



Gainesville City School System

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: All Media Outlets

From: Gainesville City School System

Subject: McConnell named Gainesville City School District Teacher of the Year

Date: November 20, 2015

Gainesville City School System has named Heather McConnell as the 2017 District Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made last Friday at the Gainesville High School football state playoff game as a special presentation by Superintendent Dr. Wanda Creel and Gainesville Middle School Principal Dr. Rose Pre-Jean Harris. Dr. Creel congratulated Ms. McConnell on her accomplishment stating, "We are proud of the exemplary way that Heather serves our students at school and within the community, and we commend her for her dedication to a profession that is both challenging and rewarding."

Ms. McConnell, a 2006 graduate of Gainesville High School, currently serves as an autism teacher at Gainesville Middle School. She began teaching within the Gainesville City School System as a substitute teacher in 2011 and was later hired as a paraprofessional until becoming a lead autism teacher in 2012.

When asked how does it feel to be the District Teacher of the Year, Ms. McConnell exclaimed, "Shocking, humbling, encouraging!" She stated, "As it says in Proverbs 16:9, "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord established his steps". The Lord had a classroom of rambunctiously challenging and sweet boys planned for me and I wouldn't want to teach in any other environment."

Ms. McConnell praises each small accomplishment of her students, knowing the daily challenges that they have to overcome. She stated, "These little things add up quickly and soon you have made a lot of well-earned progress."

Heather is the daughter of Dave and Denise McConnell, both teachers in the school system. Her mother Denise was the 2014 District Teacher of the Year. Heather has two brothers David Jr. and Jacob, who are also GHS graduates.

Ms. McConnell along with other district winners from around the state will compete for Georgia Teacher of the Year which will be announced at the annual banquet in May 2016.

In addition to naming the district teacher of the year, the school system also recognized the teachers of the year for each of the schools. They are Diana Drerup of Centennial Arts Academy, Kay Law of Enota Multiple Intelligences Academy, Michelle Garcia of Fair Street IB World School, Samantha Cronic of Gainesville Exploration Academy, Jessica Chambers of New Holland Knowledge Academy, Jean Louis Pondo of Gainesville Middle School, MSgt. Jack Reese of Gainesville High School, and Heather McConnell of Wood's Mill Academy.

Attachment: Photo of Heather McConnell, 2017 Gainesville City School District Teacher of the Year