



## Leadership Maryland Member is Finalist For National Education Leadership Award



**Dr. Elizabeth M. Morgan '04**  
**Superintendent, Washington**  
**County Public Schools**

*By Alan Dessoiff*

A Leadership Maryland member whose leadership of a public school district has won her recognition as Maryland's top school superintendent for 2010 is a finalist for National Superintendent of the Year. Dr. **Elizabeth M. "Betty" Morgan '04**, Superintendent of the Washington County Schools for nine years and approaching 31 years of service in Maryland, is the first superintendent from her county to be named Maryland Superintendent of the Year by the Public School Superintendents Association of Maryland.

She is one of four finalists for the top national honor, sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators, ARAMARK Education and ING. The winner will be announced Feb. 11 at the National Conference on Education in Phoenix, Arizona.

Dr. Morgan and the other finalists participated in a forum on public education issues last month at the National Press Club in Washington. Afterwards, she termed the event a learning experience and "the highlight of my life," as the Hagerstown Herald-Mail reported.

The Maryland honor, which was announced last fall, recognizes a chief school administrator in the state who exemplifies excellence and achievement in educational leadership. "Her leadership has resulted in

improved student performance results in every category and has contributed to establishing a culture throughout the county where education is highly valued. While it takes a collective effort to accomplish the significant progress in student performance, we know that it will not happen without outstanding leadership from the superintendent," **Dr. Carl D. Roberts '98**, executive director of the Maryland superintendents association, said when Dr. Morgan was selected for the state award by a committee of her peers.

The significant progress that the Washington County school system has made under Dr. Morgan's leadership includes setting back-to-back records for the highest graduation rate and lowest drop-out rate in the history of the system. She has "established respect for our schools that this county has long deserved" and is "a dedicated leader with a strategic focus on students," said Wayne Ridenour, president of the Washington County Board of Education.

In a visit to Washington County last year to dedicate a new school for the arts, Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, Maryland's state superintendent of schools, praised Dr. Morgan's outstanding leadership and vision for the children in the county.

Among numerous awards she has received for excellence in education, Dr. Morgan was recognized as an Outstanding State Leader for Gifted and

Talented Education and also was honored by the Maryland Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Beyond education, she was named Washington County Person of the Year for 2007 by the Herald-Mail and has been inducted into the Circle of Excellence for Maryland's Top 100 Women.

Asked what leadership skills are required to be an effective school superintendent, Dr. Morgan said a superintendent should be "a conduit for effectiveness, and a facilitator who enables others around her to realize the very best vision of themselves for the sake of the school system and the students."

A superintendent doesn't have to be an "aggressive change agent," she explained, unless a situation calls for that, but rather a "facilitative leader, a kind of Wizard of Oz, with the curtain pulled back, exposed as an ordinary human being whose mission is to bring out the potential in others. As the line in the song by America goes, 'Oz never did give nothing to the Tin Man that he didn't already have...' A good superintendent gets staff and students to perform at peak productivity, because she is only one person and her work for the system is mostly done through others who are motivated to do their best."

Dr. Morgan says her Leadership Maryland experience helped shape her leadership capabilities. "It exposed me

to a range of leadership styles exhibited by participants in the program. It also gave me some tools for leadership and management that I was not aware of previously," she explained. "I also learned a lot through personal interaction, discussions and conversations with fellow participants, and became aware of individuals who could provide information and expertise, such as Anirban Basu (Chairman and CEO, Sage Policy Group, Inc.) and Eliot Pfanstiehl (President and CEO, Strathmore Hall Foundation, Inc., and Leadership Maryland facilitator) and others upon whom I could call when I had a particular need or problem to solve. The array of experts in their fields offered through the program was amazing!"

Her LMD experience "has served me well" as head of the Washington County schools and "I am thankful for having participated in the program," Dr. Morgan concluded.

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**For more information on how you can become involved in Leadership Maryland, contact Nancy Minieri, president, at 410-841-2101, or visit [www.leadershipmd.org](http://www.leadershipmd.org)**