

Caroline County
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



ONE FAMILY. ONE VISION.

Teacher & Support Employee of the Year Celebration



**President
Michele Wayman**



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1987-2025 Teachers of the Year



1987-88	Bonnie Baker
1988	Cora Pinckens
1992-1993	Camille Cay Cutright
1993-1994	Brenda Scanlon
1994-1995	Cheryl Lynn Eichler
1995-1996	Miriam Dyer
1995-1996	Christy Pierce (Honorary)
1996-1997	Kathryn Harcum
1997-1998	Rosemary Ayers
1998-1999	Victoria McConnell
1999-2000	Monica Agapaloglou
2000-2001	Ellen Mulder
2001-2002	Mary Ruth Higgs
2002-2003	Catherine Knight
2003-2004	Bernadette France
2004-2005	Adele Showalter
2005-2006	Christine Fortner
2006-2007	Tamra Baurys

2007-2008	Lindsey McCormick
2008-2009	Melissa McFayden
2009-2010	Wayne Martin
2010-2011	Janna Michaluk
2011-2012	Cheri Nier
2012-2013	Emily Edwards
2013-2014	Katherine Bridwell
2014-2015	Chad Shelly
2015-2016	Cheryl Carmean
2016-2017	Marcia Porter
2017-2018	Jennifer Gunter
2018-2019	Andrea Burns
2019-2020	Shawn Parks
2020-2021	Shaugnessy Harris
2021-2022	Michelle Foster
2022-2023	Mirta Valdes-Bradner
2023-2024	Rob Honer
2024-2025	Danielle Dennis



Support Employees of the Year

2018–2020	Jeneene & Tyrell Brummell
2020–2021	Sharon Hollingsworth
2021–2022	Penny Boyd
2022–2023	Matt Sartwell
2023–2024	Sheldon Neal
2024–2025	Amy Barnes



Past Teacher & Support Employees of the Year





2025-2026 Teacher of the Year Andrew "Buffy" Buffenmyer





2025-2026 Support Employee of the Year Nick Marshall



2026-27 Support Employee of the Year Finalists



Christina Black, RES



Becky Quidas, RES



David Rosario-Torres, NCHS



Amy Smith, FES



Jane Towers, CRMS

Support Employee of the Year Finalist

Christina Black

Ridgely Elementary Instructional Assistant



Caroline Family since 2018

Mrs. Black is a truly deserving candidate because of her exceptional dedication to students and staff. She consistently builds strong, trusting relationships with all students while actively and effectively using Conscious Discipline strategies to support their social and emotional growth. Students feel cared for and supported by Mrs. Black, and she balances that care with clear expectations, always maintaining her role as a calm, steady, and respectful adult.

Mrs. Black's relationships extend beyond students to the entire staff. She has a reputation as someone colleagues can rely on for support, guidance, and collaboration. She willingly covers throughout the building whenever she is available and is always ready to step in and support the team in any way she can.

During moments of student crisis, Mrs. Black remains calm, patient, and composed. Her ability to de-escalate situations and help students regain control is a strength that has a direct and positive impact on student safety and well-being. Additionally, Mrs. Black plays an important role in developing and implementing strategies for Tier 3 students, helping to ensure that our most vulnerable learners receive consistent, thoughtful, and effective support. Mrs. Black is also an active member of our Positive Behavior Committee and Safety and Behavior SIT committee.

Mrs. Black's genuine care for students, unwavering professionalism, and commitment to the entire school community make her an invaluable asset to our elementary school and a highly deserving recipient of Support Staff of the Year.

Support Employee of the Year Finalist

Becky Quidas

Ridgely Elementary Head Custodian



Caroline Family since 2021

Mrs. Quidas goes above and beyond for our school. Not only does she build an amazing rapport with the staff but she genuinely puts everything she has into her role at our school. Staff members feel comfortable going to her if needed & if there is a problem or issue that arises, she addresses and finds a permanent solution, not a temporary fix. She checks in with staff throughout the day and asks if we need anything. She is prompt when needed and has an amazing rapport with the students as well. We are blessed beyond words to have her as part of the RES family!

Support Employee of the Year Finalist

David Rosario-Torres

North Carolina High School Multilingual Family Coordinator / Translator



Caroline Family since 2021

Mr. Rosario is such a great asset for Caroline County Public Schools. Not only does he translate for our bilingual community, he also is able to put our parents at ease, especially during IEP meetings. Whenever I reach out to Mr. Rosario for help in contacting a parent, he is able to communicate with the parent and relay their response to me (in record time!). He is a great candidate for Support Employee of the Year.

Support Employee of the Year Finalist

Amy Smith

Federalsburg Elementary
In School Support Faciliator



Caroline Family since 2022

"Ms. Smith understands her role and goes above and beyond to support students, families & staff, and is one of the hardest working employees here. She loves the kids and they know it. I'm happy she is moving on to be a teacher, but she will be so hard to replace.

Amy is busy from the moment she steps foot in the building until the time she leaves. As the leader of In-School Support, she works with many students throughout the day, especially those experiencing behavioral challenges. She actively learns and incorporates Conscious Discipline, researches new strategies for hard-to-reach students on her own time, and spends her own money on incentives to motivate and support students.

Amy also takes the time to build meaningful relationships with students who need it most. She lives in the Federalsburg community and truly believes in these children. She wants to see them succeed because she understands that they are the future of her town."

Support Employee of the Year Finalist

Jane Towers

Colonel Richardson Middle School Attendance Secretary



Caroline Family since 2009

Mrs. Towers is always one of the first ones in the door in the morning, and one of the last ones out at the end of the day. She is the face of CRMS. When students, parents, and other community members enter our building, Mrs. Towers is always there to greet them. She helps keep our hallways brightened up with her bulletin board designs. Mrs. Towers does a great job assisting our admin attendance meetings by running data reports. No matter the need or questions, Mrs. Towers is right there helping. Her experience and years of service along with her work ethic has made her a huge asset to the CRMS team!

2026-2027
Support
Employee
of the Year

2026-2027 Teacher of the Year Finalists



Krista Bennett, FES

Brittany Busick, DES

Tom Cheezum, CRHS

JJ Hester, RES

Nina Porter, PES

Teacher of the Year Finalist

Krista Bennett

Federalsburg Elementary School



Caroline Family since 2006

"She meets her students with such grace and kindness and you don't see that much anymore. She's always so engaged and supportive of those around her. FES is lucky to have her!"

"Ms. Bennett truly makes learning fun and engaging for her students. She creates memorable learning experiences in her classroom, transforming it this year into a Toy Story themed environment that sparks creativity and excitement. She takes students on virtual field trips to places such as Disney World and thoughtfully incorporates meaningful learning into each experience."

"Ms. Bennett uses a variety of hands-on manipulatives, including pom-poms, playdough, and colorful magic boards to support student engagement. She is a mentor teacher, serves on multiple committees, and volunteers her time before and after school for school events and projects. She even brought joy to students by having her elf donate recess toys and equipment.

Ms. Bennett consistently puts students first. She teaches real-world skills, such as applying for classroom jobs, and is a strong advocate for Conscious Discipline, serving as the leader of this committee for staff in our building. She fully supports school initiatives and gives her all in everything she does, especially in her role as a house leader for Team Rêveur."

Teacher of the Year Finalist
Brittany Busick
Denton Elementary School



Caroline Family since 2017

Ms. Busick is an exceptional educator who consistently places students at the center of every decision she makes. Her unwavering focus on student progress and individual needs is evident in her daily instruction, planning, and interactions with students. She thoughtfully analyzes data, adjusts instruction, and provides targeted support to ensure every learner has the opportunity to grow and succeed.

Brittany demonstrates a remarkable ability to balance the demands of teaching with a healthy school-to-home balance, modeling sustainability and professionalism for colleagues. She brings intention, care, and heart to her work, creating a classroom environment where students feel supported, challenged, and valued.

Instructionally, Mrs. Busick is strong, reflective, and purposeful. She implements best practices with fidelity, engages students actively in learning, and maintains high expectations for both herself and her students. She is also a thoughtful advocate—willing to speak up when needed to support students, colleagues, and the school community, always doing so with respect and professionalism.

Brittany Busick embodies the qualities of an outstanding educator. Her dedication, instructional expertise, and student-centered mindset make her a highly deserving candidate for Teacher of the Year.

Teacher of the Year Finalist **Tom Cheezum** Colonel Richardson High School



Caroline Family since 2009

"Mr. Cheezum is a hard worker and he always push his students to do their best."

"Mr. Cheezum is an outstanding teacher and an outstanding band director because he goes above and beyond for his students and helps out when needed. He encourages us to do our best and helps us overcome hard times. He is an amazing asset to the Caroline County staff. He never asks for recognition for the things he does. He always put others first before himself and for that he deserves this honor."

"Mr. Cheezum gives students a real outlook on life. He tells the truth about the world to us and doesn't sugar coat things. He gives tough love when it's needed. Because of this, many kids are scared or afraid of him but really he's just a friendly teddy bear. I've played clarinet for 4 years, and have thought about quitting many times but then remember that I've always wanted to have Mr. Cheezum as a band director. In my 7th grade year at CRMS we had no band director and Mr. Cheezum stepped up and handled both schools. He walked from school to school everyday and really proved how much he cares for the kids he teaches. Mr. Cheezum is really more than just a teacher and is very deserving of the award."

Teacher of the Year Finalist
James “J.J.” Hester
Ridgely Elementary School



Caroline Family since 2019

“Mr. Hester has transformed Physical Education classes into an exciting adventure on a daily basis for students and staff. Through his creativity and enthusiasm, everyday is full of individual skill building, team work, collaboration, exercise, and sportsmanship. He incorporates math and ELA academic content into his rotations, games, stations, and instruction consistently. Mr. Hester provides themed based activities and creates incredible, decorated stations that engage students including his Halloween Moonlight Bowling, Glow in the Dark Golf, and upcoming Super Bowl activities including field goal kicking. Staff often participate in student activities along during his lessons. His Million Dollar Shot incentive is a favorite among students and staff. Selected students who have met the classroom expectations for the day have three chances to toss a ball into a pvc tube. While some have made the shot, it is not easy and the videos of celebrations when a shot is made will bring a smile to your face.

Mr. Hester received the Simon A. McNeely Award from SHAPE Maryland this year. He is an active member of the Well-Being and Belonging SIT Team generating monthly staff activities for staff to participate in and build school culture. Everyone looks forward to the annual Field Day experience that he organizes at the end of the year. If you were someone that did not like PE when you were growing up, Mr. Hester would change your mind!”

Teacher of the Year Finalist
Nina Porter
Preston Elementary School



Caroline Family since 2017

"Ms. Porter is a fantastic teacher. My child was nervous about starting school, but she instantly felt loved and comfortable in Ms. Porter's classroom. She is excited to go to school each day and tells me about all the fun ways they learn. I find so much comfort in knowing that she feels loved and happy each day."

"My son had a really hard time adapting to school at first. We were homeless before moving to Maryland, and I had a hard time getting things going properly with everything that had happened. She has really helped and made such an impact on my son's life, I couldn't imagine anyone else receiving this title."

"Ms. Porter has helped my son in more ways than one. He now feels safe and loved while in school."

The background of the image is a soft-focus bokeh effect. It consists of numerous overlapping circles in various shades of green, ranging from light mint to deep forest green, and some warm yellow and orange tones. The circles vary in size and opacity, creating a dreamy, textured backdrop.

2026-2027 Teacher of the Year



Teacher & Support Employee of the Year Celebration

Thank you for coming!

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