



from

Anne Arundel County Public Schools

Kevin M. Maxwell, Ph.D., *Superintendent of Schools*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AACPS ART EDUCATOR RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

Southern High School Art Department Chair Michael Bell has built an art legacy that is now nationally recognized. Honored today at a ceremony in New York for his “extraordinary leadership skills in education,” Bell has been named a recipient of the William U. Harris Award of Excellence presented by the College Board.

“When I think of those educators who consistently perform on an exceptional level in the classroom and overall school community, Michael Bell is always at the top of the list,” schools Superintendent Kevin Maxwell said. “He has been a major influence on the overall visual arts education program for our entire county.”

In addition to being the 2004 Anne Arundel County Teacher of the Year, Bell is also known for another major contribution to AACPS. When he first embarked upon creating Southern High School’s *ArtQuest* and the county’s Gifted Visual Arts Program, Bell had no specific models upon which to build. Motivated by his simple passion for arts education, he drew from his experiences and brought to life a countywide visual arts community that caters to the needs of individual students, cultivates their creativity, and encourages them to realize the power of art beyond the classroom.

Bell’s guidance has led to a four-year run of student winners of the National Art Education Association’s ‘Rising Star’ Award. The award is given annually to only one deserving student artist and opens the doors to hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarship offers.

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As the consummate educator, Bell also enjoys guiding fellow art teachers as a mentor in the Maryland State Department of Education's Teachers of Promise Mentoring Program and Institute.

"Winning this prestigious national award is so inspiring, and I'm honored to receive it alongside Dr. Maxwell and my Principal, Marc Procaccini. It's also a tremendous honor to be joining the elite company of former winners like our former State Superintendent Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick," Bell said. "It's a big testament to the hard work and dedication that's going on with our kids daily at Southern High and is a huge endorsement for the unparalleled importance of a strong visual arts education, which Dr. Maxwell passionately supports."

The William U. Harris Award is named after the former Middle States regional executive director of the College Board. Winners of the award demonstrate a commitment to serve and inspire young people; dedication to mentoring and supporting fellow educators; and a strength and resolve to effect change.

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