



Wood, Whitehead Receive TPSD Top Honors

TUPELO, Miss. — Recognition was the theme of Tuesday’s Tupelo Public School District Board of Trustees meeting at the Church Street Elementary Auditorium, with Melanie Wood and Leigh Ann Whitehead being the focus.

Wood, now in her third year with the Tupelo Career and Technical Center, was named the 2024 TPSD Teacher of the Year, while Whitehead, the PTO president at Thomas Street Elementary, was named the 2024 TPSD Parent of the Year.

The announcement was made by board vice president, Hope Huey.

“I believe everyone can learn if provided with the proper tools,” said Wood, a preparation teacher in the Teacher Academy. “Teachers are the ones who unlock the toolbox for students to find it within themselves to succeed.”

Wood has been in the district for seven years and spent her first four teaching accounting-related classes for the high school. She earned both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Ole Miss. She also serves as a mentor to new teachers.

A native of Fulton, she and her husband have two children — Caleb and Makenna.

“She is one who goes beyond what is necessary and is a resource for all who she encounters,” CTE principal Evet Topp said. “She provides her students with quality instruction that is fun and innovative with real world experiences.”

A native of Tupelo and 1999 graduate of THS, Whitehead has served as PTO president for Thomas Street the last two years, where her son, Will, is in the first grade. Her daughter, Tanner, is in the third grade at Pierce Street, where she is also heavily involved as a volunteer.

“I love everything about being involved in this school district that has gone above and beyond to ensure that both of my children have every opportunity to succeed,” she said. “I have so enjoyed getting to know all the teachers and staff and just loving on them and supporting them in whatever way I can.”

In addition to having a full-time job as office manager and agent for Sullivan Insurance Solutions, Whitehead has organized the Back-to-School Breakfast and Lunch for teachers and staff, organized the T-shirt fundraisers and Back to School Nigh, help implement the new PBIS system and oversaw the Community Tailgate and the homecoming float efforts.

She also planned and coordinated the Fall Festival and TSE Book Fair and has volunteered for the Polar Express Experience. She was also the 2023 TSE Parent of the Year.

“She constantly gives of her time and talents. Her work provides direct support to our students, staff and families and to our school district,” principal Christy Carroll said. “Our school is certainly better for our children because of her efforts.”

2023-24 TPSD Teachers of the Year

Carver

Jennifer Lesure

ECEC

Amanda Young

Joyner

Maggie Montgomery

Lawhon

Terry Leigh Clayton

Lawndale

Angela Standfield

Milam

Laketia Davis

Parkway

Kelly Crawford

Pierce Street

James Matthews

Rankin

Raven Guyton

Thomas Street

Rachel Davis

Tupelo Career Center

Melanie Wood

Tupelo Middle School

Marsha McEwen

Tupelo High School

Nichole Hardin

2023-24 Parents of the Year

Carver

Courtney Finley

ECEC

Courtney Holcomb

Joyner

Cherie Demoran

Lawhon

Missy Ewing

Lawndale

Sheryl Sykes

Milam

John Foster

Parkway

Katese Rutherford

Pierce Street

Natalie Morton

Rankin

Stephenie Brady

Thomas Street

Leigh Ann Whitehead

Tupelo High School

Kathy Thompson

Tupelo Middle School

Emily Addison