

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**APRIL 21, 2021**

## **LAUREN BYRD NAMED 2021 HARFORD COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

*1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher from Hickory Elementary School to vie for state title*



Lauren Byrd, 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher at Hickory Elementary School with 17 years of teaching experience, nine in Harford County Public Schools (HCPS), was named the 2021 HCPS Teacher of the Year during a surprise announcement at the 27th Annual Harford County Teacher of the Year live event. This year, the virtual event included approximately 200 invited guests and was open to all community members to join in the celebration.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sean Bulson made the announcement Wednesday evening to guests from all over the county, including elected officials, school administrators, educators, students, family, friends, and community sponsors.

“This event provides an opportunity for the Harford County community to come together, to celebrate the teaching profession,” said Dr. Bulson. “We shine the spotlight on five outstanding finalists. Listening to their students share what makes them special is one of the highlights of the evening and truly a gift for each educator, as well as for each of us in attendance. Mrs. Byrd illustrates the importance building relationships and creating an environment, whether in-person or virtual, has on encouraging and supporting students. I hope you follow Mrs. Byrd’s blog on our website through the upcoming year, and I’m honored to announce Mrs. Byrd as Harford County’s 2021 Teacher of the Year.”

Mrs. Byrd began her career with HCPS in 2012 at Roye-Williams Elementary School and currently teaches at Hickory Elementary School. Mrs. Byrd holds a master's degree from Loyola University as a reading teacher and a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Juniata College. Mrs. Byrd was nominated for Harford County’s Teacher of the Year by the Turner family.

“Mrs. Byrd can inspire her students to ‘do hard things’ because she has herself modeled this in her role as an educator, serving not only the first-grade students daily in her classroom, but providing models for new teachers, serving on committees, and writing curriculum to benefit her colleagues in Harford County Public Schools,” said nominators Carl and Martha Turner. “She should be recognized as the 2021 Harford County Teacher of the Year due to her unwavering passion in meeting the needs of the individual student and the significant impact she has on the lives of young learners.”

Enthusiastic support for her nomination came from Mr. Brad Stinar, principal of Hickory Elementary School.

-more-

## Page Two: Byrd Named 2021 Harford County Teacher of the Year

“Mrs. Byrd exhibits confidence, compassion, knowledge of content, high expectations, and empathy. She is fully immersed in the school community; she wants to see her students in her neighborhood, she wants them to see her, and continuously be a part of the broader school community. This is all part of building strong relationships which foster strong academic achievement in her students. Mrs. Byrd can be found everyday standing at her classroom door, greeting the children, welcoming children into their shared classroom. She’s built a community of learners who love to be in that special space; that classroom has been transformed into a campground, tropical rainforest, the arctic tundra... whatever the space needs to inspire the 6- and 7-year-old students who are there. Every time I go into that classroom, I do not want to leave! What Mrs. Byrd is doing with her students is magical; highly effective indeed.”

As the Harford County Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Byrd received a free lease of a brand new 2021 Nissan Rogue for one year courtesy of Jones Junction; a Dell laptop; a watch from Saxon’s Diamond Centers; and a big-screen TV from NTA Life, a Horace Mann Company. In addition, she was awarded multiple gift certificates; local merchant gift cards; and \$1,200 from HAR-CO Credit Union, which was provided to all five finalists.

Mrs. Byrd will now compete for the title of Maryland Teacher of the Year to represent teachers across the state as an education spokesperson. We anticipate the state winner will be announced at the Maryland Teacher of the Year Event in October.

Visit [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org) for more information on 2021 HCPS Teacher of the Year Lauren Byrd, as well as the other four Harford County Teacher of the Year finalists.

###