



Knight Named 2026 TPSD Administrator of the Year

TUPELO, Miss. — A 30-year veteran of the Tupelo Public School District, Talina Knight has served in various and diverse roles, starting as an In-School Suspension teacher.

While she has held several titles, it was her most recent that brought her to tears.

Tuesday at the TPSD Board of Trustees November meeting at the Hancock Leadership Center, President Amy Tate announced that Knight has been named the 2026 Administrator of the Year, as voted on by her fellow principals, directors and assistant principals.

A native of Corinth and graduate of Mississippi State, Knight has been the principal at Lawndale for seven years.

“I feel very honored,” she said. “Lawndale is so much more than just an A-school. We are a family. Everyone cares for one another and loves on our students each and every day as they would their own. This award isn’t just about me. It takes everyone at Lawndale working together. We are a scrappy bunch, and it’s a team effort every year to ensure the success our kids achieve. We want to see all students succeed. I steer the ship, but our staff does all the hard work to meet the needs of everyone. It’s truly a blessing to be a part of this team.

“I am so appreciative of the leadership from our board and Dr. (Rob) Picou. They are very supportive and believe in our mission and goals. The opportunity to make a positive impact every day is why I love my job so much.”

An English teacher at heart, Knight came to Lawndale after serving as assistant principal at Tupelo Middle School, where she also taught before moving into administration.

Since making the transition to the 3-5 level, where she admitted she was a little reluctant at first due to her massive experience in the secondary level, Knight has seen her school receive an A-rating from MDE for four-consecutive years.

Also under her guidance, Lawndale has been named a Mississippi Whole School Model Campus designation and has been awarded numerous National Beta School of Merit honors.

“Mrs. Knight questioned me when I first encouraged her to become an elementary principal,” Picou said. “But I knew she possessed the tools and knowledge to be a great leader. Her expectations are clear, and the culture of excellence she has established is something everyone associated with Lawndale should be proud of.”

Knight is the proud mother of three Tupelo High School graduates, Lauren, Rylie and Kat, and she has a 2-year-old grandson, Cameron.

—www.tupeloschools.com—