

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Communications Office**

Jillian Lader, Manager of Communications  
[Jillian.Lader@hcps.org](mailto:Jillian.Lader@hcps.org)

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 7, 2025**

### **Laura O’Leary of North Harford High School Named Agriculture Teacher of the Year by Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts**

North Harford High School agriculture teacher and Envirothon advisor Laura O’Leary has been honored as Agriculture Teacher of the Year by the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD), in recognition of her outstanding leadership in agricultural and environmental education.

Ms. O’Leary, who serves in the Natural Resources strand of North Harford’s Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences Magnet Program, is starting year 37 of teaching, using the school’s rural campus and working farm to bring classroom learning to life. Her commitment to hands-on learning and community partnership has made a lasting impact on students and the broader Harford County region.

As advisor to North Harford’s Envirothon team, Ms. O’Leary has guided students to remarkable success. Most recently, her team earned second place at the 2025 NCF-Envirothon international competition in Calgary, missing first place by just one point—and capturing the Aquatic Ecology station award and a \$10,000 scholarship. The team placed third globally in 2024 under her direction. Locally, her students won the Maryland state Envirothon title for a third straight year in 2025, earning their spot on the international stage.

Former principal Bryan Pawlicki, who nominated Ms. O’Leary for the award, praised her for creating immersive learning experiences and fostering deep environmental stewardship in her students.

“They care deeply about the environment and each other. Their success is a result of the time they’ve invested studying after school, practicing in the field, and pushing themselves to grow as scientists and as a team,” Ms. O’Leary said of her students—who demonstrated exceptional mastery in soil science, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and presentation skills.

On the world stage in Calgary, Ms. O’Leary steered the team through five rigorous field tests and a high-stakes oral presentation on this year’s theme, *Roots and Resiliency – Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change*.

The Agriculture Teacher of the Year Award, presented by the MASCD, honors educators who exemplify excellence in conservation-focused agricultural education. Ms. O’Leary was selected for her exceptional

work inspiring students and forging partnerships that translate environmental science into action on and beyond the local farm.

Located in Pylesville, Maryland, North Harford High School offers a distinguished Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences (NRAS) Magnet Program, including a working barn and mini-farm on campus—the only one of its kind in Harford County. Supported by decades of collaboration with the Harford Soil Conservation District, the program promotes real-world learning in agriculture, conservation, and environmental science.

Congratulations to Ms. Laura O’Leary for this well-deserved recognition. Ms. O’Leary’s stewardship and dedication continue to cultivate future leaders in agriculture and environmental science.

###