News Release: PGCPS Students Participate in Annual Special Olympics

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For Immediate Release
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UPPER MARLBORO, MD – Student athletes and alumni from Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) special education program will take part in a variety of exciting and inspirational athletic events in April and May. Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and athletic competitions in a variety of Olympic-type sports for students and community members with disabilities, and celebrates ability, dedication, accomplishment, and teamwork.

The competitions will kick off with the George Dobson Swim Meet on **Thursday, April 16 at 10:30 a.m.** Participants will compete in freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and mixed relay categories. The meet will take place at the Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex Aquatics Center, located at 8001 Sheriff Road in Landover. This event is sponsored by Special Olympics and members of community swim teams.

Six PGCPS special education program sites will host Challenge Days for student athletes. As a modified version of the traditional Special Olympics Program, Challenge Day is designed to provide an opportunity for students with severe or multiple disabilities to demonstrate their personal best. The program is part of the Special Olympics Motor Activities Training Program, which emphasizes training and participation rather than competition.

Months prior to the event, an adapted sport is identified for each student by the school's educational team and is based on age, ability, and interest. Sports include bowling, volleyball, relay races, softball, football, roller skating, baton relays, and aquatics. Each student is assigned a peer coach from neighboring elementary and secondary schools. Peer coaching is a unique component of the program, as it provides students with approximately three months of training for the event.

At the end of Challenge Day, each student's achievement is recognized and celebrated in an awards presentation. During the ceremony, every student will receive an official Special Olympics Medal to commemorate weeks of training and hard work.

The Challenge Day schedule is as follows:

Friday, April 24 10:30 a.m.
Margaret Brent Regional School
5816 Lamont Terrace, New Carrollton

Friday, May 1 □ 9:30 a.m.
C. Elizabeth Rieg Regional School
15542 Peach Walker Drive, Mitchellville

Wednesday, May 13 □ 9 a.m.
Tanglewood Regional School

8333 Woodyard Road, Clinton

Friday, May 15 □ 9:30 a.m.
James E. Duckworth Regional School
11201 Evans Trail, Beltsville

Thursday, May 21 □ 9 a.m.
Panorame Elementary School
2002 Callaway Street, Temple Hills

Friday, May 22 □ 9:30 a.m.
Oxon Hill Middle School

9570 Fort Foote Road, Fort Washington

The biggest event – the countywide Annual Special Olympics Spring Games – is hosted in partnership with the national Special Olympics organization and will be held on **May 7 at 10:30 a.m.** This event will take place on the outdoor track of the Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex in Landover. Students will compete in a variety of athletic events, including the 50/100/200 meter dash, wheelchair race (for students with orthopedic disabilities), running and standing long jumps, high jump, shot put, turbo javelin, and softball and tennis ball throws.

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Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), one of the nation's 20th largest school districts, has 201 schools and centers, more than 133,000 students and nearly 20,000 employees. The school system serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities located in the Washington, DC suburbs. PGCPS is nationally recognized for college and career-readiness programs that provide students with unique learning opportunities, including dual enrollment and language immersion.