

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DECEMBER 14, 2015**

## **North Harford Elementary named 2016 Maryland Blue Ribbon School**

*Six Maryland schools recognized for achievement, improvement*

Harford's North Harford Elementary School was announced today as a 2016 Maryland Blue Ribbon School by the Maryland State Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education for students achieving at very high levels. The announcement made by Interim State Superintendent of Schools Jack Smith cited only six Maryland schools to receive the distinguished honor.

"North Harford Elementary School truly exemplifies what it means to be a Blue Ribbon School," commented Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Superintendent Barbara P. Canavan. "Their staff continues to serve their students and all members of the school community with fervor that is highly personalized; ensuring the success of each child entrusted to them. We are extremely proud of the prestigious achievement this accolade brings to our students, staff, parents and administrators."

At North Harford Elementary School, high academic achievement is encouraged, monitored and celebrated. The school has established solid co-teaching relationships at each grade level that allows instruction teams to target and address differentiated student needs. North Harford Elementary is home to one of only four co-taught PreK programs in the county, giving the school's youngest learners a strong start to their academic careers. A strong Parent Teacher Association and school partnership results in collaborative efforts to support students' academic growth and family cohesiveness.

In addition to the academic subjects, students and teachers value the importance of the whole child. Students participate in various STEM-related challenges involving robots, pneumatics and hydraulics in the STEM afterschool club. In the Mathematics and Athletics after school program, critical mathematical thinking in conjunction with physical fitness and well-being is promoted. Other science and cultural arts activities are provided by high school students through a partnership between the North Harford area schools.

A 2014 Maryland Green Ribbon School, the school is proud of their innovative and student-driven projects. The school's Monarch Waystation has produced a visible increase in both Monarch caterpillars and adult Monarchs. The student-built gardens yield a lettuce crop that is served in the school's cafeteria for students and staff to enjoy.

"This is an amazing honor," said North Harford Elementary School Principal Lisa B. Sundquist. "Congratulations to our students and staff! Their efforts have shown so much heart and dedication and we are very excited to begin our Blue Ribbon celebrations!"

Other HCPS Blue Ribbon Schools have been Fountain Green Elementary – Maryland and National – 2015; Ring Factory Elementary – Maryland and National – 2012; Bel Air Middle – Maryland and National – 2000; Joppatowne High – Maryland – 2000; North Harford Middle – Maryland and National – 1996; Jarrettsville Elementary – Maryland – 1992; and Havre de Grace High – Maryland and National – 1990.

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**PAGE TWO: NORTH HARFORD ELEMENTARY NAMED A MARYLAND BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL**

North Harford Elementary, along with the other five schools, will be invited by the U.S. Department of Education to apply to be National Blue Ribbon Schools. With underwriting and gift sponsors, each school will receive a Maryland Blue Ribbon Flag, a monetary prize, \$1000 of office supplies, interactive technology equipment, an audio sound system, and a school congratulations party. Underwriting sponsors include BGE, Comcast, Dimension U, Mrs. Fields, NTA Life, Rudolph's Office Supply, SMART Technologies, and State Farm Insurance. A dinner in Annapolis will be held in honor of the winning schools on March 14, 2016. On that date, each Blue Ribbon School will be honored by the Maryland House of Delegates and the Senate.

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