News Release

The Partnership for Excellence Honors 2026 Award Recipient
For Immediate Release: May 11, 2026

COLUMBUS, OH – The Partnership for Excellence (TPE) is pleased to announce a high-performing organization as recipient of one of its 2026 Awards for Excellence. The awards represent the region's highest honor for performance excellence through innovation, results, and visionary leadership using the Baldrige Excellence Framework®.

The 2026 Award Recipient is:

Fairfax County Public Schools, Falls Church, VA (Gold Award, Achievement of Excellence)

The mission of TPE is to cultivate organizational performance excellence and continuous improvement across all industry sectors. Using the Baldrige Excellence Framework®, organizations can have a greater focus on customers, process management, innovation, work systems, and organization-wide results. This approach often leads to lower costs, improved productivity, and increases in employee and customer satisfaction, which may contribute to growth and overall performance improvement. TPE's primary product is a comprehensive assessment to help organizational leaders better understand and prioritize key strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Applicants are rigorously evaluated by an independent board of examiners in seven areas defined by the Baldrige Excellence Framework®: leadership; strategy; customers; measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; workforce; operations; and results. The evaluation process includes more than 1,500 hours of review and a site visit by the examiner team to clarify questions and verify information in the application. An independent panel of judges review each organization's evaluation, approve the final feedback reports, and develop award recommendations, which are ratified by the TPE Board of Trustees. Award levels granted to recipients can be bronze, silver, gold, or platinum level.

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), which received the gold level award, serves the students of Fairfax County, Virginia and is the ninth largest school district in the United States comprising more than 265 schools and centers, over 180,000 students, and over 25,000 full-time employees. Examples of best practices FCPS exhibited during its site visit include visionary and ethical leadership, alignment of key processes across the school district, and a focus on students. TPE looks forward to recognizing FCPS later this year.

The Partnership for Excellence's 2026 award recipients will be honored at an awards banquet on September 14th during TPE's annual *Quest for Success* conference, which will be held September 14-15, 2026, at the Quest Conference Center near Columbus, Ohio. During the conference, TPE and national award recipients, and performance excellence professionals will present information on their performance excellence journeys and share best practices in plenary sessions, breakout sessions, and in informal discussions with conference attendees. For additional information contact: Margot Hoffman, President & CEO, The Partnership for Excellence, phone: (614) 425-7157 or visit the TPE website at: The Partnership for Excellence