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PAULA STANTON NAMED 2018 HARFORD COUNTY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

English teacher from Bel Air High School to vie for state title



Paula Stanton, Ph.D., English teacher at Bel Air High School and 24-year veteran teacher, eight of which were for Harford County Public Schools (HCPS), was named the 2018 HCPS Teacher of the Year during a surprise announcement at the 24th Annual Harford County Teacher of the Year Banquet. The dinner banquet for more than 170 guests, provided by Lou Ward, owner of the Bayou Restaurant in Havre de Grace, and HAR-CO Credit Union, was held on Wednesday, April 4, 2018, at the Bayou Restaurant.

Board of Education of Harford County President Joseph Voskuhl, along with Superintendent of Schools Barbara Canavan, made the announcement Wednesday evening to guests that included Harford County Executive Barry Glassman, members of the county council and other elected officials, school administrators, educators, students, family, friends, and community sponsors.

“The annual Teacher of the Year event is one of my favorite events,” said Superintendent Canavan. “The festivity provides an opportunity for the community to come together to celebrate the teaching profession. This evening, we focus on the five finalists and what they do in their classrooms every day to instruct, support, and encourage our students. Dr. Stanton is a change agent; a consummate professional who has perfected her craft by creating a secure environment for her students and a classroom community that is instructionally sound and nurturing. Therefore, I am filled with pride as I announce the Harford County 2018 Teacher of the Year, Dr. Paula Stanton.”

Dr. Stanton currently teaches English 9 and English 10 general, honors, and inclusion. She serves as her school’s English Department Chair, facilitating monthly professional learning meetings for her colleagues and analyzing department benchmark data in order to develop strategies for instructional improvement, among other duties. In addition to her full-time role as English teacher at Bel Air High School, Dr. Stanton is also an adjunct associate professor at the University of Maryland and a per diem English teacher for the HCPS Alternative Education Program. She maintains all of these commitments with the highest level of dedication and professionalism.

“I am committed to ensuring that students have a safe space in which to learn and thrive by engaging in activities that evolve from the needs of students and our school community,” said Dr. Stanton.

Beyond the walls of her classroom, Dr. Stanton serves her entire Bel Air High School community with the same level of passion. She currently volunteers as a member of the school’s Unity Campaign Committee to engage students and staff in crucial conversations about race and culture and developing lessons that supports HCPS’ systematic goal of cultural proficiency. She also

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volunteers support to the Harford County Reading Council by scoring essays for their annual contest and to the Northeast Theater Festival by evaluating and providing feedback for play scripts. In 2016, Dr. Stanton implemented the Rose Arch Clowder Society at Bel Air High School, one of two English honor societies in the district. Prior to that, she co-facilitated a Chat and Chew club at her school to support healing for students following tragic losses to the Bel Air community. During club meetings, students were able to discuss emotional topics such as grief, bullying, and self-esteem.

Dr. Stanton feels that an intense reflection process is critical in the teaching profession, and believes that one of her greatest accomplishments as a teacher is seeking out authentic opportunities for collaboration among educators. By connecting with teachers within and outside of HCPS, she is able to share and learn best practices and modify lessons and strategies based on expert knowledge.

She contributes to her field by actively researching and supporting ways to increase teacher retention, especially within the critical first five years. In addition to supporting novice teachers, Dr. Stanton mentors Towson interns and ensures they receive an equitable and productive experience with HCPS and engage in the type of planning, data collection, data analysis, and reflection that will help indoctrinate them into the teaching profession.

Dr. Stanton earned her bachelor degree in English and secondary education from Howard University in 1993, and her Ph.D. in Education from Waldon University in 2017. She recently completed her National Board Certification. During her 24-year teaching career, she has served students in Maryland and the District of Columbia. Dr. Stanton was nominated for Harford's Teacher of the Year by HCPS Supervisor of Equity and Cultural Proficiency Laurie Namey.

"From the moment I met Paula, I was impressed with her passion, tenacity, and energy," said Ms. Namey. "She radiates love and commitment, and the knowledge she possesses to impact children is incredible. Her classroom is an inviting and inclusive space where students are encouraged, supported, and free to be themselves."

Enthusiastic support for her nomination came from Gregory Komondor, principal of Bel Air High School.

"Dr. Stanton challenges and encourages her students using a wide variety of instructional strategies, and holds each one accountable for both their work and their behavior," said Mr. Komondor. "She makes real-world connections with her lessons and uses the power of relationships with her students to maximize their success. Those students who don't have Dr. Stanton as a teacher often come to her as a mentor and confidant."

As the Harford County Teacher of the Year, Dr. Stanton received a free lease of a brand new 2017 Nissan Rogue for one year courtesy of Jones Junction, a Dell laptop, a watch from Saxon's Diamond Centers, a big-screen TV from NTA Life, 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 HARCO Credit Union, which was provided to all five finalists.

Dr. Stanton 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 2018 HCPS Teacher of the Year Paula Stanton, as well as the other four Harford County Teacher of the Year finalists.