

## Kimbro and Hagelin earn Calvert school's top honors

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**Mill Creek Middle School special education instructional assistant Regina Hagelin, center left, and Huntingtown High School special education teacher Dr. Nathan Kimbro, center right, are Calvert County Public Schools' Educational Support Person of the Year and Teacher of the Year for 2019, respectively.**

**Chesapeake Beach, MD** - Two individuals who have made careers out of educating special needs students earned top honors from Calvert County Public Schools (CCPS) Thursday, April 11. Huntingtown High School (HHS) special education teacher Dr. Nathan Kimbro was selected as CCPS' 2019 Teacher of the Year and Mill Creek Middle School (MCMS) special education instructional assistant Regina Hagelin was named the 2019 Educational Support Person of the Year. The awards were bestowed during a well-attended ceremony at the Rod 'N' Reel Restaurant in Chesapeake Beach.

"I love what I do," said Kimbro, who wrote his acceptance speech on the back of a hall pass. When the excitement of hearing his name called as the top teacher abated a bit and he received the many citations from elected officials and gifts from local businesses, Kimbro stepped to the podium to speak. "One of the best leaders I've worked for is [HHS Principal] Rick Weber," said Kimbro. "Great leaders are important." Kimbro talked about attending two different funerals—one of a rich man and one of a poor man. He noted at both services that the eulogizers didn't dwell on the material abundance or lack of either man. "One hundred percent of the comments I heard had to do with the impacts that we leave on each other's lives. Everybody in this room impacts people. You impact people in everything you do. Keep impacting. That's what makes us rich."

"Everything I do is for our students," said Hagelin, who plays a large role in MCMS's intervention program. "It's my pride and joy." Hagelin, who has been at MCMS for 18 years, said her daily routine involves being at school well before students arrive. She tells her students, "every time you walk in that door, it's your destiny. Don't let anybody choose it for you. You do it for you." Hagelin told attendees that "I won this award for the kids. The kids make me who I am. Every student at my school makes me proud every single day."

Kimbro is the latest HHS teacher to win Calvert's annual award. "We've got a good group," said Weber of his teachers and support staff. "It makes my job easier."

As emotional as remarks from Kimbro and Hagelin were, the 2018 awardees also offered inspiration in their outgoing addresses. "You guys go above and beyond what the police department ever did," said 2018 Educational Support Person of the Year Dean Jones told the 49 nominees. A retired Prince George's County Police Department lieutenant and current Patuxent High School safety advocate, Jones borrowed an expression he heard from a student when he told the educators gathered, "you do the most."

Dr. Melaney Sanchez of Mount Harmony Elementary School (MHES) (pictured), showcased a "Teacher of the Year Survival Kit," adding that for the top-awardee that what is to follow is "an 18-month opportunity." Sanchez, MHES' media specialist, through the survival kit props, chronicled the many field trips that Maryland's top teachers experienced. The list included sporting events, receptions and a Chesapeake Bay excursion. "Your students will benefit from all the gifts you'll receive," said Sanchez.

Arguably, one of the most treasured gifts Sanchez and Jones received last year was also given to Kimbro and Hagelin—a two-year lease on a vehicle tagged with their respective honors courtesy of Bayside Auto Group. "Calvert County does this right," said Bayside President Geoff Wanamaker, who flagship dealership is celebrating 30 years in the county. He presented the keys to a 2019 Chevrolet Equinox to Kimbro and the keys to a 2019 Toyota RAV 4 to Hagelin.

As county's Teacher of the Year, Kimbro goes on to compete at the state level with the possibility of representing Maryland on the national level.

"Every year, through this event, we see more and more of the depth of experience, love and commitment in our staff that makes Calvert County Schools such a great place," said CCPS Superintendent of Schools Dr. Daniel Curry, in a statement released after the ceremony. "These two were selected from a truly outstanding bunch of nominees. We are especially excited to follow Nate Kimbro as he vies for Maryland Teacher of the Year. We think he can be a winner."

Calvert remains one of the few jurisdictions in the state that honors support staff—teaching assistants, secretaries, nurses, custodians, safety advocates and other staffers.

Two seven-member panels of judges selected the nominees. A compilation of points from the individual judges determines the winners, whose identities remain unknown to but a few inside the CCPS administration circle prior to the big announcements.

During opening remarks, Calvert County Board of Education President Dawn Balinski stated when she first got involved with the local public school system after moving to Calvert, she figured it would be an entity "that didn't take risks. Balinski admitted she was wrong and CCPS is instead "a never-ending, moving organization." Of the students, Balinski told the educators "every one of you becomes a part of their lives every day."

"It's wonderful to see the support for all of you," said Calvert County Chamber of Commerce Board President and Exelon Corporation Communications Manager Janna Jackson, who noted how several local businesses bestowed gifts on the 49 honorees and two top awardees.

As part of the celebration, attendees enjoyed a buffet dinner with dessert. Later, they were serenaded by Northern High School (NHS) student Marianne Thayer, who was accompanied by NHS Teacher of the Year Joshua Gresko. Thayer sang Carole King's "You've Got a Friend."

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