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CONTACT: Sherrie Emoto, board@mbhsmagnet.org

Address:

MBHS Magnet
Foundation Inc.
P.O. Box 101
Kensington, MD
20895

Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Teacher Receives Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching

Silver Spring, MD—Mr. James Schafer, a physics and mathematics teacher in the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program, was named a 2015 Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching (PAEMST) recipient. This recognition was bestowed upon 108 teachers, who represent all 50 states (two per state), the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools. Each recipient will receive a citation signed by President Obama, as well as a \$10,000 award provided by the National Science Foundation (NSF) at an awards ceremony later in summer. Festivities will include educational and celebratory events, as well as visits with members of the Obama administration.

The PAEMST program is administered by the NSF on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and recognizes outstanding K-12 teachers, with this year highlighting accomplishments of teachers in grades 7-12. A panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and educators select the winners, beginning at the state level.

Mr. Schafer has taught at Montgomery Blair High School since 2002 and in the Blair Magnet since 2007. He is an alumnus of Montgomery County Public School's Rockville High School and graduated cum laude from the College of William and Mary with degrees in physics and applied mathematics in 2002. He was recognized as the 2010-2011 Montgomery County Public Schools Teacher of the Year and a 2010-2011 State of Maryland Teacher of the Year Finalist.

At Blair, Mr. Schafer has taught Magnet freshman physics, Advanced Placement (AP) physics, quantum physics, thermodynamics, precalculus, and mathematical physics. He coaches the school's highly successful quiz bowl team, which has seen first place D.C. Metropolitan Regional Championship wins at *It's Academic*. In addition, members of the Blair physics team, which he coaches, have earned gold, silver, and bronze medals at the annual International Physics Olympiad. Mr. Schafer has also helped found and organize Blair's annual puzzle competition, Puzzlepalooza, coordinated and

coached the Final Frontiers space engineering program, and mentored AP physics teachers throughout the county.

Mr. Schafer humbly comments on his award, “Winning an award such as this one is not an individual accomplishment. Instead, the award is truly a representation of the terrific students I have taught, the incredible teachers I have had the good fortune to work with, and the supportive administrators. Being able to teach in such a unique program as the Blair Magnet, in such an incredible school as Blair, surrounded by talented individuals every day, is largely what makes winning this award possible.”



Montgomery Blair Magnet teacher Mr. James Schafer is one of only two Maryland teachers to receive a Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching.

About the Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation

This organization was founded by a group of concerned students, teachers, administrators, and alumni in 2008. Its purpose is to promote science, mathematics, and computer science education by supporting the Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School in its efforts to develop resources and refine practices needed to provide a rigorous and enriched education for students, staff, and the community at large. The

Foundation is incorporated in the state of Maryland and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.