



The Comcast  
Parent Involvement  
Matters Award

**Choose Your Seat.  
Get Involved.**



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Community  
Collaboration

What would a Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award winner look like?

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He/she might demonstrate all of the five areas of parent involvement described on the following pages, or he/she might demonstrate only one area, but he/she will have made a real difference for students, parents, and schools. >>

# Message from Comcast

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At Comcast, we are committed to developing and supporting programs that ensure the vibrancy and strength of communities across Maryland. That's why we collaborated with the Maryland State Department of Education to create the Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award.

With this award, we'll celebrate outstanding parents and highlight the involvement projects they undertake which make a meaningful and measurable difference for the entire school community.



We look forward to learning about the exciting parent-led projects taking place in schools across our state right now. If you know a committed, involved parent who has made a significant contribution to Maryland public education, please nominate him or her for the Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Fred Graffam".

Fred Graffam  
Senior Vice President  
Comcast, Beltway Region

# Areas of Parent Involvement

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The Maryland State Department of Education provides leadership and guidance to local school systems in designing parent involvement programs.

After consulting with the Maryland State Department of Education, Comcast decided to use a nationally-recognized framework for family involvement as a springboard to identifying the areas of involvement to be demonstrated by nominees for the Parent Involvement Matters Award.

We have identified five areas of parent involvement below. Nominees can demonstrate involvement in one area or multiple areas, but the nominee must have made a significant, positive impact on public education with their involvement project within the last 24 months.

## 1. Communication



Fostering communication that impacts the school community.

## 2. Volunteering



Recruiting or organizing volunteers, or supporting school activities, both internal and external.

## 3. Learning



Organizing or coordinating learning activities that reinforce homework or classroom skills.

## About the Award

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The Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award is an annual award for parents (and others with legal responsibility for a child) whose exemplary contributions to public education have led to improvements for Maryland's public school children, teachers, schools, programs, and/or policies. Comcast created the award with the Maryland State Department of Education to highlight the positive impact parents have on public schools and to encourage all parents to get involved in whatever way they can.

## Nomination Deadline

Completed nomination packages must be postmarked by

**January 16, 2009**


All nomination packages must be mailed to:

Maryland State Department of Education  
Office of Academic Policy, 7th Floor  
Attn: PIMA  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Nomination forms can be downloaded in English and select foreign languages at [www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/pima](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/pima).

Submissions will not be accepted online or by e-mail.





**“The time has come for our parents to be recognized for their role in academic and school success. The amount of time and energy, and the level of effort parents dedicate to ensure students have the best education possible translates into smiles on faces, performance in classrooms, and, most importantly, tremendous possibilities for the future.”**

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Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

#### 4. Decision Making



Participating on decision-making committees, or in programs that advocate system or policy changes, or serving as a representative for the school or education community.

#### 5. Community Collaboration



Coordinating resources and services for the school community, which could include fundraisers that would enhance a school's services or environment, or coordinating resources or services from the school community that may serve an external community.

## Examples of Award-Winning Parent Involvement

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### *What would a Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award winner look like?*

He/she might demonstrate involvement in one area or in multiple areas, but he/she will have made a real difference for students, parents, and schools.

The following are a few examples of award-winning activities. They do not represent the only types of activities that could win an award.

- Translated school documents during meetings, clubs, and other school gatherings; and served as the Spanish speaking liaison to the school's organized parent group.
- Worked with school staff and other volunteers to create an engineering club for third, fourth, and fifth graders.
- Initiated and ran a monthly book exchange to make sure students had regular access to fresh reading materials.
- Created a laboratory for the school that includes a trail, boardwalk over natural wetlands, and amphitheater.
- Designed a family safety and wellness communication program that reached out to over 400 families.
- Helped established an academic endowment fund to support academic excellence and creativity in the classroom.
- Created a program that rewards honor roll students with incentives from local businesses.
- Helped college-bound students and parents navigate the application and financial aid processes.
- Helped establish an affordable after-school care program for parents with multiple children.
- Led a summer program that emphasized academic learning as well as the prevention of tobacco, alcohol, and other substance abuse.
- Created a chess club for middle school students.
- Organized an annual school dinner where fathers prepare their own spaghetti sauces to serve to other parents, children, and friends.
- Created a series of training sessions and events for parents of students receiving special education services to help them understand and participate in the IEP process.
- Reached out to the Asian and Hispanic parent populations and helped them form parent groups.
- Created a digital camera lab that students can use to support their classroom projects.

## Eligibility

To be considered for the Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award, nominees must:

1. Be a parent, which includes a natural parent, an adoptive parent, a legal guardian, a person acting as a parent of a child such as a relative or a stepparent with whom a child lives, and any other person legally responsible for the child's welfare.
  - If nominating a group, the group must have been organized for the specific purpose of the project(s).
2. Have a child in a Maryland public school.
3. Not be an employee of Comcast, the Maryland State Department of Education, or the Maryland public school system.
  - Any person who is paid by a school or by the school system (i.e. substitute teacher, translator, etc.) is not eligible to be nominated.
4. Have conducted or participated in the project for which he/she is nominated within the last 24 months.
  - If nominating a previous award winner, the nomination must be for a new project or activity.

## Opportunities for Winners

After the celebration, semifinalists, finalists, and the statewide winner will have many opportunities to be recognized and to promote parent involvement, such as:

- Participating in a public service announcement to be broadcast on Comcast cable television.
- Speaking at educational events and conferences.
- Appearing at Maryland State Board of Education and/or local board of education meetings.
- Participating on educational task forces and/or committees.
- Participating in a "best practices" publication and/or Web site that will serve to inspire parents as well as give them practical advice.

## Selection

### PROCESS

After reviewing all completed nomination submissions, judges will select 24 semifinalists—one parent from each of the 23 counties in Maryland and one parent from Baltimore City. A second group of judges will review the 24 semifinalists' nominations and select five finalists for the statewide award. A final group of judges will interview the five finalists and recommend one to be the statewide winner.

Comcast will host an award celebration in Spring 2009 to recognize all 24 semifinalists. At the celebration, the names of the finalists and the statewide winner will be announced. The statewide winner and finalists will each receive a monetary award to further parent involvement activities.

### CRITERIA

To qualify for the award, the nominee shall:

1. Be a consistent advocate of public education.
2. Have had a significant, positive impact on public education with his/her creativity, innovation, and/or commitment at the school, district, or state level in one or more of the following areas:
  - Communication
  - Volunteering
  - Learning
  - Decision Making
  - Community Collaboration

## Nomination Instructions

- Please complete Sections 1, 2, 3, & 4 of this nomination form.
- A complete nomination packet should include an original and two single-sided copies of each section.
- Incomplete nominations will not be considered.
- If you have questions about the nomination process or award program, please contact [pima@msde.state.md.us](mailto:pima@msde.state.md.us) (preferred) or 1-888-246-0016.

The complete nomination package must be postmarked by

**JANUARY 16, 2009**

and mailed to:

Maryland State Department of Education  
Office of Academic Policy, 7th Floor  
ATTN: PIMA  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

# Nomination for Comcast's Parent Involvement Matters Award

## SECTION 1: Contact Information

Responses should be in a type size no smaller than 11 points or printed clearly.

### Nominee

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First M.I.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

\_\_\_\_\_ City County State ZIP Code

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### Nominator

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First M.I.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address Apartment/Unit #

\_\_\_\_\_ City State ZIP Code

Home Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Alternate Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 2: Statement of Agreement for Nominee

Please read the following statements carefully and sign your name at the bottom of the section.

### I AGREE THAT:

- I am aware of and support my nomination for the Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award.
- I meet the eligibility requirements of the program.
- I have never been convicted of a felony crime, child abuse, or neglect.
  - All semifinalists will be subject to a background investigation which will require providing his/her social security number and fingerprints.

### I ALSO AGREE THAT:

If I am identified as a semi-finalist, finalist, and/or statewide winner, I will participate in:

- the Comcast Parent Involvement Matters Award ceremony.
- a personal interview at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) or Comcast.
- a recorded interview, portions of which may be taped for purposes that include, but are not limited to, broadcast on cable television, streaming on the Web, and screening at education-related events.
- a public service announcement for broadcast on Comcast cable channels.
- a recognition ceremony at the MSDE.
- educational events (e.g., state or district level conferences on family involvement) that may include invitations to speak, as my schedule permits. (MSDE and Comcast understand that parents already have many commitments.)
- a "best practices" publication and/or Web site with the MSDE staff. (This participation will likely involve speaking with MSDE staff and providing any materials relevant to my parent involvement project.)

Nominee Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nomination for Comcast's Parent Involvement Matters Award

## SECTION 3: Narrative

The narrative is separate from the three letters of recommendation and is limited to two pages with one-inch margins, single spacing, and in a type size no less than 11 points. The top of each page should include:

- Section 3: Narrative
- Name of Nominee
- Project(s) Name/Location

The information provided in the narrative should describe the nominee's outstanding contribution(s) to public education. The description should provide sufficient detail about the nature of the project(s) the nominee has been involved in and the impact the nominee's involvement has had on students, teachers, the school as a whole, and/or the community. Please include the names of schools, school systems, and/or organizations who were involved in the project.

## SECTION 4: Letters of Recommendation

Three original, signed letters of recommendation are required from people in different positions who have direct knowledge of the nominee's accomplishments. The following are examples of different positions: school administrator, teacher, student, parent, school district administrator, school board member, community or faith-based leader, business leader, and legislator.

Letters of recommendation should be limited to no more than two pages. Please provide the name and contact information for the letters' authors below and include the letters in the application.

### First Recommendation Letter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

### Second Recommendation Letter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

### Third Recommendation Letter

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

## Writing a Narrative & Letter of Recommendation

When writing the Narrative, please provide clear, detailed information about the nominee's involvement in the specific project(s), including:

- a clear, concise description of the project(s)
  - when and where the project began
  - why the project was initiated
  - what was the goal of the project
  - how was the project goal achieved
- a description of how the nominee was involved in the project(s)
- a description of how the people/community benefitted from the project(s)

Letters of recommendation should describe the nominee's involvement from the perspective of the writer.

For instance:

- a letter of recommendation from a principal should include information about how the nominee's involvement impacted the school community.
- a letter of recommendation from a parent should include information about how the nominee's involvement impacted the parent community.

Additional information about the nominee can be provided in the narrative and letters of recommendation so long as the information meets the two-page limit.