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Six Maryland Public Schools Named 2017-18 State Blue Ribbon Honorees

Program Spotlights High Achievement

BALTIMORE (December 5, 2017) – Six Maryland public schools today were selected as 2017-18 Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools. All six were selected as an Exemplary High Performing School, one of the U.S. Department of Education’s two categories. The schools are being honored today before the Maryland State Board of Education.

The schools are:

- **West Towson Elementary School, Baltimore County**
- **Urbana Elementary School, Frederick County**
- **Fallston Middle School, Harford County**
- **Waterloo Elementary School, Howard County**
- **Bannockburn Elementary School, Montgomery County**
- **Luxmanor Elementary School, Montgomery County**

"I believe that every child in Maryland deserves access to a world-class education, and these outstanding schools prove that this goal can be reached," said Governor Larry Hogan. "Each of our Maryland Blue Ribbon Schools is focused on helping every student succeed, and I offer my sincerest congratulations to the teachers, administrators, and families who have worked so hard to make certain that their schools shine."

"Each one of these schools is laser-focused on student success, and the results speak for themselves," said Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent of Schools. "Creative teachers work with engaged and dedicated administrators, parents and the community to develop strong learning environments for their students. We will be proud to nominate these schools for National Blue Ribbon honors."

The schools will be invited by the U.S. Department of Education to apply to be National Blue Ribbon Schools. With underwriting and gift sponsors, each school will receive a Maryland Blue Ribbon Flag, a monetary prize, \$1000 in office supplies, interactive technology equipment, and a school *Congratulations Party*. A dinner in Annapolis will be held in honor of the winning schools on March 12, 2018. On that date, each Blue Ribbon School will be honored by the Maryland House of Delegates and the Senate.

Maryland's Platinum sponsors for the Blue Ribbon program are BGE; Comcast; Microsoft; and NTA Life. Gift sponsors are: Mrs. Field's/Joe Corbi's Pizza; Rudolph's Office Supply; Lifetouch Photography; and SMART Technologies, Inc.

(Attached: Blue Ribbon School Profiles)

EACH 2017-18 MARYLAND BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL HAS BEEN SELECTED IN THE CATEGORY OF EXEMPLARY HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOL, HAVING SCORED IN THE TOP 15 PERCENT OF ALL MARYLAND SCHOOLS ON THE 2017 PARCC ASSESSMENTS

Baltimore County - West Towson Elementary School is proud of its PARCC scores with an average of 79% of all students meeting or exceeding expectations in math and English language arts. In 2014, the school was one of 10 Baltimore County Public Schools initiating the district's Spanish language instruction program which has grown and now reaches all West Towson students in grades four and five. West Towson, a Maryland Green School, is the school system's first LEED certified school, earning silver level recognition for the building's minimized impact on the environment, focus on occupant health, and instructional programs emphasizing environmental literacy. West Towson earned a bronze level award from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation for implementing healthy practices reflecting improved student performance. A Professional Development School with Towson University, West Towson is instrumental in training primary level teacher interns.

Frederick County - Urbana Elementary School has two special programs integrated in its learning community- inclusive special education pre-kindergarten classes and three classes- one in third, fourth, and fifth grades for students identified as gifted and talented. The school has an average of 70% of all students meeting or exceeding expectations in math and English language arts on the PARCC tests. Urbana is proud of its H.A.W.K. Kids Club - (Helping All With Kindness) – which promotes a culture of kindness around the school community. With the PTA, students participate in community and global outreach activities such as collecting over 500 pairs of socks for Socktober and over \$650 in coins to support the National PTA Disaster Relief Fund. Urbana is proud to have a 97.4% attendance rate and a Buddy Class Program where students mentor other students in different grades. Emphasis is on scholastic achievement along with rigor, relevance, and relationships.

Harford County - Fallston Middle School weaves reading into the fabric of its culture and instruction; as a result, it has won the Harford County Public Libraries' Summer Reading Challenge for Middle Schools seven times in the last nine years, including the past four years in a row. The school has an average of 70% of all students meeting or exceeding expectations in math and English language arts on the PARCC assessments. A strong commitment to supporting wellness for students and staff resulted in the school collecting over \$124,000 for the American Heart Association. Fallston regularly competes in the National Geographic Geography Bee, where three students advanced to competition at the state level. Student works of art were showcased in the HCPS Calendars, the Maryland Treasury Building, and the Governor's holiday tree. Fallston Middle is also a Professional Development School for Towson University.

Howard County – Waterloo Elementary School is a pre-k-5 school that also houses a regional program providing instruction and support for students with emotional disabilities. With a disadvantaged student population of over 45%, the school has a PARCC average of 60% of all students meeting or exceeding expectations in math and English language arts. Waterloo won a Gold Award three consecutive years for its implementation of PBIS. Waterloo is also a professional development school with Towson University. In the past three years, 14 student teams from Waterloo earned Top 3 honors in the Rube Goldberg and Safe Racer Engineering Challenges; 16 students were chosen to participate in the HCPSS Band & Strings Honors and GT groups, and 66 students participated in the 5K Girls on the Run/Let Me Run programs that prepare them to compete in a 5K race. As a Certified Green School, students planted 122 trees around the school and created, landscaped, and now maintain a rain garden.

Montgomery County – Bannockburn Elementary School was named the top performing elementary school in the State of Maryland for the 2017 PARCC English Language Arts in grade 4 (ELA/4). The school has a PARCC average of over 89% of all students meeting or exceeding expectations in math and English language arts. In 2016, Bannockburn became a Certified Green School. It has built a strong partnership with parents and has a PTA membership participation rate that averages over 80% each year. The staff is committed to building their capacity through ongoing professional development, including programs like Mindfulness that impacts both teachers and students. Bannockburn has instituted a Growth Board to facilitate teacher-led data discussions to strategize and ensure growth for ALL students. Its mantra of *first teaching is best teaching* is evident in differentiated small group instruction in all subject areas.

Montgomery County - Luxmanor Elementary School has a diverse international student population, with 26% of students coming from 22 different countries speaking 22 different languages. Luxmanor is also home to unique special education programs, accounting for 13% of the school population. Still, with 45% disadvantaged students, Luxmanor has an average of over 65% of all students meeting or exceeding expectations in math and English language arts. Beyond the classroom, students' efforts have impacted the community through annual food, clothing and school supply drives and fundraising. The school's student energy and recycling team have contributed to its Maryland Green School certification. Luxmanor is also home to the 2017 Marian Greenblatt Elementary Master Teacher award winner for MCPS. The school supports student mentoring relationships between general and special education students.