



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Deer Park Middle Magnet social studies teacher named 2021 BCPS Teacher of the Year

TOWSON, MD — During a surprise visit from BCPS and Baltimore County leadership – and her parents from Pennsylvania – Deer Park Middle Magnet School history teacher Brianna Ross was named today as Baltimore County Public Schools’ 2021 Teacher of the Year.

Ross was at a loss for words when BCPS Superintendent Dr. Darryl L. Williams, Board of Education Chair Makeda Scott, and Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski appeared at her classroom door Tuesday morning bearing balloons, flowers, and good news.

Dr. Williams congratulated Ross on a teaching career spent entirely in BCPS, first at Scotts Branch Elementary School and, since 2018, at Deer Park. “Brianna Ross represents the very best of the teaching profession – talented, dedicated to her students, and passionate about learning,” said Dr. Williams.

“In a year that has tested every educator not only in Baltimore County but across Maryland and the nation, Ms. Ross shows us that great teaching transcends even the constraints of a pandemic,” Dr. Williams added. “She shows us that great teaching – and great teachers – are among the most powerful forces anywhere and at any time.”

Ross was also surprised by her parents, Linette and Vincent Ross, who drove from their Pennsylvania home to the Randallstown school where their only daughter teaches. Ross and three other finalists – Stephanie Lawrence of Milford Mill Academy, Sheri Metzbower of Carroll

Manor Elementary, and Kristine Saja of Sparrows Point High – were among [157 teachers honored by their schools as teachers of the year for 2021](#).

As teacher of the year, Ross was celebrated Tuesday with a gift basket from First Financial Federal Credit Union, bouquets of flowers and balloons, and a \$1,000 check and flatscreen television courtesy of NTA Life, a Horace Mann company, in partnership with The Education Foundation of Baltimore County, Inc.

Debbie Phelps, executive director of The Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools, Inc., which arranged for the gifts, says Ross also will receive a variety of additional prizes throughout the school year as a way of honoring the year-round, full-time commitment of teachers across Baltimore County.

In her sixth year as a teacher, Ross teaches middle school history. She serves as Deer Park's Social Studies Department Chair, Equity Liaison, and Summer Transition Program Coordinator and has been a BCPS curriculum writer among many roles.

A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, where she received both a bachelor's degree in Applied Developmental Psychology and a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction, Ross also earned a certificate in Administration and Supervision from Loyola University of Maryland and is working towards a doctorate in Urban Educational Leadership from Morgan State University.

"When I began teaching, I was intentional about working specifically in communities of color because I believe that it is critical for our students of color to learn from teachers who share their perspectives, understand their experiences and recognize the need to make an unwavering commitment to their success," Ross wrote in her BCPS Teacher of the Year application.

"In my classroom, I have created a culture that prioritizes building positive relationships and academic rigor above all else. It is my mission to ensure that when each of my students step into my space, they feel that they are part of a community that loves them, values who they are, and will protect them no matter what," Ross continued. "In spite of the chaos that has surrounded the last year, 'stepping' into my classroom and teaching continues to be a source of joy. If I have learned anything from this pandemic, it is that taking care of my students will always be my first priority."

The BCPS Teacher of the Year is selected by a committee of administrators, teachers, students, and BCPS staff. Each BCPS school, program, and center can nominate one teacher for consideration. Ross will be the BCPS representative in the Maryland State Teacher of the Year program.

*(Editor's note: A photo of Teacher of the Year Brianna Ross accompanies this release.)*

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