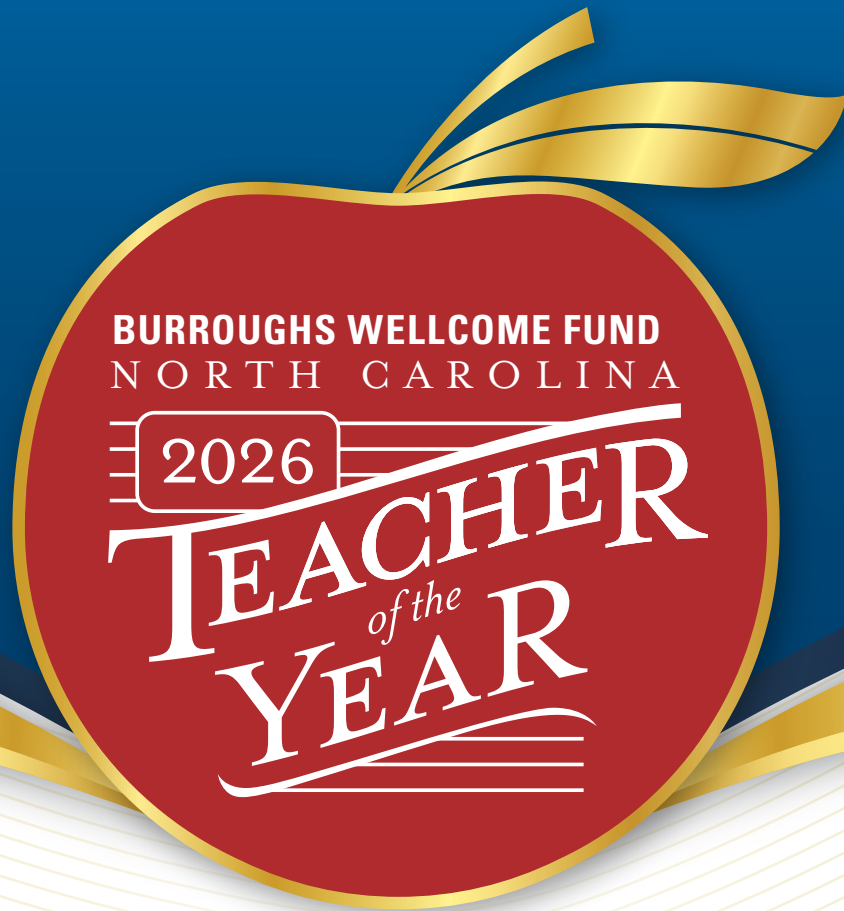


# A SHOWCASE OF EXCELLENT EDUCATORS



# OUR SPECIAL APPRECIATION IS EXTENDED TO SPONSORS WHO MAKE THE PROGRAM POSSIBLE:

## BURROUGHS WELLCOME FUND

**Burroughs Wellcome Fund** — The Burroughs Wellcome Fund (BWF) is a private foundation dedicated to advancing biomedical sciences and supporting the next generation of scientific researchers and educators. With a strong commitment to fostering innovation and excellence in science, the Burroughs Wellcome Fund has made a significant investment in the realm of STEM education. In the past 25 years, BWF has invested more than \$100 million to support initiatives and networks in STEM education. In addition to funding, BWF provides opportunities for interactions with colleagues and engagement with the broader community of educators and grant recipients across other BWF education programs. BWF's focus on support of education highlights the belief in the pivotal role it plays in shaping the future of scientific discovery and addressing complex global challenges.



**Bojangles** — The Bojangles Foundation was formed in June 2023 to provide support to the communities we serve. Our main pillars are military and first responders support, literacy and educational support and hometown heroes in the communities we serve. We believe that literacy impacts all individual's ability to make positive contributions to society. It is relevant to both our community and crew to form future leaders. It is our goal to make an impact in the Tar Heel state!

Bojangles Restaurants, Inc. began as the dream of Jack Fulk and Richard Thomas, two veteran restaurant operators who predicted rising consumer demand for good food served in a quick-service environment. They based their concept on three attributes: distinctive flavor, high-quality products made from scratch, and a festive restaurant design with friendly service. Now we have restaurants in 18 states with over 875 locations. In 2026, we plan to open over 60 more locations.



**Carolina Hunger Initiative** — Our mission is to increase access to healthy food for North Carolinians. The Carolina Hunger Initiative is

a project at the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and works in collaboration with No Kid Hungry NC. We use programming, applied research, and compelling communications to support policy, systems, and environmental changes. From innovative ways to serve school breakfast and summer meals for kids, to nutrition classes empowering elementary students, we are connecting people with the food they need to thrive. Learn more at [CarolinaHungerInitiative.org](http://CarolinaHungerInitiative.org).



**Global NC** — Global NC's mission is to connect North Carolina and the world. Since 1979, Global NC has provided transformative

programs that build the capacity of educators, business, community and policy leaders to enable North Carolina to succeed in a global economy and increasingly interdependent world. Global NC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to making North Carolina a great place to invest, work, study, visit, partner, and live.



**Lenovo** — Lenovo is committed to supporting educators. Focused on a bold vision to deliver smarter technology for all, we are developing world-changing technologies that create a more inclusive, trustworthy, and sustainable digital society. As a global industry leader in the education market, Lenovo is committed to making a difference in support of teachers, students, classrooms, and education through related initiatives focused on community investments and collaborative partnerships. For 20 years, Lenovo has called North Carolina our home — one of our two global headquarters is located in Morrisville and our U.S. Fulfillment Center is located in Guilford County.



**NC Digital Learning Initiative** — The NC Digital Learning Initiative focuses on providing digital teaching and learning supports and resources for North Carolina Public School Units.

These supports include:

- Designing and implementing the North Carolina Digital Learning Plan
- Providing professional learning around Digital Teaching and Learning Pedagogies and Resources
- Curating and developing resources related to the goals established in the Digital Learning Plan
- Conducting research to inform the design of Digital Teaching and Learning Professional Learning and Resources

The work that is completed under the Digital Learning Initiative is done with support from the North Carolina State Legislature.



**NC State Athletics** — The mission of the NC State University Department of Athletics is to prepare student-athletes to compete at the highest level and to inspire them to be leaders now and for the future. NC State Athletics provides the best environment for students to achieve their athletic, academic, and personal aspirations as well as provides support for the professional development of our coaches and staff, all within the role of the greater institutional relationships to the University.

# AWARD CEREMONY

## — LUNCHEON —

### WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**ELIZABETH SANTAMOUR** • Educator Recognition Coordinator,  
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

### GREETINGS

**ALAN DUNCAN** • Vice Chairman, State Board of Education

### REMARKS

**DR. LOUIS J. MUGLIA** • President and CEO, Burroughs Wellcome Fund

### REFLECTIONS

**RACHEL CANDASO** • 2025 Burroughs Wellcome Fund North Carolina Teacher of the Year

### CELEBRATION OF TEACHERS

**JOSH STEIN** • Governor of North Carolina

### RECOGNITION OF REGIONAL FINALISTS

**RACHEL CANDASO** • 2025 Burroughs Wellcome Fund North Carolina Teacher of the Year

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2026 BURROUGHS WELLCOME FUND NORTH CAROLINA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**MAURICE "MO" GREEN** • State Superintendent,  
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

### ACCEPTANCE REMARKS

**2026 BURROUGHS WELLCOME FUND NORTH CAROLINA TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

### CLOSING AND DISMISSAL

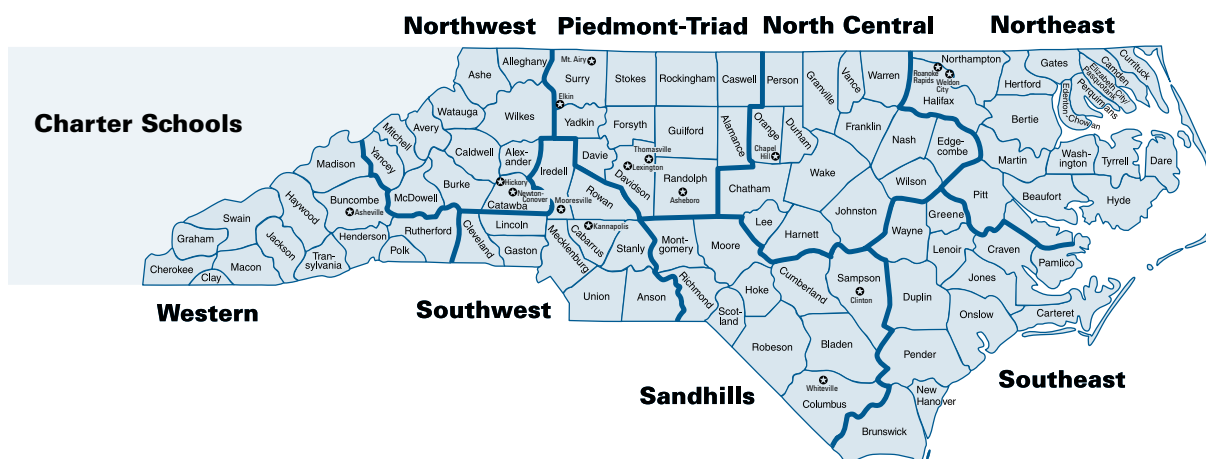
**ELIZABETH SANTAMOUR** • Educator Recognition Coordinator,  
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

*Following the ceremony, finalists and sponsors will gather on the terrace for photos.*

# NC TEACHER *of the* YEAR PROGRAM

Since 1970, North Carolina has honored exceptional educators through the Teacher of the Year program. This initiative is dedicated to elevating the teaching profession by recognizing, supporting, and advocating for outstanding teachers. The program highlights exemplary educators whose innovative practices inspire excellence and strengthen education across the state.

Each Public School Unit and Charter School may nominate one educator to participate in the regional selection process. North Carolina is divided into eight geographic regions, with charter schools collectively forming a ninth region. The Regional Teachers of the Year form a dedicated team, actively championing the teaching profession through advocacy, professional collaborations, and participation in key initiatives. By engaging with educators and stakeholders alike, they bridge the gap between the classroom and broader educational conversations. Their collective efforts amplify individual impact, fostering a strong network of support and shared leadership among North Carolina's top educators.



## 2026 TEACHER OF THE YEAR STATE SELECTION COMMITTEE

Selecting the representative and liaison for all teachers in North Carolina is no easy task. Members of the state selection committee are carefully chosen for their proven commitment to supporting education. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education take great pride in honoring the state's most innovative and impactful public school educators. We extend our sincere thanks to the selection team for their time, dedication, and unwavering commitment to celebrating excellence in education.

**LEAH CARPER** • 2022 North Carolina Teacher of the Year

**DEBRA DERR** • Senior Director of Government Affairs, NC Chamber

**ALFRED MAYS** • Chief Diversity Officer and Senior Program Officer –  
Diversity and Education, Burroughs Wellcome Fund

**BECKIE SPEARS** • 2024 North Carolina Principal of the Year

# NORTHEAST REGION



## HEATHER DAIL

### Northeast Region Teacher of the Year

Hertford Grammar School  
Perquimans County Schools

- **STEM Teacher**
- **7 Years of Teaching Experience**
- **Elizabeth City State University (BS)**
- **Leads monthly schoolwide “Hour of STEM”**
- **Organizes STEM-focused field trips**
- **Events Committee Co-Leader**



## *Northeast* REGION WINNERS

### ASHLEY JONES

Bath Elementary  
Beaufort County Schools

### TANIESHA NEWKIRK

Windsor Elementary  
Bertie County Schools

### ALEXA WILKINS

Camden Intermediate  
Camden County Schools

### MOANA JOHNSON

Dr. W. T. Griggs Elementary  
Currituck County Schools

### BRUCE GEMMILL

First Flight Middle  
Dare County Schools

### JOHN REINHOLD

Chowan Middle  
Edenton-Chowan Schools

### ALICIA BILLUPS

Central Elementary  
Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County  
Public Schools

### LORI LOLIES

Gatesville Elementary  
Gates County Schools

### MONICA SINGH

Halifax County Early College  
Halifax County Schools

### TIMESHI FENNELL

Hertford County Middle  
Hertford County Schools

### RAVEN COLE

South Creek Middle  
Martin County Schools

### NICOY FAIRCLOUGH

Gaston STEM Leadership Academy  
Northampton County

### EMILY SIMS

Eastern Elementary  
Pitt County Schools

### HEATHER DICKENS

Akers Center for Education Success  
Roanoke Rapids Graded School District

### JENNIFER BRICKHOUSE

Columbia Early College  
Tyrell County Schools

### LINDA ARNOLD

Washington County High  
Washington County

# SOUTHEAST REGION



## **CASON JUSTICE**

### **Southeast Region Teacher of the Year**

Swansboro High  
Onslow County Schools

- High School Social Studies Teacher
- 13 Years of Teaching Experience
- North Carolina State University (BA)
- National Board-Certified Teacher
- North Carolina Teaching Fellow
- Mentor Teacher



## *Southeast* REGION WINNERS

### **KARI BABSON**

West Brunswick High  
Brunswick County Schools

### **SHERRI MEADOWS**

Croatan High  
Carteret County Public School System

### **MARGARET JACKSON**

Grover C. Fields Middle  
Craven County Schools

### **BETH ROSE**

North Duplin Jr./Sr. High  
Duplin County Schools

### **HEATHER DAVIS**

Greene Early College  
Greene County Schools

### **BRITTNEY COOK**

Trenton Elementary  
Jones County Public Schools

### **TARA CARROLL**

South Lenoir High  
Lenoir County Schools

### **BENJAMIN LORD**

Myrtle Grove Middle  
New Hanover County Schools

### **CHRISTOPHER GRAY**

Pamlico County Primary  
Pamlico County Schools

### **MICHELLE LEE**

Topsail Annandale Elementary  
Pender County Schools

### **SUSAN DOBBINS RANDOLPH**

Wayne School of Engineering  
Wayne County Public Schools

# NORTH CENTRAL REGION



## SHANNON CAMPBELL

### North Central Region Teacher of the Year

Wilson Early College Academy  
Wilson County Schools

- 11th and 12th Grade American History Teacher
- 14 Years of Teaching Experience
- East Carolina University (BS)
- Social Studies Department Chair
- Mentor Teacher
- Serves as a Clinical Teacher



## *North Central* REGION WINNERS

### JESS GRINNELL

McDougle Middle  
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools

### AMY SEITZ

Siler City Elementary  
Chatham County Schools

### ALEC VIRGIL

Middle College High  
Durham Public Schools

### TARSHA LITTLE

Fairview Elementary  
Edgecombe County Public Schools

### BRITTANY HEDGEPEETH

Youngsville Elementary  
Franklin County Schools

### MA. ROZELA ESPINA

Granville Central High  
Granville County Public Schools

### MICHAEL REIMER

Overhills High  
Harnett County Schools

### WILL MARSHALL

West Johnston High  
Johnston County Public Schools

### SAMMIE JO GODFREY

J. Glenn Edwards Elementary  
Lee County Schools

### MATTHEW BISSETTE

Southern Nash Middle  
Nash County Public Schools

### JOSE HIDALGO

A.L. Stanback Middle  
Orange County Schools

### MARY JANE BOWMAN

Stories Creek Elementary  
Person County Schools

### BRIAN SCHLESSINGER

Vance County Early College High  
Vance County Schools

### MACY BRINSON-BUNTING

Kingswood Magnet Elementary  
Wake County Public Schools

### NICHOLE GIBBS

Warren County Middle  
Warren County Schools

# SANDHILLS REGION



## MANZELL SPENCER

### Sandhills Region Teacher of the Year

Douglas Byrd Middle  
Cumberland County Schools

- 7th Grade Social Studies Teacher
- 5 Years of Teaching Experience
- Fayetteville State University (BA, MA)
- Head Football Coach
- School Improvement Team Member
- Member of North Carolina Association of Educators



## *Sandhills* REGION WINNERS

### CHRISTINE HARRIGER

Elizabethtown Primary  
Bladen County Schools

### JANET HEWETT

Williams Township  
Columbus County Schools

### JENNY JORDAN

Sunset Avenue Elementary  
Clinton City Schools

### AMELIA SIMPSON

SandHoke Early College High  
Hoke County Schools

### MATTHEW KYLE GREENE

East Middle  
Montgomery County Schools

### DIANA ROWLAND

Vass-Lakeview Elementary  
Moore County Schools

### DARRYL HOWINGTON

East Robeson Primary School  
Public Schools of Robeson County

### MICHELLE AUSTIN

Fairview Heights Elementary  
Richmond County Schools

### SUMMERLYN FAIRCLOTH

Lakewood High  
Sampson County Schools

### LATOYA HIBBERT-JAMES

South Johnson Elementary  
Scotland County Schools

### JOHLYNN HARRELSON CARRANO

Edgewood Elementary  
Whiteville City Schools

# PIEDMONT-TRIAD REGION



## **JONATHAN LANCHO VILLA**

### **Piedmont-Triad Region Teacher of the Year**

Pilot Mountain Elementary  
Surry County Schools

- **Multilingual Specialist**
- **7 Years of Teaching Experience**
- **University of Extremadura (BS, MS)**
- **University of North Carolina at Charlotte (TESL Certification)**
- **Running Club Coach**
- **LETRS Certified**
- **School Bus Driver**



## *Piedmont-Triad* REGION WINNERS

### **WINDY LAMPSON**

Southeast Alamance High  
Alamance-Burlington School System

### **REBEKAH ROBBINS**

North Asheboro Middle  
Asheboro City Schools

### **ANGELA TURNER**

South Elementary  
Caswell County Schools

### **TRIA HILL**

Welcome Elementary  
Davidson County Schools

### **KRISTEN TURNER**

Shady Grove Elementary  
Davie County Schools

### **JULIE REED**

Elkin High  
Elkin City Schools

### **JUANA RHILI**

Guilford Elementary  
Guilford County Schools

### **GARLAND BEAMER**

Lexington Senior High  
Lexington City Schools

### **PHILLIP RIEKEHOF**

Mount Airy Middle  
Mount Airy City Schools

### **CHRISTY HUTCHINS**

Trindale Elementary  
Randolph County School System

### **NAN ELIZABETH JOYCE**

Western Rockingham Middle  
Rockingham County Schools

### **STEPHEN MORGAN**

Chestnut Grove Middle  
Stokes County Schools

### **MA CHARITO HEGE**

Thomasville Middle  
Thomasville City Schools

### **CRISTOFER WILEY**

R J Reynolds High  
Winston-Salem/Forsyth  
County Schools

### **AUDREY ROESCH**

Forbush Middle  
Yadkin County Schools

# SOUTHWEST REGION



## **MELISSA HOLLAR CULP** Southwest Region Teacher of the Year

St. James Elementary  
Lincoln County Schools

- Second Grade Teacher
- 24 Years of Teaching Experience
- University of North Carolina at Charlotte (BA, M.Ed.)
- National Board-Certified Teacher
- LETRS Certified
- Mentor Teacher



## *Southwest* REGION WINNERS

### **MELINDA ROBINSON**

Anson Early College  
Anson County Schools

### **MADISON LIDDLE**

Harold E. Winkler Middle  
Cabarrus County Schools

### **GREGORY GABRIEL**

Winterfield Elementary  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

### **ELIZABETH GALLOWAY**

North Elementary  
Cleveland County Schools

### **JOHN RAMOS**

Forestview High  
Gaston County Schools

### **LAUREN GAITHER**

North Iredell High  
Iredell-Statesville Schools

### **AUGUST HOWERTON**

Jackson Park Elementary  
Kannapolis City Schools

### **JOHN HOWARD**

Selma Burke Middle  
 Mooresville Graded Schools

### **KEBRINA KEYS**

North Rowan Middle  
Rowan-Salisbury Schools

### **BAILEY MCGUIRE**

Locust Elementary  
Stanly County Schools

### **DYLAN CHAVIS**

Porter Ridge High  
Union County Public Schools

# NORTHWEST REGION



**GINA HOLSTE**  
**Northwest Region  
Teacher of the Year**

Valle Crucis School  
Watauga County Schools

- Reading Intervention Specialist
- 19 Years of Teaching Experience
- Appalachian State University (BS, MA)
- National Board-Certified Teacher
- LETRS Certified
- Member of North Carolina Association of Educators



## *Northwest* REGION WINNERS

**CHELSEA HARRINGTON**  
Stony Point Elementary  
Alexander County Schools

**JIM BROWN**  
Alleghany High  
Alleghany County Schools

**TANIA ROLLINS**  
Ashe County Middle  
Ashe County Schools

**KIM WISEMAN**  
Crossnore Elementary  
Avery County Schools

**MELISSA MCCLURE**  
Drexel Elementary  
Burke County Public Schools

**MELISSA STUTTS**  
Valmead Elementary  
Caldwell County Schools

**ERICA SHUFORD**  
River Bend Middle  
Catawba County Schools

**BRIANNA SEXTON**  
Southwest Primary  
Hickory City Schools

**AMBER LAWING**  
McDowell Early College  
McDowell County Schools

**JAMESIA BROWN**  
Greenlee Primary  
Mitchell County Schools

**DEBORAH GREENWALD**  
Discovery High  
Newton-Conover City Schools

**ANTHONY BENSON**  
West Wilkes High  
Wilkes County Schools

**JEREMY DOTTS**  
Mountain Heritage High  
Yancey County Schools

# WESTERN REGION



## **NISHELLE HENSON**

### **Western Region Teacher of the Year**

**Macon Middle  
Macon County Schools**

- **Middle School Math Teacher**
- **15 Years of Teaching Experience**
- **Western Carolina University (BS)**
- **NC State University (MS)**
- **North Carolina Teaching Fellow**
- **School Improvement Team Member**



## *Western* REGION WINNERS

### **SHENEKIA MCDANIELS**

Ira B. Jones Elementary  
Asheville City Schools

### **DARRYL FOX**

North Buncombe High  
Buncombe County Schools

### **BRITTANY TIMPSON**

Andrews Elementary  
Cherokee County Schools

### **DELANEY SMITH**

Hayesville Primary  
Clay County Schools

### **KRISTY SORRELLS**

Pisgah High  
Haywood County Schools

### **MARLEY MORENO-HOLLIFIELD**

HCPS Career Academy  
Henderson County Schools

### **ANNA WOODS**

Fairview School  
Jackson County Public Schools

### **KELSEY BRIGMAN**

Mars Hill Elementary  
Madison County Schools

### **JENNIFER SCHWEITZER**

Tryon Elementary  
Polk County Schools

### **KATHRYN HOLLEY**

East Rutherford High  
Rutherford County Schools

### **MOLLY LAWLESS**

Swain High  
Swain County Schools

### **KIMBERLY MOORE**

Pisgah Forest Elementary  
Transylvania County Schools

# CHARTER SCHOOLS



## STEPHANIE LANE

### Charter Schools Teacher of the Year

Lake Norman Charter Elementary  
Huntersville, NC

- **First Grade Teacher**
- **6 Years of Teaching Experience**
- **University of North Carolina at Charlotte (BA, MA)**
- **Optimal Scheduling Strategic Exploratory Committee Co-Leader**
- **School Leadership Team Member**
- **MTSS Committee K-2 Support Lead**



## *Charter Schools* REGION WINNERS

### STUART ROBINSON

Lincoln Charter  
Lincolnton, NC

### VICTORIA PATRIDGE

ArtSpace Charter  
Swannanoa, NC

### CHAD CAMPBELL

Brevard Academy  
Pisgah Forest, NC

### CAYLA AIREE

Carolina Charter Academy  
Angier, NC

### EMILY PASQUARELLA

Chatham Charter  
Siler City, NC

### MARY SINGLETARY-HINSON

Classical Charter Schools of Whiteville  
Whiteville, NC

### CATHERINE CAPANO

Envision Science Academy  
Wake Forest, NC

### GRETCHEN KEPLEY

Faith Academy Charter  
Faith, NC

### MARISA HARLEY

Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School  
Hollister, NC

### MARY SKIERCZYNSKI

IC Imagine  
Asheville, NC

### KEN OSTERNDORF

Mountain Island Charter  
Mount Holly, NC

### COLT WEAVER

North Carolina Cyber Academy  
Durham, NC

### SAMANTHA TURNER

Northeast Academy for Aerospace  
and Advanced Technologies  
Elizabeth City, NC

### TASHA BLALOCK

Oxford Preparatory  
Oxford, NC

### CHRISTOPHER CROWL

River Mill Academy  
Graham, NC

### KARA ROBERTS

Roxboro Community School  
Roxboro, NC

### SHELLEY STOVER

Uwharrie Charter Academy  
Asheboro, NC

### ANA CORTES

Vance Charter  
Henderson, NC

### DINO MANGANO

Voyager Academy  
Durham, NC

# 2025 REGIONAL FINALISTS



**RACHEL CANDASO**

**Northeast Region  
Teacher of the Year**

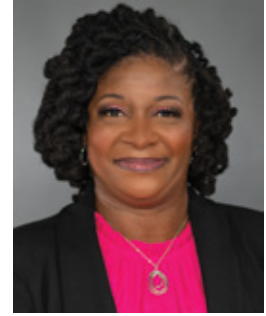
Wellcome Middle  
Pitt County Schools

- AVID Teacher
- 5 Years of Teaching Experience
- Arizona State University (BS)
- Kenan Fellow
- Teach for America
- Beginning Teacher Mentor



**HANNAH MOON**

**Southeast Region Teacher of the Year**  
Emsley A. Laney High  
New Hanover County Schools



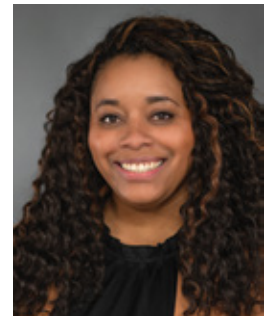
**TAMIKA J. FARMER**

**North Central Region Teacher of the Year**  
G. W. Carver Elementary  
Edgecombe County Schools



**DR. ANTHONY MARTIN**

**Sandhills Region Teacher of the Year**  
East Columbus Junior/Senior High  
Columbus County Schools



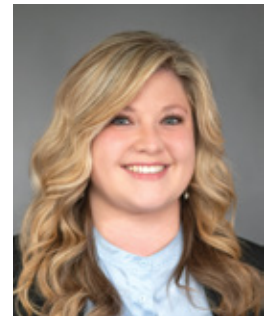
**CHANEL JONES**

**Piedmont-Triad Region Teacher of the Year**  
Broadview Middle  
Alamance-Burlington School System



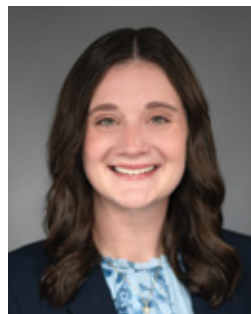
**YARONDA KILGO**

**Southwest Region Teacher of the Year**  
Wingate Elementary  
Union County Public Schools



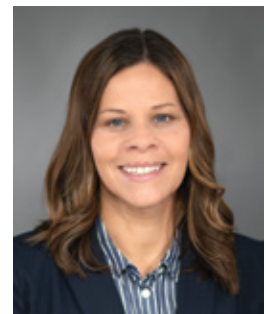
**TAYLER BOMAR**

**Northwest Region Teacher of the Year**  
Greenlee Primary  
Mitchell County Schools



**LYDIA SALE**

**Western Region Teacher of the Year**  
West Elementary  
Swain County Schools



**LINDSAY PHILLIPS**

**Charter Schools Teacher of the Year**  
Mountain Island Charter  
Mount Holly, NC

# PAST WINNERS

- 2024 **Heather Smith**, Haywood County Schools, Mathematics, Middle School
- 2023 **Kimberly Jones**, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, 10th Grade English
- 2022 **Leah Carper**, Guilford County Schools, English II, High School
- 2021 **Eugenia Floyd**, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, 4th Grade
- 2020 **†Maureen Stover**, Cumberland County Schools, Biology, 9th-10th grade
- 2019 **Mariah Morris**, Moore County Schools, 2nd Grade
- 2018 **Freebird McKinney**, Alamance-Burlington Schools, History/Philosophy, High School
- 2017 **Lisa Godwin**, Onslow County Schools, Kindergarten
- 2016 **Bobbie J. Cavnar**, Gaston County Schools, English/Journalism, High School
- 2015 **Keana C. Triplett**, Ashe County Schools, English, High School
- 2014 **James E. Ford**, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, World History, High School
- 2013 **Karyn Collie Dickerson**, Guilford County Schools, English, High School
- 2012 **Darcy Grimes**, Watauga County Schools, 3rd Grade
- 2011 **Tyronna Hooker**, Alamance-Burlington Schools, EC Inclusion, Grades 6-8
- 2010 **Jennifer J. Facciolini**, Sampson County Schools, Social Studies, High School
- 2009 **Jessica Garner**, Union County Public Schools, Spanish, High School
- 2008 **†Cindi Rigsbee**, Orange County Schools, Reading, Middle School
- 2007 **James Bell**, Edenton-Chowan Public Schools, Language Arts, 8th Grade
- 2006 **Diana Beasley**, Hickory City Schools, Biology, High School
- 2005 **Wendy Miller**, Craven County Schools, Grades K-2
- 2004 **Lizbeth Alfaro**, Catawba County Schools, ESL, Grades K-6
- 2003 **Allison Ormond**, Rockingham County Schools, Language Arts/Social Studies, 7th Grade
- 2002 **†Melissa Bartlett**, Iredell-Statesville Schools, English, High School
- 2001 **Carmen Wilson**, Ashe County Schools, Mathematics, High School
- 2000 **Laura Bilbro-Berry**, Beaufort County Schools, 2nd Grade
- 1999 **Kimberly H. Hughes**, Wake County Schools, Kindergarten
- 1998 **Rebecca O. Hoyle**, Onslow County Schools, Music, Grades K-5
- 1997 **Julian L. Coggins, Jr.**, Cabarrus County Schools, Science, High School
- 1996 **Richard Scott Griffin**, Gaston County Schools, 5th Grade
- 1995 **Vernestine Kent Taylor**, Wilson County Schools, Mathematics, High School
- 1994 **Sandra C. Wells**, Asheville City Schools, (Buncombe Co.), Team Teacher, 1st & 4th Grades
- 1993 **\*\*Sarah M. Pratt**, McDowell County Schools, English/Social Studies, High School
- 1992 **Dixie F. Abernathy**, Gaston County Schools, Science, Junior High School
- 1991 **Annie Pegram**, Durham City Schools, (Durham Co.), 1st Grade
- 1990 **Louis Gottlieb**, Granville County Schools, Science, High School
- 1989 **Sandra Davis Rogers**, Rowan County Schools, 1st-3rd Grades
- 1988 **Merv Sessoms**, Haywood County Schools, English, High School
- 1987 **Cynthia B. Zeger-Ostherhus**, Salisbury City Schools, (Rowan Co.), Mathematics, High School
- 1986 **\*Donna H. Oliver**, Burlington City Schools, (Alamance Co.), Science, High School
- 1985 **Pamela F. Brewer**, Person County Schools, English/Journalism, High School
- 1984 **Phillip R. Dail**, Wake County Schools, Science, High School
- 1983 **Jean Paul Powell**, Clinton City Schools, (Sampson Co.), English, 12th Grade
- 1982 **James Jerome Williams**, Burke County Schools, Music, High School
- 1981 **Penelope Sue Smith**, Asheboro City Schools, (Randolph Co.), Humanities, High School
- 1980 **Linda Lee**, Burlington City Schools, (Alamance Co.), English, High School
- 1979 **Jo Ann Payne Norris**, Wake County Schools, 1st Grade
- 1978 **Ruth P. Watkins**, Richmond County Schools, Social Studies, High School
- 1977 **Ted Scott Henson**, Vance County Schools, Language Arts/Social Studies, 5th Grade
- 1976 **\*Ruby Murchison**, Fayetteville City Schools, (Cumberland Co.), Language Arts/Social Studies, 7th Grade
- 1975 **Herman L. Forbes**, High Point City Schools, (Guilford Co.), 6th Grade
- 1974 **Frances A. Kiser**, Cleveland County Schools, English, High School
- 1973 **†Sarah E. Spivey**, Raleigh City Schools, (Wake Co.), 4th-5th Grade
- 1972 **\*James M. "Jay" Rogers**, Durham City Schools, (Durham Co.), American History/Black Studies, High School
- 1971 **Genella Allison**, Hickory City Schools, (Catawba Co.), English/Journalism, High School
- 1970 **†John McFadden**, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 6th Grade



*“The work I do is not unique, it’s a reflection of what so many educators across North Carolina do each and every day. With this platform, I will continue to champion the idea that public education is not just an academic foundation — it’s a launchpad for life. Together, I know my colleagues and I will continue to advance our educational environment where all students are seen, valued, and empowered to thrive and we will continue to recognize the excellence of our educators in shaping the leaders of tomorrow.”*

**RACHEL CANDASO**

2025 Burroughs Wellcome Fund North Carolina Teacher of the Year

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The Burroughs Wellcome Fund North Carolina Teacher of the Year process is facilitated by the Office of the State Superintendent.