



NEWS RELEASE

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Relay Elementary educator chosen as Baltimore County's new Teacher of the Year for 2023-24 *Principal, Assistant Principal of Year also chosen at BCPS Champions for Children gala*

TOWSON, MD. – Beverly Folkoff, a special education teacher of children in Grades 3-5 at Relay Elementary School in Halethorpe, was named the 2023-24 Teacher of the Year for Baltimore County Public Schools today during a gala celebration not only of the county's more than 9,000 classroom educators but also of its school administrators, staff, and community supporters.

Also honored during the event at George Washington Carver Center for Arts and Technology in Towson were the 2023-24 BCPS Principal of the Year, Brian Powell of Kenwood High School, and 2023-24 Assistant Principal of the Year, Nicole Bridges of Towson High School.

The annual honors were the final highlights of the school system's first "Champions for Children" celebration, which also saw recognitions for the school system's "Rising Star" Teacher of the Year, Transportation Champion, Business Partner Champion, and other superlative school employees and supporters.

"Baltimore County Public Schools is blessed to have so many exemplary educators like Beverly Folkoff serving our children, but we are also fortunate to have strong leadership by our school administrators like Brian Powell and Nicole Bridges and throughout our organization, all dedicated to providing the very best educational experiences and opportunities for each child in our schools," said BCPS Superintendent Dr. Darryl L. Williams. "Congratulations to all those who we recognized and celebrated today at our Champions for Children gala. We cannot thank them enough for the talent and dedication they bring every day to the mission of serving our students."

Folkoff, the BCPS Elementary School Teacher of the Year, was among three finalists from across the county who were honored by Dr. Williams, Board of Education of Baltimore County Chair Jane Lichter, and Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski. Also congratulated were finalists Talven Pearsell, a mathematics teacher at Sudbrook Magnet Middle School and Baltimore County's Middle School Teacher of the Year, and Abigail Karey, a special education teacher at Maiden Choice School in Catonsville and the BCPS High School Teacher of the Year.

A teacher for 16 years, half of them at Relay Elementary, Folkoff teaches students in the Functional Academic Learning Support program, or FALS, at Relay. A graduate of Towson University (B.S. degree in early childhood special education) and the University of Virginia (master's degree in curriculum and instruction), Folkoff "wanted anything but to become an educator" until a high school internship in a self-contained kindergarten classroom convinced her of her lifelong calling. "I fell in love," she says, "with the students, with the challenges, the creativity the job required, the collaboration, problem-solving. . . . I wanted to go to work as excited as I was to go to that internship."

The BCPS Teacher of the Year was chosen by a committee composed of BCPS administrators, staff, students, TABCO representation, and the 2022-23 BCPS Teacher of the Year, Alicia Amaral Freeman. This year, there were Teacher of the Year nominations from a record 169 of Baltimore County's 178 schools, centers, and programs.

The 2023-24 BCPS Teacher of the Year program is supported by a generous array of education partners, including The Education Foundation of BCPS, Inc., First Financial Federal Credit Union, Flowers & Fancies, NTA Life, and the Padonia Park Club.

The BCPS Teacher of the Year will represent the school system and its more than 9,000 professional educators in the Maryland state Teacher of the Year program.

Powell and Bridges stood out among strong slates of finalists for school administrator honors. Joining Powell as finalists for Principal of the Year were Andrea Derrien of The Chatsworth School and Kalisha Miller of Pikesville Middle School. Assistant Principal of the Year finalists, in addition to Bridges, were Anthony Schultz of Westowne Elementary School and Jodi Pasquale of General John Stricker Middle School.

Both Principal and Assistant Principal of the Year were chosen after asking BCPS students and their families, staff, and the public for nominations, which were then considered by the staff and leadership of the Education Foundation of Baltimore County, Inc. In all, BCPS received 1,043 nominations for Principal of the Year and 791 for Assistant Principal of the Year.

BCPS also celebrated seven new “Champions for Children” at the event who were selected by BCPS administrators and staff, employee union representatives, and other members of the BCPS community. Also honored at Wednesday’s gala were:

- Rising Star Teacher of the Year – Lauren Deardorff, English language arts teacher, Chesapeake High School
- Supervisory Leader of the Year – Denise Saulsbury, supervisor, Academic Programs and Options
- Supporting Services Employee of the Year – Joanna Crandall-Sick, paraeducator, Relay Elementary School
- Transportation Champion – Engr Johnson, dispatcher
- AFSCME Employee of the Year – Vance Scovens, building operations supervisor, Hillcrest Elementary School
- Volunteer Champion – Ramona Basilio, PTA Council of Baltimore County, Deer Park Magnet Middle School
- Business Partner Champion – Scott Dorsey, Chair and CEO, Merritt Construction Services

(Note: Photographs of honorees can be found on [Flickr](#).)

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[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](#).