



PRINCIPAL *of the* YEAR

FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2021, 12:00 PM





Learning is a lifelong journey

Children are curious to know what the world is about. As they grow, they ask what it can become. Learning is a journey that continues throughout their lives.

Wells Fargo NC Principal of the Year, your efforts give a path to their future.

[wellsfargo.com](https://www.wellsfargo.com)

PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR SPONSORS



**WELLS
FARGO**

Wells Fargo is a nationwide, diversified, community-based financial services company that has 239 stores and more than 36,500 team members in North Carolina. Wells Fargo's vision is to satisfy all of its customers' financial needs and to help them succeed financially through its banking, commercial real estate lending, insurance, investments, mortgage, and consumer and commercial finance products and services.

Wells Fargo is honored to sponsor the North Carolina Principal of the Year Program and to support educational initiatives in communities across the state. This past year in North Carolina, Wells Fargo provided more than \$16.2 million to nonprofits and schools. These contributions were channeled into areas such as housing affordability, small business recovery & growth, financial health, environmental/sustainability, financial literacy, education and COVID-19 recovery. Team members volunteered more than 83,000 hours. Visit a Wells Fargo branch today or [wellsfargo.com](https://www.wellsfargo.com) to learn more about the company.



Education First is proud to have a longstanding relationship with the Wells Fargo Principal of the Year Award – it is a relationship built on valuing the fantastic educators and administrators across the state of North Carolina that bring their schools to life and have dedicated their careers to the next generation of global citizens. EF's mission is to open the world through education. To that end, EF is pleased to award the 2020 Principal of the Year a trip to the Global Education Symposium in Boston in 2021 for the POY and a guest or two teachers of his/her choosing. This event is hosted at the North American headquarters in Boston, MA where like-minded educators will gather to explore topics like STEM, sustainability and others through a global lens and will feature educators from around the world as well as EF partners contributing to the field. The prize includes flights, accommodations, meals, conference registration, and a chance to experience Boston.



Minneapolis-based Jostens provides products, programs and services that help people tell their stories, celebrate important traditions and recognize achievements. Jostens is the most trusted partner in helping customers to celebrate moments that matter. The company's products include school yearbooks and pictures, scholastic products such as class rings, graduation products, letter jackets and products for athletic champions and their fans. Jostens partners with schools across the country and internationally, and helps bring their mission, vision, and values to life through their Branding Initiatives — They strive every day to help Faculty & Students not only express it on the walls but live it in the halls. Jostens is a subsidiary company of Platinum Equity.



No Kid Hungry North Carolina is working to break down the barriers that keep kids from accessing healthy food. Our organization was formed in 2011 in partnership with state leaders and the national No Kid Hungry campaign, which is a program of the nonprofit Share Our Strength. In 2014, No Kid Hungry NC became an initiative of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

In North Carolina, almost 900,000 public school students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Many of those students depend on school for their nutrition. That's why No Kid Hungry NC is helping connect our state's children to effective but under-utilized federal nutrition programs such as school breakfast, summer meals, and afterschool meals.

Learn more at NoKidHungryNC.org.

AWARD CEREMONY

MISTRESS OF CEREMONY

DR. SONJA BROWN • Recognition & Advancement Lead, Division of Transformation,
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

WELCOME AND GREETINGS

DR. CYNTHIA MARTIN • Director, Division of Transformation, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

DR. OLIVIA OXENDINE • State Board of Education, Sandhills Education Region

VIDEO MESSAGES

THE HONORABLE ROY COOPER • Governor of North Carolina

LUNCHEON

SPONSOR REMARKS

JOHN W. WARD • Region Head, Carolinas Division Middle Market Banking, Wells Fargo

ALESSANDRO MONTANARI • Assistant Director, Division of Transformation,
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on behalf of Education First (EF)

JUBAL STAGNER • Sales Representative, Central North Carolina Jostens

HELEN ROBERTS • Program Manager, No Kid Hungry NC

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP

KISHA CLEMONS • 2020 Wells Fargo North Carolina Principal of the Year

CATHERINE TRUITT • State Superintendent, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

VIDEO PRESENTATION OF 2021 REGIONAL FINALISTS

RECOGNITION OF REGIONAL CANDIDATES

DR. BEVERLY EMORY • Executive Director, Office of District and School Transformation

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2021 WELLS FARGO NORTH CAROLINA PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

MICHAEL L. GOLDEN • Executive Vice President, Triangle Region Bank President, Wells Fargo

CLOSING AND ADJOURNMENT

DR. SONJA BROWN

WELLS FARGO NC PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

The Wells Fargo Principal of the Year Award was introduced in 1984 to recognize the role of the principal in establishing an environment conducive to the pursuit and achievement of academic excellence in North Carolina's schools. This Foundation sponsors the award in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Since the inception of the program, there have been 41 Wells Fargo North Carolina Principals of the Year, 272 regional award recipients, and 3,460 local Wells Fargo Principals of the Year. The Principal of the Year Program recognizes principals at the local, regional, and statewide levels.

The local process begins with each school system selecting one principal as its local Wells Fargo Principal of the Year. The selection process at the local level is the responsibility of the local superintendent or designee. The person chosen as the local Wells Fargo Principal of the Year represents his or her school system in the regional selection process. The regional selection process includes an evaluation of the candidate through a portfolio review and an interview. Eight regional finalists participate in the state selection process. The state selection process continues with each regional finalist being interviewed and his/her portfolio reviewed by a state selection committee.

The Wells Fargo Principal of the Year serves as the North Carolina ambassador for the state's approximately 2,500 principals. The 2021 NC Principal of the Year will serve in an advisory capacity to the State Board of Education for a two-year term and serves on the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Public School Forum.

This selection process is facilitated in each region by Regional Education Facilitators representing the Division of Transformation at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.



2021 STATE SELECTION COMMITTEE

The State Selection Committee, chosen based on their dynamic public record in support of education, perform panel interviews and extensive portfolio review in the selection of the North Carolina Principal of the Year. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education take pride in celebrating the most innovative and effective public school leaders in our state.

DR. MARY ANN WOLF

President and Executive Director
Public Schools Forum of North Carolina

DR. JEFF COX

President
Wilkes Community College

DR. SHIRLY PRINCE

Executive Director
North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals' Association

DR. SONJA BROWN

Ex Officio Member, Recognition & Advancement Lead
Division of Transformation
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

THE HONORABLE HOWARD N. LEE

Founder and President
Howard N. Lee Institute

MICHELLE WHITE



NORTHEAST REGION PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Chowan Middle | Edenton-Chowan Schools

“In order to ensure an educational environment that promotes maximum success for every individual student, we have created an environment characterized by a positive culture, high expectations for all, and data driven instruction. Our slogan, ‘All Thrive in the DFW Hive,’ is highly evident in our strong culture reinforced by academic, social, and behavioral multi-tiered systems of support.”

- 12 years of administrative experience
- East Carolina University (BA)
- Elizabeth City State University (MA)
- Wingate University (Doctoral Candidate)
- National Board Certified Teacher
- Led D.F. Walker Elementary to earn NC’s National Title I Distinguished School Award in 2019
- According to 2020 NCTWC survey, 100% of staff feels school leadership holds teachers to high professional standards for delivering instruction

NORTHEAST DISTRICT WINNERS

Shannon M. Cecil

Rodgers Elementary
Martin County Schools

Lauren Hinnant

W.L. Manning Elementary
Roanoke Rapids Graded School District

LeVar D. Mizelle

Camden Middle
Camden County Schools

Diane Childress

First Flight Middle
Dare County Schools

Chastity Kinsey

Inborden Elementary S.T.E.A.M. Academy
Halifax County Schools

Delishia R. Moore

Elizabeth City Middle
Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools

Ernest Cooley Jr.

Hertford County High
Hertford County Public Schools

John Russell Lassiter

Hertford Grammar
Perquimans County Schools

Darryl Thomas, Jr.

E.B. Aycock Middle
Pitt County Schools

Jonathan William Hayes

Gates County High
Gates County Schools

Clara Lee

Bertie Early College High
Bertie County Schools

DR. CHRISTOPHER BARNES



SOUTHEAST REGION PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

White Oak High | Onslow County Schools

“Equity is a critical issue for school principals and it is linked directly to the diversity we see in our classrooms and across the homes of the school district. Bridging real or perceived gaps takes a special appreciation of and respect for the population and subgroups we serve.”

- 20 years of administrative experience
- NC State University (BS)
- East Carolina University (MSA, Ed.D)
- Participant in Distinguished Leadership Program of North Carolina
- NC Principal Fellow
- NC Teaching Fellow
- According to 2020 NCTWC survey, 100% of staff feels the school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement

SOUTHEAST DISTRICT WINNERS

Lorene Bell

La Grange Elementary
Lenoir County Public Schools

Jessica Emory

Beaufort Middle
Carteret County Public Schools

Beverly D. Eury

Bolivia Elementary
Brunswick County Schools

Marketa Y. Hargrove

Chinquapin Elementary
Duplin County Schools

Steven E. Howard

Pollocksville Elementary
Jones County Public Schools

Rachel Manning

Snipes Academy of Arts & Design
New Hanover County Schools

Dr. Eleanor B. Patrick

Oaks Road Academy
Craven County Schools

Emery Smith

Snow Hill Primary
Greene County Schools

Melissa Wilson

Topsail Elementary
Pender County Schools

Sheila Ann Wolfe

Northwest Elementary
Wayne County Public Schools

DR. ELENA ASHBURN



NORTH CENTRAL REGION PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Needham B. Broughton Magnet High | Wake County Public School System

“Every school community has its unique cultural, social, intellectual, and political resources. An important component of the principal’s work is not only understanding these resources but leveraging them to promote student learning and school improvement.”

- 9 years of administrative experience
- Longwood University (BA)
- UNC-Chapel Hill (MSA, Ed.D)
- 2018 Michael Priddy Family Leadership Award & Scholarship for Aspiring Superintendents (UNC School of Education)
- Presented study on the gender gap in NC Superintendency at the International Women Leading Education Conference in England in 2019
- Led Needham B. Broughton Magnet High School to achieve the highest graduation rate in the school’s history at 89.33%
- According to 2020 NCTWC survey, 99% of the staff feels teachers are encouraged to participate in school leadership roles

NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT WINNERS

Stephanie Ann Ayscue

Advance Academy
Vance County Schools

Dr. Kerri Evans

Swift Creek Middle
Johnston County Public Schools

Dr. Jennifer Spivey

Highland Elementary
Harnett County Schools

Eric Bethell

Terrell Lane Middle
Franklin County Schools

Christine Kreider

Hillsborough Elementary
Orange County Schools

Susan Taylor

Jordan High
Durham Public Schools

Donnell Cannon

North Edgecombe High
Edgecombe County Schools

Dustin Martin

Stories Creek Elementary
Person County Schools

Lisa Tusa

South Granville High
Granville County Public Schools

Lisa Duffey

JR Ingram Elementary
Lee County Schools

Carla Murray

North Chatham Elementary
Chatham County Schools

Pamela Walthall

Vick Elementary
Wilson County Schools

Crystal Epps

Mary Scroggs Elementary
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

Hugh Scott II

Southern Nash High
Nash County Public Schools

SUZANNE OWEN

SANDHILLS REGION PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Cliffdale Elementary | Cumberland County Schools

“When I focus on a person’s talents, I am able to teach them how to use their gifts to enhance their areas of weakness. Focusing on a person’s strengths yields a much higher reward.”

- 13 years of administrative experience
- UNC Pembroke (BA)
- Fayetteville State University (MSA)
- NC Principal Fellow
- Led Cliffdale Elementary to exceed growth in Reading in 2019
- Participant in Distinguished Leadership Program of North Carolina
- According to 2020 NCTWC survey, 100% of the staff feels teachers work in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices



SANDHILLS DISTRICT WINNERS

Kelly E. Bullard

Tabor City Elementary
Columbus County Schools

Dr. Fannie L. Mason

Sycamore Lane Elementary
Scotland County Schools

Susan Westerbeek

Clinton High
Clinton City Schools

Della Ingram

East Middle
Montgomery County Schools

Tracy C. Metcalf

New Century Middle
Moore County Schools

Dr. Jason M. Wray

East Bladen High
Bladen County Schools

ERIK NAGLEE



PIEDMONT-TRIAD REGION PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Page High | Guilford County Schools

“High visibility, I feel, is the most important thing to do as a leader and allows you to become more proactive rather than reactive.”

- 11 years of administrative experience
- Greensboro College (BA)
- UNC-Chapel Hill (MSA)
- Walden University (Doctoral Candidate)
- Led implementation of Malik Ramirez Learn to Swim Program
- Board Vice Chair Out of the Garden Project
- According to 2020 NCTWC survey, 99% of the staff feels the curriculum taught in this school is aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study

PIEDMONT-TRIAD DISTRICT WINNERS

Erica Blackwell

Reidsville Middle
Rockingham County Schools

Kelly Kirkland

Yadkinville Elementary
Yadkin County Schools

Kevin Spainhour

West Stokes High
Stokes County Schools

Penny Crooks

Asheboro High
Asheboro City Schools

Sarah Maier

Shady Grove Elementary
Davie County Schools

Margaret Spicer

Copeland Elementary
Surry County Schools

Francesca Gantt

N. L. Dillard Middle
Caswell County Schools

Debbie McIntyre

Jefferson Elementary
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools

Jennifer Tallant

Liberty Drive Elementary
Thomasville City Schools

Kelsey Greer

Denton Elementary
Davidson County Schools

Emily Niston

B. H. Tharrington Primary
Mount Airy City Schools

Ashley Westmoreland

Alexander Wilson Elementary
Alamance-Burlington School System

Shea Setzer Grosch

Randolph Early College High
Randolph County School Systems

ERICIA TURNER

SOUTHWEST REGION PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Rocky River High | Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

“One of my most fundamental values as a leader is to foster positive relationships with my staff and demonstrate my ability to be relatable and empathetic to their personal and professional needs.”

- 11 years of administrative experience
- NC A&T State University (BS, MS)
- Gardner Webb University (Add-On Licensure)
- UNC Greensboro (Doctoral Candidate)
- 2020 Northeast Learning Community Principal of the Year
- Decreased teacher turnover rate by 5% over the past 4 years
- According to 2020 NCTWC survey, 96% of teachers within the district use assessment data to inform their instruction



SOUTHWEST DISTRICT WINNERS

Zebbie Bradley-Bondurant

Ethan H. Shive Elementary
Rowan-Salisbury School

Chasity R. Dolan

Weddington Hills Elementary
Cabarrus County Schools

Tracy Eley

Battleground Elementary
Lincoln County Schools

Will Gibson

Jackson Park Elementary
Kannapolis City Schools

Chris Grace

Lakeshore Elementary
Iredell-Statesville Schools

Dr. Michael W. Harvey

Sun Valley High
Union County Public Schools

Crystal C. Houser

Forestview High
Gaston County Schools

Jennifer I. Huneycutt

West Stanly Middle
Stanly County Schools

Julie Y. Rikard

Kings Mountain High
Cleveland County Schools

Michael A. Vetter

Ansonville Elementary
Anson County Schools

JILL WARD



NORTHWEST REGION PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

Old Fort Elementary | McDowell County Schools

“By modeling expectations, encouraging teachers to try new things and providing leadership opportunities, our school team has accomplished amazing things.”

- 5 years of administrative experience
- Appalachian State University (BS)
- Western Carolina University (MA)
- Appalachian State University (Add-On Licensure)
- Led Old Fort Elementary to exceed growth in Reading and Math in 2019
- Participant in Distinguished Leadership Program of North Carolina
- According to 2020 NCTWC survey, 100% of the staff believes what is taught will make a difference in students’ lives

NORTHWEST DISTRICT WINNERS

Lora Austin

Walter Johnson Middle
Burke County Public Schools

Paul Matthew Bentley

Crossnore Elementary
Avery County Schools

Brian A. Bettis

Bethel School
Watauga County Schools

Pamela Huffman

West Wilkes Middle
Wilkes County Schools

Kevin M. Huskins

Mountain Heritage High
Yancey County Schools

Jacob Lail

West Alexander Middle
Alexander County Schools

Eric J. Puryear, Sr.

Hickory Career & Arts Magnet High
Hickory Public Schools

Mitzi Story

Tuttle Elementary
Catawba County Schools

Courtney Wright

Hibriten High
Caldwell County Schools

KEVIN BRADLEY



WESTERN REGION PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

CHASE High | Rutherford County Schools

“I believe that trust and respect is rooted in relationships. If the roots of the relationships are strong, then the fruits of trust and respect that grow from the relationship are healthy.”

- 10.5 years of administrative experience
- NC State University (BS, MS)
- Appalachian State University (Add-On Licensure)
- National Board Certified Teacher
- Led CHASE High School to exceed growth in 2019
- Board of Directors Member Rutherford County Schools Education Foundation
- According to 2020 NCTWC survey, 100% of teachers are encouraged to try new things to improve instruction

WESTERN DISTRICT WINNERS

Derek Edwards

Asheville High
Asheville City Schools

Dr. Lisa Fletcher

Andrews High
Cherokee County Schools

Allison Guynn

South Macon Elementary
Macon County Schools

Susan Jackson

Hot Springs Elementary
Madison County Schools

Caroline Lynch

W.D. Williams Elementary
Buncombe County Schools

Eleanor Macaulay

Fairview School
Jackson County Public Schools

Mark Page

Atkinson Elementary
Henderson County Public Schools

Tonya Treadway

Pisgah Forest Elementary
Transylvania County Schools

2020 WELLS FARGO NORTH CAROLINA
REGIONAL PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR



**Kisha
Clemons**

2020 WELLS FARGO NORTH CAROLINA

PRINCIPAL
of the **YEAR**

NORTHWEST REGION
NEWTON-CONOVER CITY
SCHOOLS



SHEILA P. EVANS
Northeast Region
Edenton Chowan Schools



DEBORAH S. HOFFMAN
Southeast Region
Onslow County Schools



DR. RUTH C. STEIDINGER
North Central Region
Wake County Public Schools



ALFRED JEAN HAMMOND
Sandhills Region
Hoke County Schools



ASHLEY CRAVEN LEMLEY
Piedmont-Triad Region
Davidson County Schools



DR. JENNIFER BRINSON
Southwest Region
Cabarrus County Schools



LORI FOX
Western Region
Haywood County Schools

PAST NC PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR

2020 Kisha Clemons, Newton-Conover City Schools, Shuford Elementary

2019 Matthew Bristow-Smith, Edgecombe County Public Schools, Edgecombe Early College High

2018 Tabari Wallace, Craven County Schools, West Craven High

2017 Jason Griffin, Perquimans County Schools, Hertford Grammar

2016 Melody Chalmers, Cumberland County Schools, E.E. Smith High

2015 Steve Lassiter, Jr., Pitt County Schools, Pactolus School

2014 Dr. Carrie Tulbert, Mooresville Graded School District, Mooresville Middle

2013 Dale Cole, Beaufort County Schools, Chocowinity Middle

2012 Patrice Faison, Guilford County Schools, Oak Hill Elementary

2011 Dr. Rob Jackson, Union County Public Schools, Cuthbertson High

2010 Dr. Jan King, Henderson County Schools, Glenn C. Marlow Elementary

2009 Vann Pennell, Brunswick County Schools, South Brunswick High

2008 Debra Morris, Kannapolis City Schools, A.L. Brown High

2007 Craig Hill, Lenoir County Schools, Kinston High

2006 Marian Yates, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, South Mecklenburg High

2005 Margaret Hyatt, Buncombe County Schools, Avery's Creek Elementary

2004 John R. Black, Hickory City Schools, Longview Elementary

2003 Nina René Corders, Cumberland County Schools, E.E. Smith High

2002 Lloyd G. Wimberley, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Myers Park High

2001 Peggy Smith, Johnston County Schools, East Clayton Elementary

2000 Gail T. Edmondson, Greene County Schools, Snow Hill Primary

1999 Daniel A. Piggott, Winston-Salem/Forsyth Schools, Carver High

1998 Pandora M. Bell, Guilford County Schools, Jesse Wharton Elementary

1997 Judith H. Budacz, Pitt County Schools, Wahl-Coates Elementary

1996 Mary D. McDuffie, Cumberland County Schools, Seventy-First High

1995 Jo Ann Bowman, Lee County Schools, J. Glenn Edwards Elementary

1994 David C. Burleson, Burke County Schools, Freedom High

1993 Ann B. Clark, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Alexander Graham Middle

1992 Jane B. Burke, Hertford County Schools, Hertford County High

1991 John M. Schroeder, High Point City Schools, Fairview Elementary

1990 John R. Griffin, Cumberland County Schools, E.E. Smith High

1989 Barbara M. Ledford, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Northeast Jr. High

1988 Dan A. Jones, Guilford County Schools, Erwin Open Elementary

1987* Karen H. Campbell, Buncombe County Schools, W.W. Estes Elementary
Dale J. Metz, Greensboro City Schools, Gateway Education Center

1986* Patricia F. Gibson, Newton-Conover City Schools, Newton-Conover Middle
Janie E. Manning, Pitt County Schools, Bethel Elementary

1985* Alice H. Hart, Buncombe County Schools, Glen Arden Elementary
Beverly S. White, Hickory City Schools, Jenkins Elementary

1984* Robert A. Clendenin, Guilford County Schools, Paige High
Alexander Erwin, Wilkes County Schools, Wilkes Central High

* Prior to 1988, two statewide winners were named each year. Since then, one statewide winner has been selected.



“Cultivating a school climate built on trust and mutual respect does not happen by chance. It is an investment in people. It is the development of systems, practices, and procedures that support a healthy ecosystem for all.”

Kisha Clemons

2020 Wells Fargo North Carolina Principal of the Year

Please share moments from today on social media using #nctoypoy

The Wells Fargo North Carolina Principal of the Year process is facilitated by the Division of Transformation.

