2026 - 2027 Press Releases

# Press Release: PGCPS Teacher of the Year Clara Allsup Named Finalist for 2027 Maryland Teacher of the Year

*International High School at Langley Park educator brings personal experience, military service and deep commitment to multilingual learners to statewide honor*

**Upper Marlboro, Md.** — Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) 2026-27 Teacher of the Year Clara Allsup has been named one of seven finalists for 2027 Maryland Teacher of the Year. An English teacher at International High School at Langley Park, Allsup is a National Board Certified Teacher and former U.S. Air Force cryptologic linguist whose own journey has shaped the way she teaches, leads and advocates for students.

"Ms. Allsup embodies the very best of what it means to be a PGCPS educator," said Superintendent Dr. Shawn Joseph. "Her personal journey, her deep understanding of our multilingual learners and her belief in the potential of every student are a powerful reflection of the educators who serve our students every day. We are incredibly proud to see Clara represent Prince George's County on the statewide stage."

The daughter of immigrants from Egypt and Mexico, Allsup was born in Prince George's County and attended PGCPS as a young student. Her parents instilled in her from an early age the transformative power of education and the opportunities it can create.

At International High School at Langley Park, Allsup teaches English to multilingual learners, provides professional learning for educators and leaders, helps design her school's master schedule to expand academic support for multilingual learners, and chairs the Recruitment and Intake Committee, connecting newly enrolled students with critical services.

"I see my multilingual learners and my students as extensions of my family," Allsup said. "They look like my family. They talk like my family. We just have a lot of cultural connections."

Growing up navigating Arab, Latino and American cultures, Allsup said she sometimes felt as though she did not fully belong in any one of them.

It was in public school that she found a place where she could simply be a student.

"The public school system served everyone, regardless of their backgrounds or their beliefs," she said. "I felt like it was a place where I could just be a student and belong. And that's what I strive to bring to my classroom. I really want school to be a place where all of our students can just be their authentic selves and belong."

That belief is reflected in her classroom practice. Allsup works with colleagues to incorporate diverse texts that reflect students' identities, teaches students about the evolution of American identity and the role of immigrants in shaping the country, and creates opportunities for students to build community through discussion, shared reading and debate.

She also recognizes that multilingual learners are not a single group with a single set of needs.

"Students who are new to the country, students who are more experienced long-term multilingual learners, and students with interrupted education all have different needs," she said.

Allsup challenges fellow educators to look beyond language proficiency and recognize what students already know and can do.

"We have such a great opportunity to be the catalyst for change in students' lives," she said. "When an educator believes in them and helps, most importantly, to build their sense of academic identity as a student, that's where change begins to happen."

Her work extends to families as well.

As the daughter of immigrants, Allsup understands the sacrifices families make in pursuit of opportunity for their children.

"Immigrant families make so many sacrifices and take so many risks just for the chance of providing a better life for their loved ones," she said. "They place their complete trust in us ... to nurture their children. So for me, families are our strongest partners in the classroom."

Maryland Teacher of the Year finalists were selected from the 24 local school system Teachers of the Year across Maryland. Finalists were evaluated on rigorous criteria including student achievement, teaching philosophy, academic results, community involvement and knowledge of educational issues.

The 2027 Maryland Teacher of the Year will be announced during a gala reception and dinner on Friday, October 9, at Martin's Valley Mansion in Cockeysville. The Maryland Teacher of the Year will compete for the National Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced in April, and will serve during the 2026–2027 school year as a speaker and advisor on statewide education issues.











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