



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Catherine Truitt, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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## Two Charter Leaders Share 2021 Charter One North Carolina Charter Schools Principal of the Year Recognition

Raleigh, NC

June 22, 2021

Ten Finalists were selected for the first ever Charter One North Carolina Charter Schools Principal of the Year to be announced today during the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the North Carolina Public Charter School Law.

Charter schools are public schools operated by non-profit boards. These schools have open enrollment and no tuition is charged to attend. Tax dollars are the primary funding source for charter schools. North Carolina has 201 charter schools serving just over 125,000 students across the state.

The North Carolina Office of Charter Schools, led by Dave Machado, felt that during this unprecedented pandemic the unique and extraordinary leadership exhibited by the 201 charter leaders across the state should be recognized. These leaders and their staff have a great deal of flexibility to meet the unique needs of their school community, but also must meet the challenge of functioning as their own Local Education Agency without the staffing and support of a traditional public school district.

Out of ten Finalists:

Shannen Bretz - Union Academy Charter (Monroe, NC)  
Thomas McKoy, Reaching All Minds Academy (Durham, NC)  
Alex Quigley - Healthy Start Academy (Durham, NC)  
Christy Spurrier – Matthews Charter (Matthews, NC)  
Nealie Whitt III – Falls Lake Academy (Creedmoor, NC)  
Leslie Hall Paynter – Alamance Community School (Haw River, NC)  
Tiffany Flowers – KIPP Academy Charlotte (Charlotte, NC)  
Heather R. Verekyen – Clover Garden School (Burlington, NC)  
Michelle Holland – Lake Norman Charter (Huntersville, NC)  
Steve Pond – Peak Academy (Apex, NC)

Thomas McKoy, Reaching All Minds, and Steven Pond, Peak Academy will share the 2021 Charter One Charter Schools Principal of the Year Award. Each finalist will receive a \$250 check from the award sponsor, Charter One, and the Co-Principals of the Year will receive a check for \$1000.

### OFFICE OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

“Charter One is honored to sponsor the Charter School Principal of the Year award. Great schools require great leaders. We celebrate these Principals and recognize their leadership in providing parents and students with high-quality school choice options.”

Michael Way  
Charter One Southeast Division Vice President

“This past academic school year has been a challenge for all educators across North Carolina. The definition of a true academic leader is someone that can rise above the situation and lead his or her school community to higher heights. The first ever Charter School Principals of the Year exemplify what the charter school community is built on, innovative leadership assuring students are prepared for today’s global world. I am so proud of Steve Pond at Peak Charter Academy and Thomas McKoy at Reading All Minds Academy, and what their schools have accomplished. It is an honor to call them colleagues,” said Dave Machado, Director of the Charter School Office.

The two winners were surprised with their awards today at their schools. Photos of our leaders. [www.tinyurl.com/CharterOne2021PotY](http://www.tinyurl.com/CharterOne2021PotY)

Follow @nccharteroffice for more memories from the day.

Visit the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/> for more information.