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Annapolis HS Educator Mary Kay Connerton Named 2023-2024 Maryland Teacher of the Year

BALTIMORE (October 13, 2023) – Mary Kay Connerton, a physical education, health, and wellness teacher at Annapolis High School in Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), has been named the 2024 Maryland Teacher of the Year.

Dr. Deann Collins, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, made the announcement Friday at the 33rd Annual Teacher of the Year Gala with Governor Wes Moore and more than 800 guests in attendance, including educators and dignitaries.

Ms. Connerton serves as the Wellness Coordinator at Annapolis High School. She created a wellness program to assist the school community with living healthfully, earning an AACPS Wellness School of Distinction Award. She co-leads the Trauma Team, programs that focus on healing and connecting communities, and pioneered the first yoga program and Social Emotional Learning/Wellness curriculum for 25,000 students. Ms. Connerton received the 2020 SHAPE (Society of Health and Physical Educators) Friend Award and earned a master's in special education and a bachelor's in childhood education from SUNY Cortland.

Ms. Connerton said that she believes each student has a story of their own. "Providing students with the tools to process their stories in a way that puts wellness at the forefront offers results that aren't just measured by academics, attendance, and behavior," she said. "The results will be felt by the heart and that is the type of education I advocate for."

"When a teacher sees a child for who they are, they change that child's life. I'm in awe of our tremendous educators, who have gone above and beyond to unleash the potential in our students--no matter their race, background, religion, or family lineage," said Governor Moore. "Mary Kay Connerton is one such exceptional teacher. I congratulate her, her family, and all of the leaders, educators, and students at Annapolis High School. Ms. Connerton exemplifies what it means to leave no one behind, and she makes our entire state proud."

"On behalf of the State Board, we are delighted to congratulate Mary Kay Connerton on being selected as the 2024 Maryland Teacher of the Year," said State Board President Clarence Crawford.

“She exemplifies the best of what our educators in Maryland have to offer and the positive impression she has had on her students and her colleagues is undeniable. We look forward to her leadership and continuing impact on our school systems for years to come.”

The finalists were selected by a panel of judges from key Maryland education organizations representing principals, teachers, school boards, teacher unions, parents, and higher education. Finalists were measured according to a rigorous set of national criteria that included student achievement, teaching philosophy, academic results, community involvement, and knowledge of education issues.

The other finalists were Brianne Souder, Cecil County; Nicole Rhoades, Frederick County; Andrea Schulte, Queen Anne’s County; Raymond Weber, Washington County; Tara Martens, Wicomico County; and Dr. Jaimie Ridgely, Worcester County.

The annual Teacher of the Year Gala was held at Martin’s West in Baltimore. Presenting sponsors of the Maryland Teacher of the Year Program are McDonald’s Family Restaurants of Baltimore and Northrop Grumman Corporation. Platinum sponsors are NTA Life, Educational Systems FCU, Maryland Public Television, and Whiting-Turner Contracting Company.

Ms. Connerton will now compete for the National Teacher of the Year award, which will be announced in April. She will spend the upcoming year as a speaker and advisor and join other state winners at meetings and events hosted by the National Teacher of the Year Program. In addition, she will be honored at the White House in the spring.

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