

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LAURA POTTER NAMED 2015-16 HARFORD TEACHER OF THE YEAR

C. Milton Wright High School mathematics teacher to vie for state title



Laura Potter, mathematics teacher at C. Milton Wright High School and 10-year educator having served Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) for the past two, was named the 2015-16 HCPS Teacher of the Year during a surprise announcement at the 21st Annual Harford County Teacher of the Year Banquet. The dinner banquet for 150 guests, provided by Lou Ward, owner of the Bayou Restaurant in Havre de Grace, and HAR-CO Credit Union, was held on Wednesday, March 25, 2015, at the Bayou Restaurant.

Board of Education of Harford County President Nancy Reynolds, along with Superintendent of Schools Barbara Canavan, made the announcement Wednesday evening to guests that included Harford County Executive Barry Glassman, County Council President Richard Slutzky, members of the Maryland senate and delegation and the county council, as well as school administrators, educators, students, family and friends.

“The Teacher of the Year program is an opportunity for staff, administrators, students and parents to nominate outstanding teachers that have impacted their life,” said Superintendent of Schools Barbara Canavan. “Mrs. Potter exemplifies a highly effective educator whose dedication and unselfishness has touched the hearts and minds of the children entrusted to her. As she moves on to the Maryland Teacher of the Year competition, we want Mrs. Potter to know that we celebrate her work and wholeheartedly believe that the Maryland State Teacher of the Year honor is within her reach!”

As a mathematics teacher, Mrs. Potter considers her greatest accomplishment in education to be instilling love, curiosity and passion for learning in both students and fellow teachers. She notes the planning process as one of her favorite parts of being a teacher, and believes thoughtful consideration in designing a lesson plan, effectively implementing a lesson, and most importantly reflecting on the success of the lesson is the crux of a classroom teacher. During her career as an educator, she has spent countless hours considering how individual students best learn mathematics and has developed lesson plans that support her research. Her skills are evident in the ease in which she shifts from teaching Algebra I to Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus in the time of a class change.

By focusing on providing instruction that supports how students learn, she has been successful in connecting with all of her students, providing them with a solid entry point into the world of mathematics. In 2013, 100% of her Algebra I students passed the Algebra/Data Analysis High School Assessment, 84% of her students earned a passing score on the Advance Placement Calculus AB exam, and 74% of her students earned a passing score on the AP Calculus BC exam. In 2014, 94% of her Algebra I students passed the High School Assessment, 95% of her students earned a passing score on the AP Calculus AB exam, and 84% of her students earned passed the AP Calculus BC exam.

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Six students, including both current and former, individually submitted lengthy essays to nominate Mrs. Potter for Teacher of the Year. Each written testimony highlighted in detail the qualities that made Mrs. Potter the teacher in their lives that had the most impact by far. Among them, her infectious love of mathematics, her creative and engaging lessons, her patience and determination in ensuring each student truly understands the lesson, and her warm and caring personality.

“Mrs. Potter is able to make the classroom an arena of intelligent conversation, transforming normally boring lectures into interesting topics that spark questions and debate,” said former student Ryan Pellegrino. “She does the impossible; she makes Calculus appealing, let alone bearable. I looked forward to her class every day.”

Mrs. Potter received her bachelor’s degree in mathematics from the University of Notre Dame of Maryland in 2001 and her Master of Arts in teaching from Towson University in 2005. She serves as Acting Mathematics Department Chairperson and is a member of the School Improvement Team. In addition, she facilitates professional development at the county level to strengthen mathematics instruction. In 2014, Ms. Potter was nominated for the William J. Sacco Mathematics Teacher Award. Outside of the classroom, Ms. Potter serves as the Religious Education Chairperson at Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harford County.

As the Harford County Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Potter received a free lease of a brand new 2015 Chrysler 200 Limited for one year courtesy of Jones Junction, a Dell laptop, a watch from Saxon’s Diamond Centers and a custom ring from Jostens. In addition, she was awarded multiple dinner and bank gift certificates, local merchant gift cards and \$1,200 from HAR-CO Credit Union, which was provided to all five finalists.

Mrs. Potter will now compete for the title of Maryland Teacher of the Year to represent teachers across the state as an education spokesperson. The state winner will be announced at the Maryland Teacher of the Year Gala in October.

Visit www.hcps.org for more information on 2015-16 HCPS Teacher of the Year Laura Potter, as well as the other four Harford County Teacher of the Year finalists.

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