



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
**South Orange  
& Maplewood**

## Board of Education Recognitions

November 20, 2024

NAME/SCHOOL	RECOGNITION
<p><b>Ms. Abiodun Banner</b> Admin Intern at Columbia High School</p> <p>submitted by Lamech Obwoye Asst. Principal at Columbia High School</p>	<p>Ms. Banner has been a tremendous help to the CHS administrative team during her leadership program internship. She's taken the lead on attendance and discipline and set up key systems that have made high school workloads easier and more efficient. CHS administration is very grateful for her dedication and hard work.</p>
<p><b>Ms. Tashmirah Kelly-Lewis</b> Montrose Early Childhood Center</p> <p>submitted by Leroy Johnson III Director of Early Childhood Education</p>	<p>We are eager to recognize Ms. Tashmirah Kelly-Lewis, preschool inclusion teacher at Montrose Early Childhood Center, for her exceptional dedication to preschool education. With her boundless enthusiasm, creativity, and care, she fosters a nurturing and engaging learning environment where children feel safe, valued, and inspired to explore the world around them.</p> <p>Ms. Kelly-Lewis consistently goes above and beyond to support the intellectual, social, and emotional development of every child. Her innovative teaching methods, patience, and ability to adapt to each student's unique needs make learning a joyful and meaningful experience. The positive impact she has on her students and their families is truly immeasurable.</p>
<p><b>Mrs. Marcia Hicks</b> Columbia High School</p> <p>submitted by Kerri Waibel Director of Access &amp; Equity</p>	<p>We are proud to recognize Marcia Hicks for her outstanding work in developing an AP Core presentation to support students in their Advanced Placement courses, particularly those taking AP classes for the first time. This program was designed to support students of color in their academic endeavors by creating a community and connecting students with resources.</p>

<p><b>Mr. Curtis Grayson</b>  Art Teacher  Columbia High School</p> <p>submitted by James Manno  Supervisor of Fine &amp; Performing Arts</p>	<p>We recognize the amazing work of Mr. Curtis Grayson, art teacher at Columbia High School, for being selected as a visual artist for the prestigious 15th African Cuban Biennial in Cuba. His artwork will be exhibited and permanently installed at the Central Contemporary Art Museum of Wilfredo Lam in Havana, Cuba. This special exhibition runs from November 15 through February 28.</p> <p>Mr. Grayson and 24 other artists from the United States will also be featured at the Casa de Africa and the Central Contemporary Art Museum of Wilfredo Lam during a reception on November 16, 2024. Mr. Grayson’s talent and contributions to contemporary art are amazing recognitions that make Columbia High School and our school district very proud.</p>
<p><b>Dr. Bean-Folkes</b>  Curriculum &amp; Instruction</p> <p>submitted by Dr. Jane Bean-Folkes  Supervisor of Fine &amp; Performing Arts</p>	<p>Dr. Bean-Folkes recently made an outstanding contribution to education through her presentation at the New York State Reading Association. Her paper, <b><i>A Gradual Release Model to Teach Comprehension Strategies in Asynchronous Classrooms</i></b>, introduces an innovative approach to building students' metacognition and improving text comprehension in online, asynchronous learning environments.</p>
<p><b>Varsity Field Hockey Team</b>  Columbia High School</p> <p>submitted by Stephanie Rivera  CHS Field Hockey Head Coach</p>	<p>The 2024 Columbia High School Varsity Field Hockey Team for an exceptional season, earning the first winning record in over two decades (10-9), secured double-digit wins for the first time since 2019, and set a new Blue Division record of 9-3, surpassing the previous best of 6-3.</p> <p>These accomplishments were made possible through the players' dedication, teamwork, and commitment to supporting one another on and off the field.</p> <p>Congratulations to the players, led by their captains and coaches Stephanie Rivera and Marissa Buzar, for making CHS history and inspiring us all with their hard work and success.</p>
<p><b>Janine Guida Poutre</b>  South Mountain Elementary</p> <p>submitted by Janine Guida Poutre  South Mountain Elementary</p>	<p>Thank you to Janine Guida Poutre, who was recently appointed to the South Orange Public Library’s board as a liaison to our school district. Over the next five years, she will do an excellent job at strengthening our relationship with South Orange’s library system.</p>

**Donna Friedrich & Vanessa  
LaForest**

Seth Boyden Elementary School

submitted by  
Maureen Davenport & Shannon Glander  
Seth Boyden Administrators

A large thank you goes to Donna Friedrich and Vanessa LaForest for leading the 5th graders in organizing the annual Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day for the second year in a row.

This event has explained Ruby Bridges' historic courage and resilience in the fight against injustice, serving as an enduring symbol of hope and progress. Students engaged in thoughtful discussions and explored actionable ways to combat racism and bullying, reflecting on Ruby's legacy and her relevance today. The students even suggested that the elementary school Ruby Bridges attended be renamed in her honor.

Thank you, Ms. Friedrich and Ms. LaForest.