

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 8, 2025**

**Harford County Public Schools Announces Teacher of the Year and more at  
Celebration of Excellence in Education**

*Recipients from all aspects of education in Harford County Public Schools*

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is proud to announce the 2025 honorees recognized at the Celebration of Excellence in Education. These outstanding individuals, representing various roles within the school system, have demonstrated exceptional dedication to the students and families of Harford County.

Teacher of the Year: **Shelby Hultquist**, *Havre de Grace Elementary School*

Principal of the Year: **Melissa Williams**, *Joppatowne High School*

Assistant Principal of the Year: **Lisamarie Bermudez**, *Edgewood High School*

Custodian of the Year: **James Sexton**, *Edgewood High School*

Facility Worker of the Year: **Ralph Williams**, *Automated Building Systems Technician*

Food and Nutrition Professional of the Year: **Tina Parker**, *General Worker, Magnolia Middle School*

Technology Professional of the Year: **Jack Getz**, *Senior Software Developer, Office of Technology and Information Services (OTIS)*

Educational Support Professional of the Year: **Chiwy Webster**, *Administrative Support Assistant, Edgewood High School*

General Education School Bus Driver of the Year: **Tammy Yurek**, *Bus 887*

Special Education School Bus Driver of the Year: **Timothy Ollivett**, *Bus 493*

Bus Attendant of the Year: **Tami Johnson**, *Bus 468*

The third annual Celebration of Excellence in Education was held on April 8, 2025, at Mountain Christian Church in Joppa. The event brought together nearly 500 guests, including school system leaders, educators, staff, students, families, elected officials, and community sponsors, to recognize those who make an impact in the lives of HCPS students every day.

The event began with the induction of Chris Terry and Joseph Stevens into the HCPS Educator Hall of Fame. This tradition continues to honor individuals who have left a lasting mark on the school system. Chris Terry worked for HCPS from 1966-1998 as a teacher, assistant principal and principal at multiple HCPS schools including Hall's Cross Roads Elementary School, Dublin Elementary School, Slate Ridge Elementary School, Homestead Elementary School, and Homestead/Wakefield Elementary school. Joseph Stevens worked for HCPS from 1965-2005 as a teacher, assistant principal and principal at several HCPS schools including Oakington Elementary School, Bel Air Elementary School, Hickory Elementary School, William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary School, Deerfield Elementary School, Edgewood Elementary School and Bakerfield Elementary School.

This year, HCPS expanded the awards to recognize the dedication of school transportation staff, including honors for General Education School Bus Driver of the Year, Special Education School Bus Driver of the Year, and Bus Attendant of the Year.

"Every one of these individuals has made a profound impact on our students, schools, and community. Their dedication, whether in the classroom, supporting operations, ensuring safe and welcoming spaces, or providing essential services, helps create an environment where students can thrive," said Dr. Sean Bulson, Superintendent of Harford County Public Schools. "Education is a collective effort, and tonight, we celebrate the passion, commitment, and excellence that make Harford County Public Schools an incredible place to learn and work. We are grateful for their contributions and are proud to recognize them for the difference they make every day."



**Shelby Hultquist** (*Teacher of the Year*) is a special education teacher at Havre de Grace Elementary School, in her 8th year of teaching. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and Special Education from Lebanon Valley College (2016) and a Master of Arts in Special Education from Ball State University (2022). She serves as a chair for the special education team, a member of the School's Performance and Achievement (SPA) Team, and a coach of eight years for a nonprofit lacrosse team. Mrs. Hultquist has been a model classroom teacher for new special educators and enjoys providing professional development at both school and county levels.



**Melissa Williams** (*Principal of the Year*) is the Principal at Joppatowne High School, which she leads with a passion for education and equity. She holds a Bachelor of Science in English Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, a master's in professional writing, and a Post-Master's Certification in Administration from Towson University. With experience teaching Language Arts and college-level education courses, she is dedicated to fostering strong community partnerships, amplifying student and educator voices, and promoting inclusive education. A nominee for the Maryland Association of School Principals (MASSP) Principal of the Year award, she continues to make a meaningful impact through her commitment to excellence and fairness.



**Lisamarie Bermudez** (*Assistant Principal of the Year*) is the Assistant Principal at Edgewood High School, where she has served for four years, supporting teachers and students in their academic success. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies PreK-8, a Master of Arts in Mathematics Education, and an Endorsement in Educational Leadership from Western Governors University (WGU). A former math and Spanish teacher at Edgewood Middle School for 13 years, she also contributed to the WGU Northeast Alumni Advisory Committee from 2020 to 2022. Beyond education, she is active in her community as a worship leader and pastor's assistant.



**James Sexton** (*Custodian of the Year*) was born in California. After moving to Maryland, he attended Magnolia Elementary School and Magnolia Middle School. He graduated from Joppatowne High School in 1998. James joined the Edgewood High School team as a custodian 1 in July of 2019. Just before the summer of 2024, he was promoted to custodian 2 for the evening crew. He likes to spend his spare time with family and friends or relaxing at home watching TV and playing games.



**Ralph Williams** (*Facility Worker of the Year*) has been with Harford County Public Schools for seven years. Before that, he worked at Bethlehem Steel for 17 years until its closure in 2012, leaving 2,500 workers without income. While raising a family of five, he co-founded Laughing Wolfe Resources Inc., which now provides food to 2,900 families monthly. Committed to growth, he earned a top-ranked degree in HVAC+R and maintains an active Journeyman's license with 12 years of experience. This past year, he transitioned to building automation and enjoys learning new skills.



**Tina Parker** (*Food and Nutrition Professional of the Year*) has been a Food and Nutrition general worker at Magnolia Middle School for nearly six years. She initially joined for a schedule that suited her young son but stayed for her love of the students and community. Known for her warm and caring nature, she learns students' names and takes a genuine interest in their lives. Beyond the kitchen, she supports students in various ways and brings creativity to her work, crafting beautifully presented meals. Outside of school, she enjoys experimenting with new recipes with her 10-year-old son, her pride and joy.



**Jack Getz** (*Technology Professional of the Year*) has been working in Information Technology and Software Development for more than 20 years. Upon graduating from the University of Maryland with a degree in computer science, he began his career at a tech startup. In 2006, he joined the Office of Technology at Harford County Public Schools as a software developer and has been with the district for 19 years. He is happily married to his wife, Celene Getz, who works for Johns Hopkins University. In their free time, they enjoy traveling and have visited more than 10 countries.

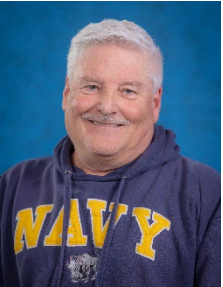


**Chiwy Webster** (*Educational Support Professional of the Year*) has been with Harford County Public Schools for 29 years, starting as a substitute before becoming an administrative specialist. A Joppatowne High School graduate, she considers Edgewood her home and takes pride in making a daily impact by assisting parents, students, and staff. Beyond her role, she has mentored nearly 200 girls through the First Ladies of Edgewood program, achieving a 100% graduation rate. Passionate about service, she has managed the Toys for Tots warehouse for five years, helping distribute over 80,000 toys. Twice nominated for Harford County's Most Beautiful

for her volunteer work, Ms. Webster lives by the motto, “The need is the call.” In her free time, she enjoys naps, time with her Goddaughter, Laila, and being with friends.



**Tammy Yurek** (*General Education Bus Driver of the Year*) has been a dedicated HCPS bus driver for 15 years, currently driving Bus 887 for Bel Air High, Bel Air Middle, and Emmorton Elementary schools. Her connection to HCPS spans nearly 35 years, beginning as a PTA volunteer and later working as a substitute before becoming a driver. She advises new drivers to prioritize safety, stay patient, and build strong relationships with students, parents, and staff. She finds joy in making each ride enjoyable and watching her students grow throughout the year. Ms. Yurek has five children, all Harford Technical High School graduates, and cherishes time with her seven grandchildren. In her free time, she enjoys scrapbooking, baking, and traveling with her family.



**Timothy Ollivett** (*Special Education Bus Driver of the Year*) has been an HCPS bus driver for five years, currently driving Bus 493 for C. Milton Wright High School, Southampton Middle School, Forest Hill Elementary School, and Harford Academy. Originally from Kingsville, Maryland, he believes in making each ride both fun and safe while building trust and respect through fairness and consistency. What he enjoys most about his job is seeing students leave the bus happier than when they boarded, knowing he has made a positive impact on their day. Mr. Ollivett served five years in the U.S. Navy as an Air Traffic Controller and retired from Verizon Communications after 30 years. He and his wife have lived in Harford County since 1987 and have two children who graduated from Fallston High School.



**Tami Johnson** (*Bus Attendant of the Year*) has been with Harford County Public Schools for nearly 17 years, including six years as a bus attendant. She currently serves as a bus attendant on Bus 468, supporting students at Havre de Grace Middle, Havre de Grace Elementary, and Meadowvale Elementary schools. A Havre de Grace native and graduate, Ms. Johnson advises new attendants to stay organized, build strong relationships with students, staff, and parents, and create a positive and enjoyable bus environment. What she loves most about her job is watching students grow, learning about their interests, and helping them achieve small goals. She takes great pride in earning the trust of both children and their families.

Visit [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org) for more information on all 2025 finalists.

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