

For immediate release:
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**Elementary School Teacher
Named City Schools' 2017 Teacher of the Year**

(Baltimore, MD) – Fourth-grade math and science teacher Justin Holbrook of Roland Park Elementary/Middle School is Baltimore City Public Schools' 2017 Teacher of the Year. City Schools CEO Sonja Brookins Santelises presented the award this afternoon during a surprise visit to his class.

“Mr. Holbrook is the kind of teacher and leader who embodies the qualities that all teachers should have,” said Dr. Santelises. “He is a creative and energetic teacher who puts the needs of his students first and works to ensure all students have engaging learning opportunities. He is deeply committed to his profession, to sharing his expertise with colleagues, and to learning from them. City Schools is honored to have him on our team.”

In addition to classroom success, Mr. Holbrook is credited with fostering a sense of community and optimism that inspires both students and staff.

“He encourages students to work together to achieve individual and group academic and community goals,” said Principal Nicholas D’Ambrosio. “Mr. Holbrook’s leadership has extended well beyond his role as classroom teacher and has left a remarkable impression on other staff, including myself. He has pushed me to bring a positive energy and enthusiasm to school every day by demonstrating a relentless approach to making the life of students better.”

Mr. Holbrook has taught at Roland Park since 2010. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from Goucher College and will receive a master’s degree in Educational Leadership from Loyola University Maryland later this month. He is a member of the Maryland Society for Educational Technology (MSET), MSET’s Professional Development Committee, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). He is also a member of and contributor to several Twitter-based, professional development associations, including #LeadUpChat, #EdTechAfterDark, and #ECEchat.

Beyond the classroom, Mr. Holbrook is involved in staff leadership and development. In 2015, he founded a worldwide Twitter-based education chat with the hashtag #BmoreEdchat to discuss educational topics, reflect on teaching, and collaborate. In 2016, he organized “EdCampX,” a professional development day for 74 City Schools’ teachers, staff, and principals. Earlier this year, he led an EdCamp Maryland event for 90 educational professionals through the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and was selected as a full-scholarship participant in the Deeper Learning Conference on Equity in San Diego, California.

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A previous Teacher of the Year finalist, Mr. Holbrook's teaching excellence has also been recognized by other institutions and organizations. He is featured in the recently-aired national documentary *Grey Matters*, about teachers and their work with the Brain Targeted Teaching framework; was nominated for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST); and was recognized in February by MSDE for leadership and instruction in gifted education.

City Schools selects the Teacher of the Year through a rigorous and competitive process that involves extensive review by the award committee of applications, essays and recommendations, interviews, and classroom observations of the final candidates. Once the finalists have been determined, the CEO conducts a personal interview with each finalist.

As City Schools' Teacher of the Year, Mr. Holbrook's will receive a cash award and classroom supplies provided through the Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke Endowment Fund at the Fund for Educational Excellence. He will also throw the first pitch at City Schools Orioles Night on Tuesday, June 6.

Mr. Holbrook now advances to the 2017-18 Maryland State Teacher of the Year competition. The winner of that competition will represent Maryland at the national level. For more information about the Teacher of the Year award, Mr. Holbrook, and the other finalists, please visit www.baltimorecityschools.org/teacheroftheyear.

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