



# Press Release

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***Maryland Teacher Is Recipient of First Bob Costas Grant for the Teaching of Writing, Announced by the College Board***

**NEW YORK**—John Cornillon, an English teacher at Harbor City High School in Baltimore, Maryland, is one of six teachers in the nation who have been awarded the first College Board Bob Costas Grants for the Teaching of Writing, the College Board announced today. The grants are in recognition of the innovative methods these teachers use to inspire and develop their students' writing skills. The award was named for Bob Costas, the Emmy Award-winning broadcaster and author, due to his dedication to the craft of writing and his generous public service work on behalf of the National Commission on Writing. Each teacher will receive a grant of \$2,000.

"The honorees are remarkable teachers who are creative and successful in their approach to get young people excited about writing and learning," said Costas. "Their commitment is clearly reflected in the confidence they are building in their students, who are developing lifelong skills of incredible value. I'm honored to be associated with this national program recognizing such noble work."

One grant recipient was selected from each of the College Board's six regions. Cornillon will be honored at the College Board's Middle States Regional Forum on February 16, 2006, at the Loews Philadelphia Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**John Cornillon**

"The coping responses judged necessary to survive in harsh and murderous neighborhoods spawned by poverty and the legacy of racism have molded most of the students I teach," wrote English teacher John Cornillon. "Many of my students have, over time, armored themselves against a world that shows little concern for their feelings or well-being. My goal is to help students examine and refine the expression of the true voice that resonates behind the mask and beneath the armor."

Four years ago, Cornillon set out to tap into what he observed as powerful peer influences at Harbor City High School, an inner-city alternative public school. He believed that through writing, a new kind of student could emerge to exert a

positive influence on his or her peers. He and a few students began by creating posters of student poems and collages in the hallways, and moved on to establishing *Voices*, an annual anthology of student writing.

The powerful and raw style of *Voices* has not only motivated students to write, but has also created a new enthusiasm for reading. Other teachers began using the anthology of student work in their classrooms, and *Voices* became a source of pride within the community. One mother stopped Cornillon in a neighborhood store to tell him that *Voices* had saved her daughter from becoming an academic dropout. Harbor City's principal, Dr. Al Thompson, said that *Voices* created a connection between the "real world" and school for some students who hadn't seen the relevance of what they learned in school to their lives.

Gaston Caperton, president of the College Board, said: "These winners, along with many of the other highly qualified applicants, are doing critical work. To succeed in the classroom and later in life, students need to acquire strong writing skills. We were heartened by the overwhelming response we received in the first year of this program and to learn about so many great efforts being made across the country to inspire students to write well."

The College Board established the National Commission on Writing in 2002 to create more national support for the teaching of writing. Bob Costas, a *New York Times* best-selling author, has received numerous Emmy awards, including two for writing, and has been honored as Sportscaster of the Year a record eight times by the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association. He has supported the Commission's work by producing a national public service announcement encouraging young people to develop strong writing skills for success in the classroom and the workplace.

Teachers of grades 6–12 from any discipline, in both public and nonpublic schools, are eligible for the Bob Costas Grants, as are writing programs that take place within schools or the community. For more details about the award and the other honorees, visit [www.collegeboard.com/costasgrants](http://www.collegeboard.com/costasgrants).

The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 5,000 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves seven million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning. Among its best-known programs are the SAT®, the PSAT/NMSQT®, and the Advanced Placement Program® (AP®). The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.

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