



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 6, 2020

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GCPS librarian named best in the nation

School Library Journal (SLJ) and Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education and media company, have named Meadowcreek High School’s **Cicely Lewis** as the nation’s **2020 School Librarian of the Year**. The award recognizes K–12 library professionals for outstanding achievement and the exemplary use of 21st century tools and services to engage children and teens toward fostering multiple literacies.



Lewis says the recognition is humbling. “I am so honored to receive this prestigious award and I plan to continue to advocate for students who are looking for answers, looking for a connection, and seeking to find themselves in books,” she says. “I will use this platform to tell the world that every child deserves a certified school librarian in their school.”

In her role as media specialist, Lewis creates programming that celebrates the diversity of Meadowcreek High’s more than 2,600 students and 180 teachers. She is the founder of Read Woke, an initiative encouraging students to read books that challenge a social norm or the status quo, give a voice to the voiceless, have a protagonist from an underrepresented or oppressed group, or provide information about a group that has been disenfranchised. The initiative has sparked meaningful conversations schoolwide and beyond, including in Canada and Norway. Of the initiative, Lewis says, “I started Read Woke to help empower my students. I never in my wildest dreams imagined it would take off like it has.”

Lewis encourages her students to be active members of their library community. The students provide one another with reading recommendations and utilize the media center’s exercise bike desks and glass study rooms with projectors to learn, collaborate and be creative. She hosts energizing events throughout the year to engage students, including a book fashion show that shines a spotlight on powerful reads, Tech Woke projects where students use technology to learn about social justice issues, and a virtual reality experience during Black History Month where students “travel back in time” to learn about pivotal moments in Black History. In addition,

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2010 and 2014 Winner of



Lewis visits districts nationwide to advocate for the importance of libraries and certified librarians in every school.

As School Librarian of the Year, Lewis is featured on the cover of the April 2020 issue of *SLJ*, and will receive a suite of awards from Scholastic, including \$2,500 cash and \$2,500 worth of digital or print products for her library. She also has been invited to attend the 2020 Scholastic Independent Reading Summit, a professional learning conference designed to provide educators with the latest practices and research for encouraging independent reading in their schools. Meadowcreek High students also will receive free books as part of a special literacy event at a later date. The event will feature in-person visits from a Scholastic author and John Schumacher (@MrSchuReads), the Ambassador of School Libraries for Scholastic Book Fairs.

The 2020 School Librarian of the Year was selected by a panel of judges, including Schumacher, and 2018 School Librarian of the Year Ali Schilpp. All entries were judged based on a set of criteria, including creativity in programming and use of content, exemplary service to fulfill the needs of students and the school community, and demonstrated student engagement.