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Heather Phillips, Bluewater Elementary School, Named OCSD Teacher of the Year

Congratulations to Heather Phillips (pictured above in the middle), Bluewater Elementary School, for winning Okaloosa County School District Teacher of the Year. The Teacher of the Year program recognizes and honors the contribution of outstanding classroom teachers who have demonstrated a superior capacity to inspire a love of learning in students of all backgrounds and abilities. Lynn Griggs (pictured above on left), Kenwood Elementary School, and Karen Mcvay (pictured above on right), Meigs Middle School, were recognized as Teacher of the Year Finalists.

The selection of the 2018-19 Okaloosa County Teacher of the Year actually began in the fall of 2017 when each school announced its honoree. In December, each school's Teacher of the Year submitted a portfolio that included a detailed resume, responses to questions about their teaching philosophy and practice, and comments about the teaching profession. Finalists were announced by the selection committee in January, and committee members visited their classrooms to observe them in action before selecting the winner.

The Okaloosa County Teacher of the Year will compete with teachers from over 70 public school districts and other institutions in Florida for the state's top honor. As our district winner, Heather will also participate in the Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year Roundtable and the Macy's Gala Awards Ceremony in July when the state winner will be announced.

Making up the Selection Committee were Alyson Lofe', Chair, Bluewater Elementary School, Dr. Lamar White, Okaloosa County School Board member, Andrea Brown, Baker School, Christin Keeney, Davidson Middle School, and Beth Russell, Fort Walton Beach High School.

Sponsors of this year's event included: ZT Motors, Publix, NTA Life, Jetty East Condominium Resort; Okaloosa County Education Association, and Beavers, Inc. (Arby's).

Special thanks also go to: Cedric Peterson, Michelle Strickland, and Missie Skyes – Banquet Committee; Eric Mitchell and Brandon McSween – Slideshow Presentation; Stephanie Cyr – Cover Photo; and Pat Mixon – Program Design.

Laura Rakas, District Representative for U.S. Congressman Gaetz, presented a Congressional Proclamation to Charlotte as part of her recognition awards.

The Grand Prize this year...Heather will get to drive a BMW for one year compliments of ZT Motors!



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