

# News Release: PGCPS Honors World Languages Teacher of the Year

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**UPPER MARLBORO, MD** – Prince George’s County Public Schools’ (PGCPS) World Languages Office, along with First Lady of the State of Maryland Yumi Hogan, recently honored three of its own for their commitment to language instruction. Tetsuo Ogawa, a Japanese language teacher with 14 years of experience with PGCPS, is this year’s World Languages Teacher of the Year. David Colon, a Spanish teacher from Beltsville Academy is first runner up, and Edward Warfield, a French teacher from James Madison Middle School is a finalist.

“I am both honored and humbled to have received this award,” said Ogawa. “ I have been teaching Japanese for the last 25 years in the United States and have committed myself to giving my students the opportunity to learn about the Japanese language and culture. I work hard to make something as challenging as learning a new language fun for my students and in turn, they have made me a better teacher.”

He added: “It’s because of them that I am receiving this award.”

The World Languages Teacher of the Year Award was created in 2010 as a way to recognize the value and commitment of foreign language educators in the county and to spotlight the importance of learning languages and experiencing other cultures.

“Learning a second language offers numerous benefits and opportunities to our students,” said Maria Flores, Supervisor of World Languages at PGCPS. “Language learning supports overall academic achievement, helps develop cognitive skills, and fosters acceptance of other cultures.”

As the 2016 World Languages Teacher of the Year, Ogawa will represent PGCPS at the Maryland Foreign Language Teacher of the Year State Competition in Maryland.

To apply for the award, language teachers participated in a highly selective application process. A panel of professionals and community members reviewed applications of nominated candidates. Additionally, all applicants committed to attend one local world languages conference and serve as a spokesperson for the profession when available.

In addition to celebrating this year’s world languages teacher of the year, PGCPS also announced the expansion of its language offerings at the awards ceremony. For the 2016-2017 school year, the World Languages Office will offer Korean classes to PGCPS students. Other available languages include: Spanish, French, Latin, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, ASL, Italian, Japanese, Arabic and Portuguese. More than 40,000 students are enrolled in a language course this school year.

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), one of the nation's 20th largest school districts, has 201 schools and centers, more than 133,000 students and nearly 20,000 employees. The school system serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities located in the Washington, DC suburbs. PGCPS is nationally recognized for college and career-readiness programs that provide students with unique learning opportunities, including dual enrollment and language immersion.

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