

2021 Recipient of the Dr. Edward Shirley Award



Rachel DuBois

Mrs. Rachel DuBois, Principal, Bayard Rustin Elementary School , Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is the 2021 recipient of the Dr. Edward Shirley Award for Excellence in Educational Administration and Supervision. This prestigious award, given by MCAAP, is presented annually to an administrator or supervisor who exemplifies outstanding leadership and accomplishments in the areas of purposeful leadership, instructional or systemwide leadership, human resources development, resource management, interpersonal skills, professional involvement, and community and stakeholder involvement.

For nearly 20 years Mrs. DuBois has devoted her life to educating students in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). She began her career as an elementary classroom teacher and she served as a GT Coordinator. Mrs. DuBois started her path to leadership as a staff development teacher before becoming an administrator in 2010. In the Fall of 2018, after serving two years as an Assistant Principal and two years as an Acting Principal, she was appointed as the Principal of Bayard Rustin Elementary School, a brand-new school that she helped build from the ground up.

Mrs. DuBois is known by colleagues, parents, and community leaders as a role model for inclusivity. She has worked with the staff to create and implement a vision for Bayard Rustin Elementary, which honors a gay civil rights leader as its namesake. She constantly asks ‘what is best for our students’ and works hard to ensure every student, staff member and family feels a sense of belonging. She believes in the importance of a school environment where diversity is valued and viewed a strength. A community leader described her as a ‘bright light in the community’ and a strong administrator, from academics to compassionate leadership to fostering the best in others.

Mrs. DuBois values shared leadership, does everything with purpose and trusts people to make decisions. Her colleagues articulated that she is deeply connected to the school community and that she understands the needs of the stakeholders she serves. School community members hail her unmatched work ethic and commitment to provide for their needs.

Staff describe Mrs. DuBois as having a spirit that is infectious. She encourages staff to have fun together and says that all employees play a critical role in healthy school culture. Mrs. DuBois is often heard saying that ‘the work we do is important, but at the end of the day, it’s the relationships and the people that matter.’ She takes the time to lead with a listening ear and is always there to support a staff member in crisis or to celebrate an exciting breakthrough. She encourages staff to lead with hearts and minds, and creates a positive culture with staff, seeing themselves as a family. She is an invested leader who stresses that everybody matters.

Many stories shared by students demonstrate her dedication to fostering academic achievement, to assist with problem solving and her unwavering ability to provide nurturing guidance to them as they learn and grow. A colleague shared that Mrs. Dubois has the extraordinary ability to intrinsically motivate students and has built relationships that reflect the philosophy that every student needs a champion in their lives. Mrs. DuBois is a champion for children, and she demonstrates this through instructional leadership that ensures that staff have the resources and professional development they need to continue to serve students well.

The school community recognizes that she is an advocate and a partner for them. Mrs. DuBois is described by parents as a role model who is courageous, humble, honest, inclusive, and an outstanding leader who always has a smile on her face.

The Shirley Award recognizes and honors Rachel DuBois for her outstanding accomplishments and looks forward to her continued contributions to excellence in educational administration. As this year's Shirley Award winner, Mrs. DuBois will be honored by MCAAP/MCBOA and recognized at the spring membership in May. Her name will be inscribed on the perpetual Shirley Award commemorative plaque prominently displayed at the MCAAP office.