

PRESS RELEASE

Lee County Public Schools

Communications Department

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SUBJECT: **DISTRICT TO NAME 2012/13 TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

Lee County Public Schools is getting ready to name its **Teacher of the Year 2012/13**. The surprise announcement, which will be held at the winner's school, is scheduled for the morning of **Friday, February 10th** – the time and location will be revealed the morning of the event (to avoid it “leaking out” as has happened in the past.)

**** ATTENTION MEDIA ****

EMBARGOED Information on the winner, time and location of the surprise visit will be provided at 8 a.m. Friday, February 10th.

Media can call the Communications Department at 239-461-8420 for the location.

Once announced, the Lee County Public Schools Teacher of the Year will then be a nominee for the 2013 Florida Department of Education / Macy's Teacher of the Year. Below is information on this year's finalists:

JAVIER GARCIA

Spanish Teacher (grades 9-12), Cypress Lake High School

Spend a few minutes with Javier Garcia and you'll come to know what his students and colleagues have known for years – he truly has a desire to have all of his students succeed.

Mr. Garcia has been with the District for 11 years, all of which have been at Cypress Lake High School. In his classrooms he provides structure and a clear set of expectations for his students. He grabs their interest on day-one and keeps it all year long. Some students have referred to his class as “tough,” but they always follow that up with he is “fair and consistent.” In fact, many students have called Mr. Garcia “the most awesome teacher they have ever had.”

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DEBRA HORN**Third-grade teacher, Cape Elementary School**

For nearly three decades, Debra Horn has been an educator – 22 of those years have been spent working with and nurturing students at Cape Elementary School. In her years at Cape Elementary she has demonstrated a commitment and passion for teaching children while inspiring them to dream big. She holds high expectations for all of her students and wants them to know that anything is possible if they set goals and work hard. Her students write weekly goals, manage progress charts and maintain individual portfolios that showcase their work.

Visit her classroom and you'll see she has really set the stage for a "community of caring and cooperative learners." Students learn how to work together in teams and how important it is to get along with others. Through team-building and setting a tone of cooperation, Ms. Horn creates an environment where her students learn responsibility and mutual respect for others.

KELLEN MILLS**Art Teacher, Paul L. Dunbar Middle School**

In her 14 years with the District, Kellen Mills has earned the respect of both teachers and students. She can often be seen helping students in the hallways between class and mentoring them throughout their time in middle school. The students look to Ms. Mills as a role model because of her sincere approach to helping all students. She truly cares and has a great deal to offer students both in and out of the classroom.

She works to provide a classroom setting that truly allows for student success and academic achievement. Ms. Mills is an enthusiastic team player who strives for perfection for her students and herself. Teaching and learning is a journey that she enjoys taking with her students.

THERESA MOROSCO**Exceptional Student Education Life Skills Teacher, Ida S. Baker High**

Visit Theresa Morosco's classroom and you see something that is much more than a "typical" learning environment. Along with differentiated instruction techniques used and a variety of education activities, in Ms. Morosco's class unique identities are embraced and students and staff interact with each other almost like a second family. Students learn respect for each other and they take ownership and responsibility for the learning that takes place in her classroom.

She provides hands-on instruction for all functional and academic employability and skill training for her Life Skills students. She works hard to meet the needs of all students by differentiating instruction and her ability to community well with students and their parents is second to none.

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Ms. Morosco who has worked for the District the past 25 years, works to identify businesses to work with Ida Baker High to foster and facilitate the learning of employable skills. Her students work in the community as much as possible to learn real-life functional skills that will help them successfully transition to the next phase in their life after graduation.

What Ms. Morosco does is anything but typical – she cares, commits and makes a true difference in the lives of her students.

DAWN VOYER

Social Studies Teacher (grades 6-9), Cypress Lake Middle School

For the past eight years, Dawn Voyer has been impacting the lives of students at Cypress Lake Middle School. As a social studies teacher she has the ability to work with students in all grade levels served at the school – and she is truly doing an outstanding job.

Look at the achievement of her students and you'll see that they consistently have the highest average on the District's Common Core Exams and their scores exceed the state average on the reading standards portion of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Every day her students are involved in an activity that is an application of the learning standard being taught. For Ms. Voyer, the textbook is really a reference point that provides a spring-board to the highest levels of learning.

In her class, students have become experts in coaching one another in their cooperative groups, working through simulations and role-playing – all part of the learning process Ms. Voyer has created. Ms. Voyer illustrates for all what great teaching looks like and the power at teacher has to influence a child.

All of the above teachers are outstanding members of the education profession. The teacher selected will represent Lee County Public Schools during the 2012/13 school year and will be part of the Florida Teacher of the Year process.

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