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For Immediate Release

To: Media Outlets

From: Gainesville City School System

RE: CTAE Educator Chosen as GCSS District Teacher of the Year

Date: October 27, 2016

The Gainesville City School System has selected Mrs. Whitney McPherson as the 2018 District Teacher of the Year. Mrs. McPherson is the Culinary Arts Instructor and FCCLA Advisor at Gainesville High School. She was honored at a special reception held on October 25th at the GHS Media Center as the Teacher of the Year for the district and Gainesville High School.

Employed with the school district since August 2006, Mrs. McPherson began working at Gainesville High School after graduating from college teaching Nutrition, Professional Foods and Consumer Services. She implemented the Culinary Arts program at GHS three years ago while serving as the CTAE department chair.

"I have always wanted to be a teacher. I knew I was called to teach but I did not know what I wanted to teach," stated Mrs. McPherson. "I found my passion in high school. I took my first Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) course, and I fell in love. After taking every FACS class offered, I started interning with my teacher through Work Based Learning. The inspiration and motivation that I received from my FACS teacher in high school solidified my decision to pursue my education to become a life-changer like her."

Mrs. McPherson is a passionate supporter of her students and expects them to have the same work ethics that she has. She uses humor and 100% care as her strategy to engage students and foster a nurturing learning environment. She explained, "I understand that all students are different and learn differently. I try to meet every student where they are and push them to achieve excellence. I believe that every student is capable of learning especially when each student is given the appropriate amount of time, support, feedback and encouragement. When students see success, they thrive."

Mrs. McPherson's primary goal as a CTAE educator is to connect with students so that they feel comfortable learning from her and from each other. She also strives to teach industry recognized curriculum with rigor and relevance in order to prepare students for both college and a future career. "I need for students to trust me so that they will be able to learn freely, make mistakes and learn from their mistakes," she shared. "I believe that it is my job to provide students with learning experiences that will train them in soft-skills and job skills."

Being selected as the District Teacher of the Year is a huge accomplishment for Mrs. McPherson. "I am honored to be selected as teacher of the year for GHS and GCSS," she stated. "There are so many hardworking, dedicated and phenomenal educators in our school system; I am humbled to be chosen. It really takes all of us pouring ourselves into our students for them to become ready for life after high school."

The school district also recognized the teachers of the year for each school: Victoria Turk (Centennial Arts Academy), Laurent Burnette (Enota MI Academy), Ana Hortman (Fair Street International Academy), Allison Barron (Gainesville Exploration Academy), Jennifer Schuetze (New Holland Knowledge Academy), and Courtney Hagans (Gainesville Middle School).