

## **Communications Office**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Among the Nation's Rarest: HCPS Students Join the Less than 1% with Dual Degrees**

*TAM+ Early College students earn high school diplomas and college degrees in Teaching*

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS), in partnership with Harford Community College (HCC), is proud to celebrate a milestone achievement for 22 graduating seniors who have earned both their high school diploma and an Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) in Elementary/Special Education.

This inaugural cohort of students in the Teacher Academy of Maryland (TAM) + Early College program has completed an extraordinary academic journey—earning 60 college credits while still in high school. Nationally, approximately .02 percent of high school students graduate with an associate degree in a teaching track, alongside their diploma, making this accomplishment especially noteworthy.

“Our students have demonstrated remarkable dedication, perseverance, and passion for the field of education,” said HCPS Interim Superintendent Dr. Dyann R. Mack. “They represent the future of our classrooms and our TAM+ program with HCC embodies the power of innovative partnerships within our community.”

To recognize this achievement, HCPS and HCC hosted an informal celebration immediately following the students’ final exams, marking the completion of their degree requirements.

Students, families, and program leaders gathered to honor the cohort’s success, culminating in a commemorative moment when students donned their HCC caps and gowns for a formal photo ahead of their official college graduation on May 21, 2026.

The TAM + Early College program is the result of a strong collaboration between HCPS and HCC faculty and leadership, including Professor of Education Brigid Cook and HCPS educator Alissa Thomas, who have worked to design and implement the program while overcoming barriers to expand access and opportunity for students.

“This program reflects what is possible when institutions come together with a shared vision,” said Thomas. “We are incredibly proud of these students and excited to celebrate all they have accomplished.”

Graduates of the program are uniquely positioned to continue their education and pursue careers in teaching, helping to build the next generation of educators in Harford County and beyond.



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