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April 7, 2026

Contact: Laura McFarland
Communications Liaison
Email: Laura.mcfarland@powhatan.k12.va.us
Cell: 804-929-6065

Paula Duncan named Region 1 Teacher of the Year

POWHATAN, VA – Powhatan County Public Schools is proud to announce that Powhatan High School teacher Paula Duncan has been named the fiscal year (FY) 2027 Region 1 Teacher of the Year by the Virginia Department of Education.

Mrs. Duncan, who was named the Division Teacher of the Year in December, now advances as the Region 1 representative in the statewide Virginia Teacher of the Year program.

Mrs. Duncan serves as the Social Studies Department Chair at PHS, where she teaches AP Human Geography and World History II. She has spent 25 years with Powhatan County Public Schools (PCPS) – all at the high school – and has more than three decades of experience in education.

Virginia Superintendent of Instruction Jenna Conway honored Mrs. Duncan during a surprise ceremony held April 7 at the high school.

“Mrs. Duncan sets a standard of teaching that inspires students every day through their passion, creativity, and dedication to learning,” said Superintendent Conway. “Her ability to connect history to students’ lives while challenging them to think critically about the world around them reflects the very best of the teaching profession.”

Superintendent Beth Teigen lauded Mrs. Duncan for exemplifying the very best of the Virginia teaching profession through her mastery of content and unwavering commitment to students.

“Mrs. Paula Duncan brings learning to life in ways that leave a lasting impact on students, colleagues, and our entire school community,” Dr. Teigen said. “Her extraordinary dedication, instructional excellence, commitment to lifelong learning, and leadership at every level make her a shining example of what it means to be Virginia’s Region 1 Teacher of the Year.”

Mrs. Duncan’s leadership extends beyond her classroom to both the state and national levels. She is an active member of the Virginia Geographic Alliance and the National Council for Geographic Education and has served in leadership roles with Alpha Delta Kappa. She is also a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and volunteers with the Feeding Powhatan Food Pantry.

She has contributed to curriculum and assessment development through her service on multiple Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) committees, including helping design the World History II Standards of Learning and serving on World History I test design and question development teams.

Principal Mike Pierce said Mrs. Duncan is widely recognized for her enthusiasm in the classroom, her deep content knowledge, and the strong relationships she builds with students and colleagues. Several of her former students have gone on to become educators themselves, with some returning to PHS as colleagues in the Social Studies Department.
“Mrs. Paula Duncan’s impact on Powhatan High School is both profound and far-reaching, built

over three decades of exceptional teaching, leadership, and service," Mr. Pierce said. "Her ability to inspire students, mentor colleagues, and bring global perspectives into the classroom makes her an extraordinary educator and a true embodiment of the Regional Teacher of the Year."

Throughout her career, Mrs. Duncan has also pursued global learning experiences that she brings back to her students. She has participated in educational travel and research in countries including Japan, China, Israel, South Africa, India, and Nepal, and has led multiple student trips to Europe.

PCPS congratulates her on this well-deserved recognition and thanks her for her decades of dedication to students and the teaching profession.

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