

NEWS RELEASE

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Teacher of the Year 2019-20:

Local educators honored as schools select Teachers of the Year

The first step of the district's search for its **2019-20 Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) Teacher of the Year (TOTY)** is complete and 139 local school Teachers of the Year have been designated as tops in their schools.

"Our Teachers of the Year exemplify the high expectations that our Gwinnett parents and community have for every teacher in every classroom," says **Dr. Jonathan Patterson**, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Support. "They are selected by their peers because of the great things they do for students every day, and they are models of excellence for their colleagues as well. We are grateful to have the opportunity to celebrate their passion and their dedication to their students and their profession."

Every year, the school system honors the passion and commitment of its teachers during the annual Teacher of the Year recognition process that takes place during the fall. 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 mid-October. **The annual Teacher of the Year banquet and the announcement of this year's top teacher in Gwinnett County will be held on Thursday, November 14, 2019.**

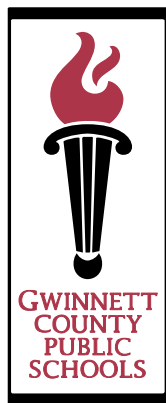
Here's an overview of the selection process:

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— visits the classrooms of the six finalists and conducts thorough interviews with each educator. The committee looks for original teaching methods, studies the educator's teaching philosophy, considers the influence the teacher has had



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2010 and 2014 Winner of

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for urban education



--more--

on the teaching practices of his or her colleagues, and reviews any special class projects the teacher has initiated.

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' 2019-20 Teacher of the Year.

2019-20 Local Teachers of the Year

Alcova Elementary School, Joya Harris, *Music Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Alford Elementary School, Chloe Troutman, *Special Education Teacher—Moderate Intellectual Disabilities (Grades K-2)*

Anderson-Livsey Elementary School, Launa Ricketts, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Annistown Elementary School, Lenise Brown, *Dual Language Immersion Teacher—Language Arts and Social Studies—English (Grade 5)*

Arcado Elementary School, Jessica Barrows, *Kindergarten Teacher*

Archer High School, Jennifer Westbrook, *Special Education Teacher—Severe and Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Grades 9-12)*

Baggett Elementary School, Jessica E. Johnson, *Special Education Teacher (Pre-K)*

Baldwin Elementary School, Dr. Sheryl Robinson, *Mathematics and Science Teacher (Grade 5)*

Bay Creek Middle School, Lauren Brazell, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 7)*

Beaver Ridge Elementary School, Chelsey Cresap, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Benfield Elementary School, Michelle McKnight, *Special Education Teacher—Significant Developmental Delay (Grades K and 1)*

Berkeley Lake Elementary School, Matthew Green, *Music Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Berkmar High School, Vivian Stevens, *Accelerated Geometry, Gifted Geometry, and Geometry Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Berkmar Middle School, Georold Rogers, *Mathematics and Science Teacher (Grade 8)*

Bethesda Elementary School, Laura Sciacca, *1st Grade Teacher*

Britt Elementary School, Sally Manaois, *Special Education Teacher—Interrelated Resource (Grades K-5)*

Brookwood Elementary School, Colleen LaPerre, *Gifted, Advanced, and Accelerated Mathematics Teacher (Grades 5 and 6)*

Brookwood High School, Dr. Amber Simmons, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 11)*

Buice Center, Jessica Garrett, *Special Education Teacher—ADAPT Program (Grades 12+)*

Burnette Elementary School, Alice Carscaddon, *Art Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Camp Creek Elementary School, Paige Davis, *4th Grade Teacher*

Cedar Hill Elementary School, Betsie Still, *Gifted Education and Advanced Content Teacher (Grades 1-3)*

Centerville Elementary School, Shaletha D. Lightfoot-Haughton, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Central Gwinnett High School, Lori Wood, *Special Education Teacher–Mild Intellectual Disabilities (Grades 9-12)*

Chattahoochee Elementary School, Kelsey Case, *Special Education Teacher–Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 1) (Grades 1 and 2)*

Chesney Elementary School, Shemika Turner, *4th Grade Teacher*

Coleman Middle School, Jimmy Nguyen, *Mathematics and Science Teacher (Grade 6)*

Collins Hill High School, Alex Lowe, *Social Studies Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Cooper Elementary School, Alyssa Krisher, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Corley Elementary School, Lilly Yvonne Houston, *Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies Teacher (Grade 5)*

Couch Middle School, Kim Dawson, *Science Teacher (Grade 8)*

Craig Elementary School, Alyson Reilly, *English to Speakers of Other Languages Lead Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Creeklane Middle School, Carrie Card, *Media Specialist*

Crews Middle School, Nicole Finley, *Mathematics Teacher (Grade 8)*

Dacula Elementary School, Laura Maxwell, *Special Education Teacher–Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 3) (Grade 3)*

Dacula High School, Tonya Aldridge, *Mathematics Teacher (Grade 12)*

Dacula Middle School, Celisa Edwards, *Mathematics and Science Teacher (Grade 7)*

Discovery High School, Jason Hall, *Spanish for Native Speakers Teacher–Levels 1 and 2 (Grades 9-12)*

Duluth High School, Brandy J. Carter, *Theater Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Duluth Middle School, Jermaine Shakespeare, *Connections Teacher–Peer Leadership and Study Skills (Grades 6-8)*

Duncan Creek Elementary School, Amy Bell, *1st Grade Teacher*

Dyer Elementary School, Ellen Hill, *5th Grade Teacher*

Ferguson Elementary School, Lashanta E. Crawford, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Five Forks Middle School, Emma Towey, *Science Teacher (Grade 8)*

Fort Daniel Elementary School, Mary Beth Peat, *Kindergarten Teacher*

Freeman's Mill Elementary School, Melissa Benedict, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 3)*

GIVE Center East, Tracy M. Valentino, *Science Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

GIVE Center West, Karen Vaught, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 11)*

Grace Snell Middle School, Zondrea Hooks-Phillips, *Special Education Teacher—Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 2) (Grades 6-8)*

Graves Elementary School, Keanna Funderburk, *Mathematics Teacher (Grade 5)*

Grayson Elementary School, Kristie Horn, *4th Grade Teacher*

Grayson High School, Michelle Green, *Chorus Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Gwin Oaks Elementary School, Cindy Amick, *3rd Grade Teacher (Grade 8)*

Gwinnett Online Campus, Debora Hogan, *Science Teacher (Grade 8)*

Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology, Dr. Rhonda Rackley, *AP Biology and AP Environmental Science Teacher (Grades 10-12)*

Harbins Elementary School, Carrie Rajek, *Physical Education Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Harmony Elementary School, Amie Jo Hewette, *English to Speakers of Other Languages, Early Intervention Program, and Advanced Content Mathematics Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Harris Elementary School, Dr. Marlene Botts, *1st Grade Teacher*

Head Elementary School, Stephanie Richter, *Literacy and Social Studies Teacher (Grade 4)*

Hopkins Elementary School, Emma Clyde, *Special Education Teacher—Moderate Intellectual Disabilities and Cognitive Impairments (Level 2) (Grades 3-5)*

Hull Middle School, Anthony Dramis, *Mathematics Teacher (Grade 8)*

International Transition Center, Erica Poole, *Spanish and Ecology Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Ivy Creek Elementary School, Melissa Lorenz, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Jackson Elementary School, Nancy Fitzgerald, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Jenkins Elementary School, Andrea Everett, *Literacy Teacher (Grades 3-5)*

Jones Middle School, Jessica Perry, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 7)*

Jordan Middle School, Lori Leigh Alderman, *Algebra I Teacher (Grade 8)*

Kanoheda Elementary School, Angela Rivers, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Knight Elementary School, Aubriann DiPietro, *Special Education Teacher—Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 2) (Grades K-2)*

Lanier High School, Nick Brenner, *Physical Education Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Lanier Middle School, Janan Olsen, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 7)*

Lawrenceville Elementary School, Will Lewis, *Behavior Coach (Grades K-5)*

Level Creek Elementary School, Lisa Vogel, *1st Grade Teacher*

Lilburn Elementary School, Ashley Maxey, *Art Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Lilburn Middle School, Dr. Adebimpe Solarm Odunjo, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 7)*

Lovin Elementary School, Vivarine Argilagos, *1st Grade Teacher*

Magill Elementary School, Tyuan Berneil Duncan, *5th Grade Teacher*

Mason Elementary School, Carly Chestnut, *1st Grade Teacher*

Maxwell High School of Technology, Mark James, *Computer Programming Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

McClure Health Science High School, Jessie Zaretsky, *9th Grade Language Arts, AP Literature, and AP Language Teacher (Grades 9, 11, and 12)*

McConnell Middle School, Michelle A. Jones, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 6)*

McKendree Elementary School, Abbey Quintero, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Meadowcreek Elementary School, LeTricia Parks, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Meadowcreek High School, Leah Ferrell, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 9)*

Mill Creek High School, Elizabeth Summerlin, *AP U.S. History Teacher (Grade 11)*

Minor Elementary School, Kemel Roberts, *Mathematics and Science Teacher (Grade 5)*

Moore Middle School, Gulannar Akhtar Rattani, *Algebra I Teacher–Gear Up for Graduation Program (Grade 8)*

Mountain Park Elementary School, Debbie A. Freeman, *Reading Recovery Teacher (Grade 1)*

Mountain View High School, Heather Brindle, *English to Speakers of Other Languages, Social Studies, and Dual Enrollment Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Mulberry Elementary School, Shannon Wiley, *1st Grade Teacher (Grade 1)*

Nesbit Elementary School, Devin Pulliam, *Special Education Teacher–Autism Spectrum Disorder (Level 3) (Grades 2 and 3)*

Norcross Elementary School, Crystal N. Jones, *English to Speakers of Other Languages Teacher (Grade 5)*

Norcross High School, Lee Newman, *Band Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

North Gwinnett High School, Rebecca Carlisle, *AP World History Teacher (Grade 10)*

North Gwinnett Middle School, Dannica Barnum, *Art Teacher (Grades 6-8)*

Northbrook Middle School, Tommy L. Edwards, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 8)*

Norton Elementary School, Delisa Tate, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Oakland Meadow School, Caitlen Green, *Special Education Transition Teacher–Severe and Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Grades 12+)*

Osborne Middle School, Kelly Sloan, *Social Studies Teacher (Grade 8)*

Parkview High School, Laura Oliver, *American Literature Teacher (Grade 11)*

Parsons Elementary School, Mary Monaco, *2nd Grade Teacher*

Partee Elementary School, DeAnna Espinoza, *Media Specialist (Grades K-5)*

Patrick Elementary School, Christy Lueke, *Music Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Paul Duke STEM High School, Carly Cantrell, *Geometry Teacher (Grade 11)*

Peachtree Elementary School, Cassidy Hobby, *Media Specialist (Grades K-5)*

Peachtree Ridge High School, MaryJane Young, *World History Teacher (Grade 10)*

Pharr Elementary School, Susan Kusch, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Phoenix High School, Therese A. Rinehart, *Mathematics Teacher (Grades 9-12)*

Pinckneyville Middle School, Amanda Heaton, *Physical Education and Health Teacher (Grades 6-8)*

Puckett's Mill Elementary School, Jenny Ittner, *Advanced Content Mathematics Teacher (Grades 3-5)*

Radloff Middle School, Brad Zickefoose, *Accelerated and Gifted Earth Science Teacher (Grade 6)*

Richards Middle School, Crystal Donaldson, *Physical Science Teacher (Grade 8)*

Riverside Elementary School, Lori Tschan, *Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher (Grade 4)*

Roberts Elementary School, Deanne Manotas, *Art Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Rock Springs Elementary School, Janet Zawacki, *1st Grade Teacher*

Rockbridge Elementary School, Christine Bower, *STEM Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Rosebud Elementary School, Nicole Fletcher, *Special Education Teacher– Interrelated Resource (Grades K and 3)*

Shiloh Elementary School, Tina Hall, *5th Grade Teacher*

Shiloh High School, Minnie Sharpe, *Special Education Teacher–Moderate Intellectual Disabilities (Grades 9-12)*

Shiloh Middle School, Jerion Smith, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 7)*

Simonton Elementary School, Sheron Jones, *4th Grade Teacher*

Simpson Elementary School, Gayle Dingler, *5th Grade Teacher*

Snellville Middle School, Tiffany S. Fortner, *Science Teacher (Grade 6)*

South Gwinnett High School, Jennifer Zaino, *Career and Technical Education Teacher–STAR Academy (Grade 9)*

Starling Elementary School, Leigh Shores, *3rd Grade Teacher*

Stripling Elementary School, Ivelisse Hernandez, *Special Education Teacher– Specific Learning Disabilities (Grade 4)*

Sugar Hill Elementary School, Julie Morrow, *Language Arts, Mathematics, and Social Studies Teacher (Grade 4)*

Summerour Middle School, Althea Carter, *Mathematics Teacher (Grade 7)*

Suwanee Elementary School, Jenn Jones, *Language Arts Teacher (Grade 5)*

Sweetwater Middle School, J. Antoine Shade, *STEAM Teacher–Accelerated Mathematics and Science (Grade 7)*

Sycamore Elementary School, Chelstyn Rudmose, *1st Grade Teacher*

Taylor Elementary School, Victoria Chhim, *1st Grade Teacher*

Trickum Middle School, Andy Paulson, *Mathematics Teacher (Grade 6)*

Trip Elementary School, Jennifer W. Jones, *1st Grade Teacher*

Twin Rivers Middle School, Jessica Walker, *Special Education Teacher–Moderate Intellectual Disabilities (Grades 6-8)*

Walnut Grove Elementary School, Ashton Simpson, *4th Grade Teacher*

White Oak Elementary School, Hind Ghazzawi, *Art Teacher (Grades K-5)*

Winn Holt Elementary School, Jamie Gowen, *Gifted Education Teacher (Grades 1-5)*

Woodward Mill Elementary School, Susan Sanders, *4th Grade Teacher*