



Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harford County Public Schools Parent Academy Announces September Winner for Family Friendly School Award Program

Chick-fil-A of Harford County to provide staff with a luncheon in celebration

The Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) Parent Academy, in partnership with Chick-fil-A of Harford County, is excited to announce that William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary School is the September winner for the school system's newly launched Family Friendly School Award program.

The HCPS Family Friendly School Award program commenced with the 2021-22 school year, and in the inaugural month of the program, every single HCPS school was nominated for the award. Nearly 2,500 unique votes were cast by the community among the 54 schools, naming William Paca/Old Post Road the winner with 138 votes.

"I am so proud of our school for being recognized with the inaugural Family Friendly School Award. Creating an atmosphere where others feel safe and welcome is a priority for us at William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary School. It is all about that Penguin Power," said Ronald Wooden, principal of William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary School.

Not only does the school earn the coveted title of Family Friendly School for the month of September, but the entire school staff will be treated to a luncheon by the program's partner, Chick-fil-A of Harford County.

HCPS recognizes that meaningful relationships between administrators, teachers, families, and communities is essential to student achievement. When families are involved in their children's learning -- both at home and at school -- their children are likely to do better in school. Parents, guardians, and family members are more likely to engage with their child's learning if they feel welcomed and valued by school staff and teachers.

"My oldest son, who has special needs, has been at William Paca/Old Post Road since pre-k and is now in 2nd grade. My other son is in kindergarten this year but has felt like a [William Paca/Old Post Road] penguin for years. They always make us feel so welcome, and I definitely hold a spot for them in my heart with how well they have worked with our family's needs. I can reach out to them anytime about anything," said Sarah Reynolds, a parent of two students at William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary, on her nomination form. "I honestly can't put into words how wonderful they have been to the three of us. They have even assisted with finding extra help outside of school for my son with special needs, whether it be weekend activity suggestions or support services."

The school system will continue to celebrate its schools that best engage all families by consistently demonstrating the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships. One school will be named a family friendly school September through May.

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“William Paca/Old Post Road Elementary is a shining example of how engaging every family, every day will build strong connections between parents/caregivers, school staff, and the surrounding community, creating an environment where students can thrive,” said Mary Beth Stapleton, Manager of HCPS Parent Academy and Family and Community Partnerships.

To win this honor, a school must first be nominated and then receive the most votes from the community. The nomination window is the first week of each month and the online form to nominate may be found on the Parent Academy page on hcps.org. On that same page on the website, HCPS publishes the schools that were nominated that month and opens a one-week voting window for the community to weigh in. One click casts your vote! Ultimately, the school with the most votes is named that month’s winner. Schools may win multiple times.

HCPS is deeply grateful for its generous Chick-fil-A partners at the Aberdeen, Bel Air, Constant Friendship, and Forest Hill locations for their tremendous support of this program.

More information may be found on <https://www.hcps.org/parents/parentacademy/familyfriendlyschools.aspx>.

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