

## **Pocomoke Middle is Featured on the Today Show**



The microphone was turned over to a special guest who joined the morning announcement team at Pocomoke Middle School on September 23. “We are here because you are all winners!” said NBC Today Show anchor Ann Curry, as the live-feed video was projected into each classroom at the fourth through eighth grade middle school.

Curry, two Today Show producers, and two camera crews were onsite at Pocomoke Middle School to highlight the programs and services which are contributing to the school’s successes. Over the three-day visit, which began at a Dads and Sons Dinner and a Movie Night on September 20, the NBC team collected footage on several students who shared their success stories, as well as a handful of teachers and staff who spoke about or demonstrated in classrooms a variety of school initiatives and strategies. The Today Show team also followed and filmed Principal Caroline Bloxom, who has served as principal of the middle school since 2000.

The footage was edited and condensed into a three to four minute snapshot of Pocomoke Middle School, one of several schools highlighted in the Today Show during the week of September 27. The coverage of successful schools coincides with NBC’s Education Nation Summit, aired September 27 and 28, which, according to the Education Nation website, “is a nationally broadcast, in-depth conversation about improving education in America.”

As an example of a school which is making a difference, Pocomoke Middle School was featured on September 29, during the Today Show program. The Today Show learned about Pocomoke Middle School because it is currently being featured on the U.S. Department of Education’s “Doing What Works” website (<http://www.dww.ed.gov/profiles>) and the National Association of Secondary Principals’ website (<http://www.principals.org>) as a 2008 MetLife Foundation-NASSP Breakthrough School.

During the visit by the Today Show team, several initiatives were featured, including the school’s theme, climate, norms, and individual student supports that are in place. In addition, many innovative programs and initiatives were filmed, including arts immersion, Breakfast in the Classroom, an artist in residence, Soar to Success reading intervention program, SMART Board instruction, academic checklists, and Family and School Connections. Student interviews were also conducted by Curry.

“We are very proud that Pocomoke Middle School was showcased by the Today Show,” said Superintendent Dr. Jon Andes. “The school is making a positive difference for our students, as are all of our schools. It truly is a special day when the

national media takes notice of the great efforts of our teachers, students, and our entire community.”

Pocomoke Middle School has many successful programs which have resulted in increased academic performance. As measured by the 2010 Maryland School Assessments (MSA), 83.3 percent of students in Grades 4 through 8 scored proficient or advanced in reading, while 81 percent scored proficient or advanced in math. Pocomoke Middle has 462 students, with 61 percent qualifying for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS).

“I felt an enormous amount of pride having the Today Show feature our school,” said Bloxom. “Our teachers and staff have worked very hard over the years and our students are amazing. They all understand that it takes hard work and commitment to be successful. Together, we are committed to our students reaching their full potential.”