

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hollis Hand Elementary teacher is a finalist for Georgia's Pre-K Program Teacher of the Year

LaGrange, GA., May 16, 2023 – A Pre-K teacher at Hollis Hand is overjoyed after learning she is a finalist for the 2023-2024 Georgia's Pre-K Program Teacher of the Year representing high-quality early childhood education programs in the state.

Kerri Metcalf was surprised with the news in her classroom full of students Tuesday morning by representatives from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), teachers and staff from Hollis Hand, long-time friends, and her husband and three kids. During her 16 years in education, Metcalf had always taught Pre-K at Hollis Hand, except for her first year teaching when she taught third grade at Ethel Kight Elementary.

She received a \$500 cash prize from the Georgia Foundation for Early Care + Learning after her application was reviewed and scored by a panel of impartial judges. DECAL is expected to release the names of all finalists by Friday, May 19.

This fall, each of the finalists will be observed in their classroom by a Pre-K Specialist and will submit a small group video to be scored by outside judges and will appear before a panel for a personal interview.

In September, DECAL will select a winner from a local public school system and a winner from a private child care center. They will receive a \$3,000 check for themselves, \$2,000 for a classroom makeover and supplies, and funds to cover out-of-the-classroom costs while the teacher is away.

The voluntary, lottery-funded Pre-K program has been recognized as one of the top programs in the nation based on quality standards, teacher qualifications, and enrollment.

Georgia's Pre-K Program is universal – meaning that any age-eligible child residing in Georgia may attend the program regardless of family income. Georgia's model for providing the Pre-K program is unique because it is offered through a public-private partnership in local school systems, private childcare centers, and other facilities.

About Troup County School System

Troup County School System is an accredited educational system with over 12,200 students in grades K-12. TCSS does offer a free Pre-K program at each elementary school. The system is comprised of eleven elementary schools, three middle schools, three high schools, one college and career academy, and one alternative learning center. Students within the school system are taught a rigorous and relevant curriculum that helps them make college and career choices beyond graduation. The system 2022 graduation rate is 85.9 percent. To learn more about Troup County School System, visit troup.org and the Troup County School System Facebook page.

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