



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **BCPS social studies educator Brianna Ross selected as Maryland's 2021-22 Teacher of the Year**

TOWSON, MD — Brianna Ross, a history teacher at Deer Park Middle Magnet School, has been named the 2021-2022 Maryland state Teacher of the Year.

Each of the 24 Maryland school jurisdictions selects an outstanding teacher to compete for the award. Ross was one of eight finalists selected by the Maryland State Department of Education.

“Team BCPS joins the entire state in congratulating Brianna Ross on being named Maryland’s Teacher of the Year,” said BCPS Superintendent Dr. Darryl L. Williams. “She represents not only the best of Baltimore County’s teachers but the best of Maryland’s educators, and we are all so proud of her. She epitomizes what it means to be a talented teacher, a dedicated professional, a lifelong learner, and a caring and compassionate counselor and friend to students everywhere.”

Finalists were interviewed by a panel of judges as a part of the final selection process. Announcement of the winner was made during a special virtual program honoring Maryland’s 24 teachers of the year.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you to the state of Maryland and to the selection committee for this incredible honor and recognition,” Ross said in her recorded acceptance remarks. “I am so excited to represent excellence in teaching, particularly on behalf of the phenomenal educators in Baltimore County. I am so grateful that God has shown me my passion and purpose and He has just directed all of my steps. A huge thank you to my parents who are perfect and who love me unconditionally, who pray for me constantly. There are not enough words to tell you how much I love you.”

Ross continued, "To my incredible mentors Dr. Kandice Taylor and Dr. Nashae Bennett, thank you for taking a chance on me and seeing vision in me that I had not yet seen. To the other educators who I have grown with, Evan Campbell, Natasha Outlaw, Ben Wolf, Shavit Poland, I would not be who I am without watching all of you do your incredible work. To all of my family at Deer Park, I love you guys so much, and, in particular, a huge thank you to my students. You have taught me what it means to love beyond condition, to teach with purpose, and to lead fearlessly. I would not be the woman that I am and the educator that I am without all of you, so thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you. And I am ready to get to work."

Ross was selected as the BCPS Teacher of the Year on April 27 from among 157 teachers from schools across Baltimore County.

"Deer Park Middle Magnet School is honored and proud of Ms. Ross. She is a dynamic teacher, a true leader, and an extraordinary person. Our school community benefits daily from her engagement and interactions with all stakeholders," said Dr. Kandice Taylor, Deer Park Middle Magnet School's principal. "We will cheer and support her efforts in sharing her equity platform with the state as well as her continued work with our school community and Baltimore County Public Schools. Get ready, Maryland, our TOY is ready to collaborate, advocate, and advance learning outcomes for ALL students in our state."

The state honor comes with prizes and cash awards. And it means that Ross, who began teaching at Scotts Branch Elementary School before coming to Deer Park in 2018, will spend the next year crisscrossing the state and nation as the official representative of Maryland's more than 60,000 public school teachers.

It also means Ross will compete for National Teacher of the Year honors, a prestigious achievement won just seven years ago by another Maryland and Baltimore County teacher of the year, Sean McComb of Patapsco High School and Center for the Arts. McComb now serves as principal of Lutherville Laboratory School in Towson.

Ross has forged a reputation as a thoughtful and probing educator, working to make lessons relevant to the lives of her students and asking them in return for a high level of analysis, creativity, and out-of-the-box thinking. She has been a strong advocate for her students, particularly students of color, and for their success.

“In my classroom, I have created a culture that prioritizes building positive relationships and academic rigor above all else,” she wrote in her BCPS Teacher of the Year application essay. “It is my mission to ensure that when each of my students step into my space, they feel that they are part of a community that loves them, values who they are, and will protect them no matter what. . . . Taking care of my students will always be my first priority.”

Ross, now in her sixth year of teaching, serves as Deer Park’s social studies department chair, equity liaison, and summer transition program coordinator and has been a BCPS curriculum writer among many other roles.

A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, where she received both a bachelor’s degree in applied developmental psychology and a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction, Ross also earned a certificate in administration and supervision from Loyola University of Maryland and is working toward a doctorate in urban educational leadership from Morgan State University.

*(Editor’s note: A photo of Maryland Teacher of the Year Brianna Ross accompanies this release.)*

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