FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 11, 2021

ALABAMA TEACHER OF THE YEAR
16 FINALISTS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED TODAY
“Top Educators Committed to Teaching Excellence and Student Achievement!”

Montgomery, Ala. – Highly skilled educators are essential to our state’s continued success. They inspire achievement, while also preparing our future generations of top professionals. These 16 outstanding educators, selected as finalists for the Alabama 2021-2022 Teacher of the Year, personify these qualities and exemplify the teaching profession’s best.

Each excels in the classroom and inspires students through mentorship and by utilizing innovative classroom instruction. This year’s 16 state finalists have emerged from a group of over 138 highly skilled educators who submitted official applications. The Alabama Teacher of the Year Program is one of our state’s oldest and most esteemed awards programs.

Alabama State Department of Education - 2021-2022 District Teachers of the Year

Julie Matranga Neidhardt
*Mobile County School System* - Hutchens Elementary School
District I Elementary Teacher of the Year

Krista N. Marcum
*Gulf Shores City School System* - Gulf Shores High School
District I Secondary Teacher of the Year

Sherlita Gilchrist
*Phenix City School System* – Phenix City Virtual Learning Academy
District II Elementary Teacher of the Year

Kimberly Johnson
*Auburn City School System* – Auburn Junior High School
District II Secondary Teacher of the Year

Allison C. Phelps
*Homewood City School System* – Shades Cahaba Elementary School
District III Elementary Teacher of the Year

Pamela McClendon
*Hoover City School System* – Riverchase Career Connection Center
District III Secondary Teacher of the Year

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Sabrina Wright
_Birmingham City School System_ – Sun Valley Elementary School
District IV Elementary Teacher of the Year

Leah Hughes
_Tuscaloosa County School System_ – Hillcrest High School
District IV Secondary Teacher of the Year

Catherine B. Jackson
_Pike County School System_ – Banks School
District V Elementary Teacher of the Year

Lilian U. Zekeri
_Macon County School System_ – Tuskegee Institute Middle School
District V Secondary Teacher of the Year

Megan Kreitlein
_Pell City School System_ – Eden Elementary School
District VI Elementary Teacher of the Year

Mashell Wehn
_Arab City School System_ – Arab High School
District VI Secondary Teacher of the Year

Rachel Graves
_Florence City School System_ – Weeden Elementary School
District VII Elementary Teacher of the Year

Jeff Schrupp
_Trussville City School System_ – Hewitt-Trussville High School
District VII Secondary Teacher of the Year

Candilyn Renee Holt
_Limestone County School System_ – Elkmont School
District VIII Elementary Teacher of the Year

Kierstan Bell
_Huntsville City School System_ – Hampton Cove Middle School
District VIII Secondary Teacher of the Year

This pool of outstanding educators will soon be narrowed down to the final Top Four. The 2021-2022 Alabama Teacher of the Year will be officially announced by the Alabama State Board of Education and the Alabama State Department of Education in August.

Alabama’s Teacher of the Year spends the majority of the school year serving as a full-time ambassador for education and the teaching profession, as well as presenting workshops to various groups. Alabama’s representative is a candidate for National Teacher of the Year.

Reflecting on his experiences as the most recent finalist, and Alabama’s current Teacher of the Year, Dr. Andrew Jackson said, “Congratulations to these highly skilled educators, who have been selected to represent their local school systems and our regional education districts. Each of these Alabama Teacher of the Year 16 Finalists truly demonstrate outstanding classroom leadership and are elevating our profession to new levels of success.”

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