



NEWS RELEASE

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Baltimore County Public Schools' communications team earns five regional awards

TOWSON, MD. – The Chesapeake Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (CHESPRA) has presented five awards – including an award of excellence – to Baltimore County Public Schools for the quality of its communications efforts. Contest entries were created during the 2020-2021 school year and were judged by an external panel.

CHESPRA members include school systems from throughout Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia.

“I am so proud of the entire staff of the Department of Communications and Community Outreach for dedicating their expertise and talents to further the work of Baltimore County Public Schools,” said BCPS Superintendent Dr. Darryl L. Williams. “Communications is one of the focus areas in the Team BCPS strategic plan, [The Compass](#). Our communications team is deeply committed to sharing key information with the community and celebrating the excellence of our students, staff, offices, and schools.”

The Fall 2021 Communications Contest awards BCPS received are:

Award of Excellence

[Team BCPS Exposure blog](#) – Diana L. Spencer, communications officer

The BCPS blog is primarily used to share feature stories about the people, schools, and offices of the school system. The blog receives about 50,000 total views per month. Stories are almost exclusively written by staff, but the communications office has featured a handful of stories written by high school journalism students. Stories range widely from exploring African American and Hispanic heritage, sharing the interesting activities of staff and students during summers or the COVID-19 pandemic, recommending books, offering a peek inside interesting classes and clubs, introducing the various professions that support students, and chronicling the efforts of

student leaders. Two popular features are *Face of the Week*, an up close and personal profile of a student, staff member, or volunteer, and *Beyond BCPS*, which tells the story of a BCPS graduate and explores how their experiences as a BCPS student have helped prepare them for their career and life. In honor of the school system's ever evolving diversity, some stories are presented in both English and Spanish. Our goal with the blog is to serve both internal and external audiences with the kinds of stories unlikely to be well-covered by the dwindling local media. In doing so, we are also creating and maintaining an archive of stories and photos about the school system's development.

Awards of Merit

[State of the Schools brochure](#) -- Brian Hiles, design and digital media specialist

This print publication, distributed annually at the State of the Schools event, serves primarily as a marketing tool for The Education Foundation of Baltimore County Public Schools. In it, photos, graphics, and feature stories highlight the achievements of the school system and The Education Foundation, honor those businesses, foundations, and individuals who have contributed to the foundation, and invite participation by others.

[BCPS weekly E-newsletter](#) – Diana L. Spencer, communications officer

The BCPS weekly newsletter, issued every Monday morning, reaches nearly 36,000 subscribers including BCPS parents, staff, and community leaders. Because it has such a broad audience, we attempt in every issue to share timely news and useful information, and to celebrate accomplishments of the school system and individual schools, students, and staff. Every issue includes a message from the superintendent, a parenting tip, and a piece of artwork by a BCPS student or teacher.

Social Media: Spring Break Activities/[Instagram](#) – Sam Lister, communications specialist

Due to the pandemic, many students were unable to spend their spring break the way they might have usually planned. So, this post aimed to give students and families some ideas to make the best of their break. During the 2020-2021 school year, many students experienced digital fatigue, so this post encouraged everyone to enjoy the outdoors and unplug!

Honorable Mention

[BCPS Information Calendar for 2020-2021](#) – Jennifer Drury, supervisor, Copy and Print Services, Brian Hiles, specialist, design and digital media, John Rutoskey, print graphics assistant, and Diana L. Spencer, communications officer

Each year, BCPS produces a calendar, distributed to BCPS families and staff, that highlights important observances, board meetings, days when schools will be closed, as well as important contact information and annual notices. The calendar design spotlights student-written haiku and student artwork.

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[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation's 25th largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).