

Michelle Ballenger has been a dedicated educator in Anne Arundel County Public Schools for 16 years. She spent the first 10 years of her career dedicated to the students and families at Georgetown East Elementary, a Title 1 school in Annapolis. While there she developed strong relationships with students and their families as she taught a group of students from second through fifth grade. Michelle then set out for a new teaching experience and found a home at Monarch Global Academy, a public contract school in Laurel. At MGA, she has taught sixth grade, eighth grade, and is now the elementary math Instructional Guide. Michelle possesses a love for inquiry in math, curriculum progressions, and for watching students grow into independent learners.

In her role as an Instructional Guide, Michelle has been able to gain a broader perspective of the needs of teachers. The desire to be treated as professionals regarding compensation, the need for fair treatment regarding leave especially when COVID protocols are still in place for themselves and their children, a desire for engaging and enlightening professional development, a realistic perspective on workload and expectations, and a level of trust and autonomy are all common threads that Michelle believes can be woven together to attract and retain great teachers. Attracting and keeping strong teachers in the field must be a priority if our state values its children and our future.

Michelle's most valued role is that of wife and mother. Michelle's husband is also a teacher; Tom teaches history at a private high school. They have five children; the oldest 3 of these attend a local Prince George's County Catholic school. The younger 2 spend time with their grandparents while their parents are teaching. Her perspective as both a mother and an educator connects Michelle to so many other teacher-moms and teacher-dads across our state. She understands that struggle to balance work and home life to her core and sees the internal struggles of those other teacher parents with whom she works. Michelle would love to collaborate with the State Board of Education to keep these dedicated professionals in the field.

Michelle's journey as an educator has allowed her to witness the progress made towards equity for all students in our public schools. In the early years of her career, her school was on the front lines of Cultural Proficiency training in Anne Arundel County. She studied the work of Erik Jensen and learned just how poverty can affect a person's brain and prioritized her teaching strategies around brain-based learning. At Monarch Global Academy, a public contract school with Anne Arundel County and the Children's Guild, Michelle puts into practice a kids first approach to teaching with a focus on meeting the needs of the whole child.

Michelle April Ballenger

Education

Administrator 1 Certificate
McDaniel College
January 2015

MA, Curriculum and Instruction with a focus in Administration
McDaniel College, Anne Arundel County Cohort
December 2011 GPA: 4.0

BA, Liberal Studies and Elementary Education
College of Notre Dame of Maryland
May 2006 GPA: 3.8

Certification

APC Elementary Education 1-6 and Middle School
Administrator 1
Early Childhood PK-3

Professional History

2018-2022: Elementary Math Instructional Guide, Monarch Global Academy
2016-2018: Teacher, Monarch Global Academy
 2017-2018 8th Grade Math and Algebra 1
 2016-2017 6th Grade; All subjects
2006-2016: Teacher, Georgetown East Elementary School
 2015-2016 Fifth Grade
 2014-2015 Fifth Grade (Looped, Co-taught with special educator)
 2013-2014 Fourth Grade (Looped, Co-taught with special educator)
 2012-2013 Third Grade (Looped, Co-taught with special educator)
 2011-2012 Second Grade (Looped)
 2006-2011 Fourth Grade

Leadership and Community Involvement

Lead bi-weekly data driven, math collaborative planning sessions with K-4 teams prioritizing student growth
Design targeted approach to closing the achievement gap within the school house using standards based data, creatively utilizing available resources.
Co- plan professional development experiences for a K-8 staff.
Collaborate with leadership team and administrators in weekly problem solving sessions to implement School Improvement Plan.
Demonstrate best practices to classroom teachers for the purpose of promoting the county's mathematics facilitation guide.
Participate in instructional walk-throughs to observe implementation of the curriculum and the School Improvement Plan.
Organize building wide use of iReady Diagnostic Assessment; 3 times per year.
Manage delivery of math intervention by the TAs to students in grades K-5.
Co-plan family Math Night
Co-lead First in Math program at MGA
Member of Leadership/Academic Team 2018-2020
Member of PBIS and School Culture teams 2016-2019
Faculty Council Facilitator 2015-2016
Fifth Grade Team Leader 2015-2016
Site Director (Georgetown East/Tyler Heights) Title 1 Summer School 2014
Participated in John Hopkins Double Check program: 2012-2013
Extended School Year Teacher: 2013
Thinking Maps, Trainer of Trainers June 2009
Fourth Grade Team Leader: 2008-2010
Hosted a prospective teacher from A.A.C.C. twice weekly: Spring 2009, Fall 2014
Title 1 After-School Program Co-Leader: 2009-2010

Awards and Other Recognition

Anne Arundel County Teacher of the Year Nominee 2013-2014
Featured in Professional Development DVD (ASCD) Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind. 2014

I have been a dedicated educator in Anne Arundel County Public Schools for 16 years. I spent the first 10 years of my career dedicated to the students and families at Georgetown East Elementary, a Title 1 school in Annapolis. While there I developed strong relationships with students and their families as I taught a group of students from second through fifth grade. I then set out for a new teaching experience and found a home at Monarch Global Academy, a public contract school in Laurel. At MGA, I have taught sixth grade, eighth grade, and am now the elementary math Instructional Guide. I possess a love for inquiry in math, curriculum progressions, and for watching students grow into independent learners.

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My most valued role is that of wife and mother. My husband is also a teacher; Tom teaches history at a private high school. We have five children; the oldest 3 of these attend a local Prince George's County Catholic school. The younger 2 spend time with their grandparents while their parents are teaching. My perspective as both a mother and an educator connects me to so many other teacher-moms and teacher-dads across our state. I understand that struggle to balance work and home life to my core and I see the internal struggles of those other teacher parents with whom I work. I would love to collaborate with the State Board of Education to keep these dedicated professionals in the field.

My journey as an educator has allowed me to witness the progress made towards equity for all students in our public schools. In the early years of my career, Georgetown East was on the front lines of Cultural Proficiency training in Anne Arundel County. I had the opportunity to study the work of Erik Jensen and learned just how poverty can affect a person's brain and prioritized my teaching strategies around brain-based learning. At Monarch Global Academy, a public contract school with Anne Arundel County and the Children's Guild, I am able to put into practice a kids first approach to teaching with a focus on meeting the needs of the whole child.

To Maryland State Board of Education,

February 1, 2022

It is with great respect and admiration that I recommend Michelle Ballenger as a candidate for the Maryland State Board of Education. Mrs. Ballenger has been a dedicated educator in Anne Arundel County Public Schools for 16 years. In 2016, she brought her 10 years Title 1 teaching experience in second through fifth grade to Monarch Global Academy Public Contract School, a K-8 International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme/Project Based Learning school in Laurel, Maryland. While working at MGA she has taught both sixth and eighth grade. Mrs. Ballenger now serves as our Elementary Math Instructional guide. Her role is to coach teachers and provide professional learning experiences to help develop and implement curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of all learners. She has worked tirelessly to make this vision a reality.

Mrs. Ballenger's primary focus is on her students. She works diligently to hold both students and teachers accountable to ensuring students are fully engaged in teaching and learning. In her current role, Michelle has provided leadership for school staff by serving as a valued member of our Academic Team and Monarch Leadership Team. She utilizes her skills to provide coaching and feedback to teachers on how to best support all students in the area of mathematics. Michelle is always willing to take on a great deal of responsibility and welcomes opportunities to collaborate with all staff to support student learning.

Due to her high degree of commitment to the students, staff, and families at Monarch Global Academy, I heartily recommend that you accept my recommendation of Michelle Ballenger to serve on the Maryland State Board of Education. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Emily Abell

Principal

Monarch Global Academy

1/31/2022

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kerri Rogers and I am the Math Department Chair at Monarch Global Academy. Michelle Ballenger is a dear friend and colleague with whom I have had the pleasure of working with for the past 6 years. Michelle first came to Monarch as a 6th grade teacher and when our school transitioned from a K-7 building to a K-8 building, I strongly encouraged my principal to hire her as our 8th grade Math teacher. Michelle is a fierce advocate for the students and a wealth of Math knowledge for teachers, which lends itself well to her current position as our K-4 Math Instructional Guide.

As the Math Instructional Guide, Michelle is responsible for providing our teachers with Professional Development and providing our students with support to improve their understanding of Mathematics content. You will frequently find Michelle perusing articles, looking for hands-on ways to engage our youngest learners. She is a supporter of Jo Boaler and believes that all students can learn math to high levels.

I believe that Michelle would be a great candidate for the position of Teacher Member to the Maryland State Department of Education because she understands the challenges of being a teacher and a mother. She understands the importance of having a teacher voice that represents both the teachers and the parents. Her willingness to hear all sides and make decisions that benefit the greater good are just two more reasons why she would be a good fit for this position.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,
Kerri Rogers
Math Department Chair
Monarch Global Academy
430 Brock Bridge Road Laurel, MD 20724
[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I, Cherryll Clacks, highly recommend Mrs. Michelle Ballenger to the State Board of Education Teacher Member position. I have had the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Ballenger for 14 years as a colleague and 3 years from the parent perspective as she is the Math Instructional Guide to my two fourth grade children at Monarch Global Academy in Laurel, Maryland.

Mrs. Ballenger is an advocate for students and families. For example, she ensures that there are math policies and programs that are equitable and in place for all at Monarch. Another way she advocates for students and families is by being a part of various committees. For example she serves on the Leadership Academic Team, whose school improvement goals focus on the academic and social-emotional achievement of all. Her expertise in math, affords her multiple opportunities to provide support for the school improvement plan and districts strategic plan by providing after school programs to students and parents. In addition her love of learning and sharing that learning has allowed her to deliver phenomenal professional development to educators within the school community. This helps to enhance teacher instruction and students' ability to engage and exceed in not just math but all subjects.

Mrs. Ballenger also has a sense of humor that creates an instantaneous positive connection to anyone she meets. This is extremely important as she is able to develop relationships consistently. Mrs. Ballenger effectively analyzes student data, shares the data, and provides action steps to ensure the best instructional decisions are made in assisting that every student reaches their full potential. My children look forward to Mrs. Ballenger's and her colleague, Mrs. Roger's First in Math weekly reports she shares on the morning announcements. She connects to the community by organizing annual school math nights to expand educational opportunities and access to all.

There is no doubt in my mind that she is highly qualified to lead the charge and be the representative to many as she always represents staff, students, and parent/guardians. Please consider Mrs. Ballenger for the position of the State Board of Education Teacher Member, an advocate for all! Please feel free to contact me at

██████████ I would be happy to share more information about the wonderful works of Mrs. Ballenger

Sincerely,

Cherryll Clacks

