Forest Hill Elementary School a 2026 Lighthouse Academic Honor Roll School.

The Leader in Me Program helps students develop leadership and life skills, like setting goals, managing their time, working well with others, and taking personal responsibility. Forest Hill Elementary School earned Lighthouse certification on June 18, 2025, reflecting its commitment to creating a culture where students are encouraged to take initiative and make meaningful contributions.

FranklinCovey Education created the Lighthouse Academic Honor Roll to recognize Leader in Me schools that maintain the rigorous Lighthouse certification standards while fostering strong academic growth or proficiency on state accountability measures. Honor roll schools are chosen using data from SchoolDigger.com, a website that ranks schools by percentile compared with similar schools across the state. A school qualifies by ranking at or above the 85th percentile, or by ranking at or above the 50th percentile and improving its ranking by at least 5 percent from the year before.

Forest Hill Elementary School's ranking rose from the 84th percentile in 2025 to the 93rd percentile in 2026, meeting both standards.

At Forest Hill Elementary School, leadership is not just something students learn about, but something they practice every day. Principal Cheryl Shaw embraces the philosophy "if students can lead it, let them!" Students are given opportunities to take ownership, share their ideas, make decisions, and serve in leadership roles through the Student Lighthouse Team, peer mentoring programs, and schoolwide initiatives. Through the Student Lighthouse Team, students welcome visitors, support school events, and help shape school initiatives. This helps them build confidence while fostering responsibility and learning leadership skills.

"I am so proud of the Forest Hill Elementary School community for earning this amazing honor," said Dr. Dyann R. Mack, Superintendent of Harford County Public Schools. "Leader in Me teaches students essential leadership, life, and career-ready skills. At Forest Hill Elementary School, students have a real voice, and they take ownership of their learning in a culture built on acceptance and support. That work is preparing every student for the future and ensuring they are all *Ready by Design*."

In a letter to Principal Shaw, Sean Covey of FranklinCovey Education wrote, "It is schools like yours that serve as exemplars for Leader in Me Schools throughout the world." This honor reflects the collective efforts of Forest Hill's staff, students, and families to create a community where caring leads to excellence. The Lighthouse Academic Honor Roll decal will be added to the school's Lighthouse banner as a lasting reminder of this achievement.

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