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For media inquiries only, contact:
Lynthia Ross
(706) 533-8176

Richmond County School System names top five Teacher of the Year finalists

(AUGUSTA, GEORGIA) – The Richmond County School System (RCSS) has named the five finalists for the 2022-23 Teacher of the Year.

The finalists are Martina Anderson, Ebony Lindsey, Vanessa Patten, Melody Spires-Howe, and Shikara Willis.

Martina Anderson is a media specialist at McBean Elementary School. A proud graduate of Glenn Hills High School, Anderson earned a Bachelor of Arts in sociology/criminology from Augusta College, a master's degree in special education from Augusta State University, and an educational specialist degree in media and instructional technology from Valdosta State University. She has spent her entire teaching career of 28 years shaping the future generation as a social studies teacher, a special needs instructor, and now as a technology and media specialist.

Ebony Lindsey is a STEM Instructor at Wheeless Road Elementary School. Lindsey has been teaching for 20 years with all but one of those years in Richmond County. She earned a bachelor's degree in computer science from Paine College, a master's degree in instructional technology from Troy University, and a specialist degree in technology from Leslie University.

Vanessa Patten is a 1st grade teacher at Warren Road Elementary School. A career educator, Patten has been teaching for 33 years with the last 26 years devoted to the students of the Richmond County School System. She obtained her Bachelor of Arts in elementary education from the University of South Carolina at Aiken, graduating with honors. She earned her Master of Education in curriculum and instruction with a specialization in reading from Grand Canyon University.

Melody Spires-Howe is an Advanced Placement Social Studies teacher at John S. Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School. She has been educating students in the Richmond County School System for her entire eight-year career. Spires-Howe earned a bachelor's degree in history and master's degree in the art of teaching both from Augusta State University.

Shikara Willis is a 5th grade English Language Arts teacher at C.T. Walker Magnet School. She has been teaching for 19 years and the last six years with the Richmond County School System. Willis earned a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Paine College, a master's degree in reading and literacy from Walden University, and a specialist in advanced studies from Augusta University.

Teachers of the Year are first selected by their respective schools and then submit applications to become a finalist for the RCSS Teacher of the Year. A panel reviews the applications to name the five finalists. A panel reviews the applications to name the five finalists. The five finalists are then recorded teaching their students. Based on the lessons and applications, a finalist is named.

The 2023 Richmond County Teacher of the Year will be named during a banquet on Thursday, Oct. 6 at the Augusta Marriott at the Convention Center beginning at 7 p.m.

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