



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Communications and Community Outreach
6901 Charles Street Towson, MD 21204
443.809.5908 www.bcps.org

FOR RELEASE: Mar. 13, 2023

[BCPS press releases are available online](#)

Three BCPS music educators honored with statewide awards

Educators honored by Maryland Music Educators Association

Towson, Md. – Laura Allison of Ridge Ruxton School and [Grace White](#) of Colgate Elementary School are among seven individuals named Outstanding Music Educators of the Year by the Maryland Music Educators Association (MMEA). In addition, [Jim Wharton](#), formerly an instrumental music teacher at Catonsville High School, is one of two retired educators inducted into the MMEA Hall of Fame.

The honorees were recognized during the 2023 MMEA Annual Inservice Conference on March 4 at the Baltimore Convention Center.

According to the MMEA website:

- **Laura Allison**, in her 16th year of teaching, “leads teacher sessions about adapting music instruction for students with disabilities and wrote an adapted curriculum. She has a passion for ensuring that ALL students have access to high quality music instruction.”
- **Grace White**, “coined Ms. Blue by her students because of her blue hair,” makes “kid-friendly-but-not-just-for-kids songs and videos to help her students learn. She is thrilled to now see them being used outside of her classroom and looks forward to conducting a new piece at the BCPS Choral Festival this spring.”
- Among his many other accomplishments, **Jim Wharton** founded the first school steel band in Maryland. “Since then, over 20 school steel band programs have been formed in Maryland. In his honor, the Catonsville High School auditorium was named Wharton Hall and dedicated to ‘a

music teacher and director whose spirit has and will continue to make music ‘much more than just playing notes and rhythms.’”

“BCPS has a long tradition of outstanding music educators,” said Dr. Brian K. Schneckenburger, BCPS supervisor of music and dance education. “Mr. Wharton has been a standard bearer for decades and has affected the culture of music education not only in BCPS, but in the state of Maryland. Ms. Allison and Ms. White are two exceptional music educators. Their passion and unique approaches to the craft of teaching are an inspiration to their students, but to their teaching peers. We are truly fortunate to have them in BCPS. Congratulations to both of them on their well-earned, well-deserved recognitions.”

(Editor’s note: Photos of [Allison](#), [White](#), and [Wharton](#) can be found on [Flickr](#).)

###

[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation’s 22nd largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).