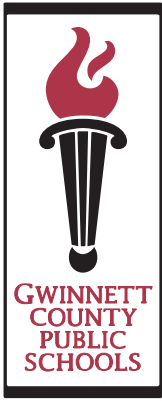


NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 2, 2020

News Media Contact: Communication and Media Relations, 678-301-6020

Teacher of the Year 2020-21:

Local educators honored as schools select Teachers of the Year

The first step in Gwinnett County Public Schools' (GCPS) search for its **2020-21 Teacher of the Year (TOTY)** is complete and 139 local school Teachers of the Year have been designated as tops in their schools.

“In light of the unique challenges our teachers faced this year, we wanted more than ever to show our love, support, and appreciation to our teachers,” said **Dr. Clay Hunter, assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instructional Support.**

“These educators are the best of the best and they shine every day in the classroom, online, and in our community. Although the state suspended its Teacher of the Year process this year, Gwinnett County Public Schools is pleased to continue its tradition of celebrating great teaching as we host our annual Teacher of the Year celebration!”

These 139 local school honorees will move into the next phase of the TOTY process as they are considered for the systemwide honor. Later this month, this group will be narrowed down to 25 semifinalists. From that group, six finalists will be chosen in early November. **On December 10, 2020, GCPS will host a virtual celebration honoring this year’s finalists and naming the top teacher in Gwinnett County.**

Here’s an overview of the selection process:

Step 1: All teachers at each participating Gwinnett school nominate and vote for their local school Teacher of the Year.

Step 2: The applications for all 139 school-level Teachers of the Year are screened and 25 semifinalists for the county-level honor are selected.

Step 3: The 25 semifinalists’ applications are scored to determine the six finalists.

Step 4: A selection committee—made up of teachers, central office personnel, and administrators—will conduct in-person and virtual visits and complete thorough interviews with each educator. The committee will look for original teaching methods, study the educator’s teaching philosophy, consider the influence the teacher has had on the teaching practices of his or her colleagues, and review any special class projects the teacher has initiated.

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The Mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools

is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

437 Old Peachtree Road, NW
Suwanee, GA 30024-2978
678-301-6000
www.gcpsk12.org

It is the policy of Gwinnett County Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, national origin, age, or disability in any employment practice, educational program, or any other program, activity, or service.

2010 and 2014 Winner of



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Step 5: From the six finalists, the committee will select a Teacher of the Year for each level— elementary, middle, and high. One of the level winners will be recognized as GCPS' 2020-21 Teacher of the Year.

GCPS' 2020-21 Local School Teachers of the Year

Alcova Elementary School, Yvonda Thomas, *Gifted Education Teacher – Language Arts (Grades 1-5)*

Alford Elementary School, Kaitlin Isabelle, *Gifted Education Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Anderson-Livsey Elementary School, Penny Dalin, *4th Grade Teacher*

Annistown Elementary School, Tracy Clarke, *1st Grade Teacher*

Arcado Elementary School, Kathryn M. Honea, *5th Grade Teacher*

Archer High School, David Nelson, *AP and Honors Physics Teacher (Grade 11)*

Baggett Elementary School, Vandana Bhagat, *Technology Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Baldwin Elementary School, Jennifer Ko, *1st Grade Teacher*

Bay Creek Middle School, Janet Donnelly, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 7)*

Beaver Ridge Elementary School, Rachel Middleton, *1st Grade Teacher*

Benefield Elementary School, Tiffany Suzette Nelson, *English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Berkeley Lake Elementary School, Melissa Redner, *5th Grade Teacher*

Berkmar High School, Dr. Jessica Ewalt, *AP Macroeconomics, AP Microeconomics, and AP Research Teacher (Grade 12)*

Berkmar Middle School, Matthew Pelli, *Special Education Teacher – Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 2) (Grades 6-8)*

Bethesda Elementary School, Ronelle Nelson, *1st Grade Teacher*

Britt Elementary School, Kasshavin Clemons, *Language Arts and Mathematics Teacher (Grade 3)*

Brookwood Elementary School, Allison Huckle, *1st Grade Teacher*

Brookwood High School, Danielle Kaiser, *History Teacher (Grades 11 and 12)*

Buice Center, Dr. Melinda Horton, *Special Education Teacher – STRIVE Program (Grade 12⁺)*

Burnette Elementary School, Tara Nolan, *Special Education Teacher – Significant Developmental Delay (Kindergarten and Grade 1)*

Camp Creek Elementary School, Madison Pogue, *4th Grade Teacher*

Cedar Hill Elementary School, Marcia Place, *5th Grade Teacher*

Centerville Elementary School, Ontoya Fowler, *1st Grade Teacher*

Central Gwinnett High School, Kelsey Allen, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 9)*

Chattahoochee Elementary School, Stephanie Kennedy, *5th Grade Teacher*

Chesney Elementary School, Ji Park, *5th Grade Teacher*

Coleman Middle School, Kelley Curtiss Donovan, *Humanities Teacher (Grade 6)*

Collins Hill High School, Hali Chase, *Spanish Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Cooper Elementary School, Beth Stetter, *Kindergarten Teacher*

Corley Elementary School, Stephanie M. Shane, *Special Education Teacher – Interrelated Resource (Grade 5)*

Couch Middle School, Carrie Harrison, *Special Education Teacher – Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 3) (Grades 6-8)*

Craig Elementary School, Dorrie Gann, *Media Specialist (Grades K-5)*

Creekland Middle School, Leslie Crider, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 7)*
Crews Middle School, Dr. Kinsey Edwards, *Orchestra Teacher (Grades 6-8)*
Dacula Elementary School, Stephanie Malley, *3rd Grade Teacher*
Dacula High School, Byron Wilson, *Special Education Teacher – Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 3) (Grades 9-12)*
Dacula Middle School, Thelma Sanford, *Mathematics Teacher (Grade 7)*
Discovery High School, Diane E. Sullivan, *Theatre and Peer Leadership Teacher (Grades 9-12)*
Duluth High School, Whitley Arens Parker, *Special Education Teacher – Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 4) and Interrelated Resource (Grades 10-12)*
Duluth Middle School, Alynna Nguyen, *Accelerated Mathematics Teacher (Grade 7)*
Duncan Creek Elementary School, Beth McDowell, *Gifted Education and Advanced Content Mathematics Teacher (Grades 1, 2, 3, and 5)*
Dyer Elementary School, Matt Bonk, *Kindergarten Teacher*
Ferguson Elementary School, Carol Patricia Grey, *Special Education Teacher – Interrelated Resource (Grades 1-3)*
Five Forks Middle School, Julianne Purnell, *Health Teacher (Grades 6-8)*
Fort Daniel Elementary School, Heather Thorpe, *5th Grade Teacher*
Freeman's Mill Elementary School, Sandy Sproles, *2nd Grade Teacher*
GIVE Center East, Sha-Von Valentine, *Special Education Teacher – Language Arts (Grade 11)*
GIVE Center West, Erica Freeman-Jones, *Language Arts Teacher (Grades 8 and 9)*
Grace Snell Middle School, Benjamin Beitzel, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 8)*
Graves Elementary School, La'Bria Monae Hannah, *3rd Grade Teacher*
Grayson Elementary School, Ferdye Bamaca-Forkel, *1st Grade Teacher*
Grayson High School, Devine Wright, *Language Arts Teacher (Grades 11 and 12)*
Gwin Oaks Elementary School, Jennifer Mimms, *Local School Technology Coordinator (Grades K-5)*
Gwinnett Online Campus, Elizabeth Lorimer, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 8)*
Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology, Laura Gray, *Mathematics and Computer Science Teacher (Grades 9-12)*
Harbins Elementary School, Melissa Barth, *2nd Grade Teacher*
Harmony Elementary School, Jennifer Branch, *Kindergarten Teacher*
Harris Elementary School, Kelcey M. Chancey, *3rd Grade Teacher*
Head Elementary School, Kelly Duggan, *Local School Technology Coordinator*
Hopkins Elementary School, Janet Kim, *1st Grade Teacher*
Hull Middle School, Jacqueline Hall, *Mathematics Teacher (Grade 8)*
International Transition Center, Mary Stoikov, *English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher– World History and U.S. History (Grades 9-11)*
Ivy Creek Elementary School, Samantha Carr, *Dual Language Immersion Teacher – Language Arts and Social Studies – English (Grade 2)*
Jackson Elementary School, Audrey Massey, *1st Grade Teacher*
Jenkins Elementary School, Teosha Teasley, *5th Grade Teacher*
Jones Middle School, Autumn Sutton, *Computer Science and Digital Technology Teacher (Grades 6-8)*
Jordan Middle School, Shannon Haney, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 8)*
Kanoheda Elementary School, Chloe Franklin, *1st Grade Teacher*
Knight Elementary School, Olivia Boza, *2nd Grade Teacher*
Lanier High School, Collin Jones, *History Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Lanier Middle School, Dena Dale, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 7)*

Lawrenceville Elementary School, Juliann Terrell, *Media Specialist (Grades K-5)*

Level Creek Elementary School, Amanda Flanter, *Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Teacher (Grade 4)*

Lilburn Elementary School, Lena Alonso, *Special Education Teacher – Interrelated Resource (Grade 5)*

Lilburn Middle School, Naveed A. Khan, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 6)*

Lovin Elementary School, Kinsley Compton, *Spanish Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Magill Elementary School, Katelyn McClure, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Mason Elementary School, Katherine Wasson, *5th Grade Teacher*

Maxwell High School of Technology, Linda Minor, *Academies and Career and Technical Education Teacher – Flight Operations Pathway (Grades 10-12)*

McClure Health Science High School, Dr. Leslie Dunham, *AP Environmental Science, AP Physics, and Physics Teacher (Grades 11 and 12)*

McConnell Middle School, Rebecca Gandy, *Special Education Teacher – Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 2) (Grades 6-8)*

McKendree Elementary School, Keona Doughty, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 3)*

Meadowcreek Elementary School, Erica Lloyd, *Instructional Coach (Grades K-5)*

Meadowcreek High School, Richard Tilford, *Special Education Teacher – Science and Interrelated Resource (Grades 11 and 12)*

Mill Creek High School, Ashley Farrington, *Special Education Teacher – Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 1) (Grades 9-12)*

Minor Elementary School, Sara Welp, *5th Grade Teacher*

Moore Middle School, Choy Roberts, *Algebra I Teacher (Grade 8)*

Mountain Park Elementary School, Katrina Tucker, *1st Grade Teacher*

Mountain View High School, Danielle Jenkins, *Special Education Teacher – Moderate Intellectual Disabilities (Grades 9-12⁺)*

Mulberry Elementary School, Virginia Dreybus, *Reading Recovery and 1st Grade Teacher*

Nesbit Elementary School, Heather Bright, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Norcross Elementary School, Kalena M. Bennett, *4th Grade Teacher*

Norcross High School, Sarah Miller, *Local School Technology Coordinator*

North Gwinnett High School, Kevin Blankenship, *AP World History Teacher (Grade 10)*

North Gwinnett Middle School, Beth Cure, *Algebra I Teacher (Grade 8)*

Northbrook Middle School, Angelika Shelley, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 6)*

Norton Elementary School, Catrice Byrd-Pippens, *Special Education Teacher (Pre-K)*

Oakland Meadow School, Angela Lamont, *Special Education Teacher – Visual Impairment (Grades Pre-K-12⁺)*

Osborne Middle School, Beckie Fulcher, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 7)*

Parkview High School, Heather Baug Graham, *Language Arts Teacher (Grades 9 and 11)*

Parsons Elementary School, Lisa Isom-Jones, *1st Grade Teacher*

Partee Elementary School, Mona Brawley, *STEAM Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Patrick Elementary School, DeeDee Thomas, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Paul Duke STEM High School, Philip Peavy, *Cybersecurity and Game Design Teacher (Grades 10-12)*

Peachtree Elementary School, Kelly Sibley, *Reading Recovery and English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher (Grades 1-3)*

Peachtree Ridge High School, Nina M. Hidalgo, *Spanish for Native Speakers Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Pharr Elementary School, Alicia Lyman, *Special Education Teacher – Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 2) (Grades K-2)*

Phoenix High School, Matt Rooks, *History Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Pinckneyville Middle School, Dennise Peagler, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 8)*

Puckett’s Mill Elementary School, Jill McKee, *Special Education Teacher – Moderate Intellectual Disabilities (Grades 4 and 5)*

Radloff Middle School, Dr. Derrick Cunningham, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 8)*

Richards Middle School, Dre Reaves, *Science Teacher (Grade 6)*

Riverside Elementary School, Genny Greco, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Roberts Elementary School, Hope Russell, *1st Grade Teacher*

Rock Springs Elementary School, Adrian Wilkins, *Special Education Teacher – Significant Developmental Delay (Kindergarten)*

Rockbridge Elementary School, Georgia O’Connor, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Rosebud Elementary School, Jennifer Ritter, *Kindergarten Teacher*

Shiloh Elementary School, Sheila Rogers, *Kindergarten Teacher*

Shiloh High School, Cynthia Onyebuchi, *Special Education Teacher – Science (Grades 9-12)*

Shiloh Middle School, Jairus E. Hallums, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 8)*

Simonton Elementary School, Derica Sherrer, *5th Grade Teacher*

Simpson Elementary School, Sarah Mazzatta, *Special Education Teacher – Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 3) (Kindergarten and Grade 1)*

Snellville Middle School, Bryant Poss, *Media Specialist (Grades 6-8)*

South Gwinnett High School, Danielle Swaby, *Work-Based Learning Teacher (Grades 11 and 12)*

Starling Elementary School, Teresa R. Blackman, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Stripling Elementary School, Lisa Stubbs, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Sugar Hill Elementary School, Katie Blum, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Summerour Middle School, Nancy Ortiz-Daley, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 6)*

Suwanee Elementary School, Medina Kovacevic, *Gifted Education Teacher – Language Arts (Grade 5)*

Sweetwater Middle School, Jason Tyler, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 8)*

Sycamore Elementary School, Amy Stout, *Instructional Coach (Grades 2-5)*

Taylor Elementary School, Judi Morrison, *Special Education Teacher – Interrelated Resource (Grades 3 and 4)*

Trickum Middle School, Kelsi Carter Hamilton, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 8)*

Trip Elementary School, Courtney L. Smith, *Music Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Twin Rivers Middle School, Katy Bettencourt, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 8)*

Walnut Grove Elementary School, Ashley Garcia, *Mathematics Teacher (Grade 5)*

White Oak Elementary School, Kristy Shea, *1st Grade Teacher*

Winn Holt Elementary School, Lindsay Fianza, *1st Grade Teacher*

Woodward Mill Elementary School, Laura Philmon, *Special Education Teacher – Interrelated Resource (Grade 4)*