

Congratulations to Our Secondary Teacher of the Year Nominees

-  March 3, 2019



This week, we are recognizing the secondary teachers who were nominated for *The Washington Post* Teacher of the Year Award.

The Washington Post award recognizes excellence in teaching and encourages creative and quality instruction. Earlier this year, each ACPS principal chose one teacher from their school to move forward to

the ACPS finalist round based on nominations from parents, students and colleagues. One of the finalists is then selected as the ACPS Teacher of the Year and the division nominee for *The Washington Post* Teacher of the Year Award.

Last year, ACPS was delighted to recognize [T.C. Williams High School AP Physics Teacher Laura Simons](#) as our selection.

This week, we're celebrating secondary teacher nominees. Next week we will highlight our support staff nominees for our first annual Support Staff of the Year Award.

This year's winners for Teacher, Principal and Support Staff of the Year will be announced in April.

Read what their students, families and colleagues had to say about the nominees and congratulate these special teachers when you see them.

Secondary Teacher of the Year Nominees



Rhea Butler
AVID Elective Teacher
T.C. Williams High School Minnie Howard Campus

“Ms. Butler is a supportive, charismatic, passionate and loving teacher and role model. Her constant excitement and contagious optimism show her love for her career. Ms. Butler is a support for many students, including myself. She is always willing to listen, help and encourage every one of her students. She facilitated my love of learning, encouraged me to have limitless goals, and was an essential support in my growth as a young

lady. I can definitively say that without Ms. Butler’s support and encouragement, I would not be the young woman I am today.” — former Minnie Howard AVID student



Jacqueline Carlson
Sixth-Grade Math Teacher
Jefferson-Houston School

“Ms. Carlson is extraordinarily talented at connecting with her students and educating in a creative and engaging fashion. She exemplifies a teacher who encourages students to achieve at high levels and to be well-rounded critical thinkers with a passion for learning.” — Susan, Jefferson-Houston Math Coach



Dr. Veronica Montgomery
Math Teacher
Francis C. Hammond Middle School

“I feel so fortunate to have worked with Dr. Montgomery for the past two years. As a third-year teacher, I have learned a lot from Dr. Montgomery about differentiating lessons to fit the needs of individual students and have grown professionally. She is a great asset, not only to her students or the math team, but to the community as well. Her presence in the school is respected by all and her many contributions are exemplary, especially to educators like me. Dr. Montgomery has had a big impact on the community and my growing career.” — Jobelle, Francis C. Hammond Math Teacher



Claudia Sechler
English Language Teacher
Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center

“I have nothing but great respect and admiration for Ms. Sechler, her great work ethic, passion, diligence, curiosity and commitment to each and learning. Ms. Sechler loves her students and they love and respect her. She goes the extra mile to plan and deliver great instruction that engages even the most reluctant of learners. She always finds creative ways to make learning accessible to her students. She is a tireless advocate for all her students. She understands them, their needs and challenges, customizes her approach and is always patient in the process. Her

students always feel at home in her classroom and it shows in their willingness to try.” — Mary, NVJDS Science Teacher



Ra Alim Shabazz
U.S. History and Government Teacher
T.C. Williams High School King Street Campus

“If it was not for Mr. Shabazz, I wouldn’t have pushed myself to do better and push out of my comfort zone. He would always talk to the class about his experiences in college and his life in general. He always felt comfortable talking to us, which made me feel like I can talk to him about anything. I think that is one of the most important things about teachers is to connect with your students and help them to achieve not only in a classroom

itself, but outside of the classroom, too.” — Former T.C. Williams student



Kailee Smith
Special Education Teacher
George Washington Middle School

“Ms. Smith works creatively to ensure she is meeting the needs of the whole child and not just their academic needs. She truly has been instrumental in my son’s success, self-esteem, development and aspirations. We are forever grateful that she has chosen this important career to make a real difference in the lives of students who truly need a caring individual that supports their social, emotional and academic development with

high expectations.” — George Washington Middle School parent

Celebrating Our Elementary Teacher of the Year Nominees

- 🕒 February 24, 2019



It’s that time of year when we introduce you to the teachers who were nominated for *The Washington Post* Teacher of the Year Award.

The Washington Post award recognizes excellence in teaching and encourages creative and quality instruction. Earlier this year, each ACPS principal chose one teacher from their school to move forward to the ACPS finalist round based on nominations from parents, students and colleagues. One of the

finalists is then selected as the ACPS Teacher of the Year and the division nominee for *The Washington Post* Teacher of the Year Award.

Last year, ACPS was delighted to recognize [T.C. Williams High School AP Physics Teacher Laura Simons](#), as our selection.

This week, we shine a light on elementary school teacher nominees. Next week we will highlight secondary school teacher nominees, followed by our support staff nominees for our first annual Support Staff of the Year Award. This year's winners for Teacher, Principal and Support Staff of the Year will be announced in April.

Read what their students, families and colleagues had to say about the nominees and congratulate these special teachers when you see them.

Elementary Teacher of the Year Nominees



Kelly Bucceri
Special Education Teacher
Charles Barrett Elementary School

“Mrs. Bucceri is an incredible asset to our Charles Barrett Elementary School community. Mrs. Bucceri is an incredibly competent and creative teacher for all types of learners. Her patience and command of the classroom are clear from the moment you enter. Calm and good humor are evident in every interaction, and this is no small thing in what can be a high-pressure world of education.” — Kelly and Matthew, Charles Barrett Elementary School parents



Katie Davidson
Third Grade Teacher
Douglas MacArthur Elementary School

“Ms. Davidson is an unbelievably dedicated teacher. She is constantly searching for ways to engage and motivate her students. Katie is a true mentor, she builds strong relationships with her students and invests in their families and lives. Ms. Davidson always shows respect and kindness to every soul she encounters. Staff and students feel her warmth and leadership fill the building.” — Hannah Christy, Douglas MacArthur Elementary School teacher



Maria Fletcher
English Language Arts Teacher
Mount Vernon Community School

“Ms. Fletcher, you are warm and welcoming to everyone, not only in your class, but the entire school. You take the time to get to know your students and their families and were a fabulous teacher for our son. Thank you for being there for him and for all of the students in your class!” — Ava and Vinny, Mount Vernon Community School parents



Kourtney Keen
Kindergarten Teacher
John Adams Elementary School

“Ms. Keen is a dynamic educator, an instinctive team builder and a model of personal conduct and character. Mrs. Keen possess an infectious positive attitude and is simply a pleasure to be around. Mia comes home with a zest for learning and looks forward to school each day. Undoubtedly, this motivation is due to the influence of Mrs. Keen and the entire team.” — Pamela, John Adams Elementary School parent



Scott Keplinger
Special Education Teacher
Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy

“I marvel at Mr. Keplinger’s ability to understand each child’s needs, tailor instruction taking into account varying goals that must be met for each child, and instill a desire to learn and achieve when doing so is a daily struggle for these children.” — Julia, Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy parent



Katie Knowles
English Language Teacher
Matthew Maury Elementary School

“Ms. Knowles is very nice and she loves to help us whenever we need her. And she never lets us give up. She gives us compliments so we won’t give up. And she is always awesome, whenever she comes into our room she always keeps a warm smile. And Ms. Knowles always brings a kind heart into the class. And Ms. Knowles is always available to help you. And Ms. Knowles is always kind hearted and a good role model.

And she is amazing for everything she does for us.”— Joshua, Matthew Maury Elementary School student



Elyse Lerman
First Grade Teacher
William Ramsay Elementary School

“Ms. Lerman has proven to be an excellent teacher and a wonderful asset to my son and the entire family as a whole. There isn’t a single day my son doesn’t reference her name on something he can read or he learned from school. I have seen more improvement in my son’s life since he went to Ms. Lerman’s class. Ms. Lerman has been a mentor to my son and is someone he always wants to learn from.”— William Ramsay

Elementary School parent



Deborah Perry
Special Education Teacher
Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School

“My daughter is now a risk taker in her learning. She is not afraid of making mistakes and actually enjoys learning from her mistakes. I give credit to Ms. Perry for instilling this love of learning in my daughter.”— Kelly, Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School parent.



Amanda Priestley
English Language Teacher
James K. Polk Elementary School

“Ms. Priestly was one of the best teachers I could wish for. She was like an angel except she doesn’t fly. If I was upset and if I hug her that would brighten my day. I never doubted her I was looking up to her, She was like a model for me. She always told me to follow my dreams. If you have a frown on your face if you look at her she will brighten your whole day.” — James K. Polk Elementary School student



April Rodgers
Physical Education Teacher
Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School

“Most mornings, you can find Ms. Rodgers at the corner of Beauregard and Rayburn Avenue. She makes sure that our kids cross the street safely and if she sees the last bit of kids coming up that hill, she will wait for them if it is close to or right at 8:00 a.m. and walk with them (or jog) into school. She greets every family on that busy corner and no matter the weather (rain, sleet, snow or heat) she is out there, and you know you can count on a smile from Ms. Rodgers! Our school community is overjoyed and thankful that we have her!” — Ferdinand T. Day Elementary School parent



Amy Salleh
Preschool Teacher
Early Childhood Center

“One of Ms. Salleh’s greatest strengths is her ability to connect with each student and their families. It is through this bond that she instills a love of learning in each child that last longer than just their preschool experience. Ms. Salleh gives each of her students the foundation they need to become lifelong learners.” — Dawn Bingham, Early Childhood Center teacher



Christine Scherrer
Third Grade Teacher
Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology

“Ms. Scherrer is a great teacher because when kids in are class are not having a great day she helps them. And when we think something is not cool she makes it fun. I love her and she loves us, too. She is funny and caring, too.” — Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology student



Amanda Williams
Art Teacher
George Mason Elementary School

“Ms. Williams is kind, caring, creative, attentive, extremely skilled, inspiring knowledgeable and a truly wonderful teacher. My daughter has told Ms. Williams and me that she wants to be an art teacher when she grows up — and I think that is the biggest compliment a teacher can receive — that one of their students wants to be JUST like them.” — Marie, George Mason Elementary School parent.



Jebren Zakar
Special Education Teacher
Patrick Henry School

“Thank you for helping me on my reading skills, spelling, and reading better. You helped me on picking a better friend. You help me choose friends that will lead me to good things! In my opinion about you being a good teacher is ten out of ten.” — Jose, Patrick Henry School student.