



Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals

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PRESS RELEASE

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Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals Announces the 2025 Middle and High School Assistant Principals of the Year



Ms. Anna Ory, Marley Middle School Assistant Principal, Anne Arundel County Public Schools



Dr. La Faye Howard, Churchill High School Assistant Principal, Montgomery County Public Schools

The [Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals](#) (MASSP), in collaboration with the [National Association of Secondary School Principals](#) (NASSP), honor both Ms. Anna Ory, Marley Middle School assistant principal (Anne Arundel County), and Dr. La Faye Howard, Winston Churchill High School assistant principal (Montgomery County), as the recipients of the 2025 Assistant Principal of the Year award. This award recognizes the work of these outstanding instructional leaders in leading teaching, learning and student achievement, and fostering cultures that promote success for all stakeholders.

The NASSP National Assistant Principal of the Year program annually recognizes outstanding middle and high school level assistant principals who have excelled in facilitating high quality instruction and learning opportunities positively impacting all students. These leaders are acknowledged by their peers and school communities for their exemplary contributions to the profession. The awards recognize

leaders in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment as well as building professional learning within their schools that promote wellness, equity, student centeredness, results orientation and collaborative leadership and innovation.

“Every great school has a phenomenal assistant principal working tirelessly behind the scenes, and we're celebrating two of the absolute best in Maryland today,” said NASSP CEO Ronn Nozoe. “Their remarkable work not only impacts their local communities but offers inspiring models for educators nationwide. We look forward to celebrating their achievements and sharing their innovative approaches that are making a real difference in students' lives.”

Anna Ory was described by a colleague as “consistently fostering innovation and creativity in both the learning process and school culture. One key example is her redesign of the student support structure”. Ms. Ory’s former principal Kim Winterbottom, a previous NASSP National Finalist for Principal of the Year, and her current principal, John Noon, say that she is “proactive and positive across all aspects of school leadership, from student safety and well-being to the building of instructional capacity among teaching staff. Her leadership of Equity Learning Walks and student Town Halls demonstrate her willingness to be an active and visible leadership presence for students and staff”.

A student stated, “We may not have realized just how essential her actions and work were at the time, but looking back, I realize that Ms. Ory would truly go above and beyond to make sure everyone felt comfortable so that everyday could be a good day at Marley Middle School.”

La Faye Howard received accolades from a parent who stated, “Dr. Howard is kind, thoughtful, smart, creative, a wonderful communicator, an exceptional listener and can find ways to effectively follow up on what matters most even when there are seemingly insurmountable hurdles in the way. Her principal, John Taylor, describes her role in fostering a positive culture and reducing incidents of hate and bias by saying, “Dr. Howard heads up our No Place For Hate student group. With over 120 members, these students actively plan and implement lessons and activities that promote acceptance and safety for all students and works to stop and address in real time bullying and hate bias in our school.”

Finally, her active and visible presence is highlighted by a student who stated, “Dr. Howard has played an instrumental role in ensuring students at Winston Churchill High School feel absolutely supported and safe. She is always present and active and immerses herself in connecting with students, which makes it very easy for any student to talk with her, ask for help, or just chat”.

Ms. Ory and Dr. Howard will both be eligible for consideration for the national award. They will join their fellow state nominees in Washington, DC on April 11, 2025 where NASSP will announce the 2025 NASSP National Middle Level and High School Assistant Principals of the Year during its National Education Leadership Awards ceremony.