



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Names Teacher and Teacher Assistant of the Year at Second Annual Gem Awards

Charlotte, NC, May 7, 2024- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is proud to announce the recipients of its prestigious Teacher of the Year and Teacher Assistant of the Year awards at the second annual Gem Awards ceremony. Hosted by WCNC-TV's Larry Sprinkle, the awards ceremony took place on May 7, 2024, at the Dale F. Halton Theater at Central Piedmont Community College.

The Gem Awards ceremony is a celebration of excellence in education, recognizing the extraordinary contributions of educators within the CMS district. This year, the spotlight shines on the remarkable accomplishments of the following recipients:

- Teacher of the Year: Elizabeth Canute, Tuckaseegee Elementary School
- Teacher Assistant of the Year: Keecha Finley, University Meadows Elementary School

"Teaching is a hard, yet rewarding, profession. Through your guidance, support and inspiration, you help students become the people they are meant to be." said Dr. Crystal Hill, superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

In addition to our winners, we also acknowledge the outstanding finalists for the 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year and Teacher Assistant of the Year awards:

2023-24 Teacher of the Year Finalists:

- Stephanie Arem, McKee Road Elementary School, South Learning Community
- Keith Burgess, Northridge Middle School, Southeast Learning Community
- Elizabeth Canute, Tuckaseegee Elementary School, Northwest Learning Community
- Leslie Cosentine, Charlotte Engineering Early College, Northeast Learning Community
- Stephanie Croker, North Academy of World Languages, North Learning Community
- Marlette Gaither, Marie G. Davis School, Central Learning Community
- Meredith Sumrell, Quail Hollow Middle School, Southwest Learning Community
- Danah Wilson, Northwest School of the Arts, West Learning Community
- Alexa Woodburn, J.T. Williams Secondary Montessori School, East Learning Community

2023-24 Teacher Assistant of the Year Finalists:

- William Crawford, Jay M. Robinson Middle School, South Learning Community

- Lynne DiMarco, Croft Community School, North Learning Community
- Keecha Finley, University Meadows Elementary School, Northeast Learning Community
- Teresa Karam, Thomasboro Academy, West Learning Community
- Ebonee McCain, Winget Park Elementary School, Southwest Learning Community
- Michaiah Miller, Harding University High School, Northwest Learning Community
- Eric Redman, Lawrence Orr Elementary School, Southeast Learning Community
- Merissa Slachciak, Villa Heights Elementary School, East Learning Community
- Anika Warmington, First Ward Creative Arts Academy, Central Learning Community

The Gem Awards ceremony serves as a testament to CMS' commitment to recognizing and celebrating excellence in education. Through the dedication and passion of educators like Elizabeth Canute and Keecha Finley, CMS continues to foster a culture of learning and achievement.

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For more information email media@cms.k12.nc.us.

Jourdyn Grandison

Media Relations Specialist

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

980-343-0761 office

704-317-3968 cell

Jourdyn1.grandison@cms.k12.nc.us

About Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is the 16th largest school district in the nation and the second largest in North Carolina. Under the leadership of Superintendent Crystal Hill, Ed.D., the district provides academic instruction and support to more than 141,000 students across Mecklenburg County.

Our vision is to create an innovative, inclusive, student-centered environment that supports the development of independent learners. With a focus on ensuring all students reach their full potential, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools leads the community in educational excellence, inspiring intellectual curiosity, creativity and achievement.