

2015 PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS FINALISTS

Mathematics



Lauren Baucom • *Forest Hills High School*

It has been the joy of my life to watch students learn. In our classroom, we explore real problems and find the mathematics that aligns as students investigate and ask “why” about their world. I consider it an honor to have been recognized by my colleagues as the Wake County Teacher of the Year and the NCCTM Outstanding Mathematics Teacher. As a life-long learner, I find my passion in mathematics education as I partner with McGraw Hill and Meredith Mathematics Institute to train educators across our great state in rich mathematical curriculum. As the co-advisor for The Mentoring Project at Forest Hills, I enjoy facilitating one-to-one relationships that help students find success at school. As a member of the Instructional Support and Curriculum Revision Teams, I collaborate with colleagues to ensure the most effective instructional strategies are implemented across the school and county. With the support of my husband and best friend, Andrew Baucom, this everyday joy is realized.



Maureen Fitzsimmons • *Mooresville Middle School*

I am a math teacher and department chairperson at Mooresville Middle School. I am blessed to teach here for twelve out of my nineteen years of teaching. My husband and I have four beautiful children who also attend the Mooresville Graded School District. We now live in a digital world where technology is everywhere. Technological tools connect people and learning. Classrooms have a moral responsibility to become student focused and reflect our world with this same personalization and efficiency. Teachers need to relinquish control and allow students to become active participants in their own learning. Utilizing 21st century tools will engage students and bridge the gap from the classroom to the real world. Teaching is always evolving and I am excited about the new pathway technology has opened up for education and student learning.



Sara Vaughn • *Northwest Middle School*

When my children were in middle school, I realized I wanted to teach—that I had to teach—to make a difference for kids. I pursued a master’s degree in education, but the real learning occurred once I became the teacher. Now, every day, I learn about kids, relationships, erudition, and even about math. My students ask me how I can get so excited about math. I reply, “How can you not be excited?” What my students don’t realize is that my excitement comes from seeing them learn and discover new things. I get to create experiences for students that make math concepts relevant and stick in their heads. I am fanatical about the power of math, and I am passionate about my students. My students are emerging individuals who need structure and guidance, but even more, they need someone who really cares for them. I get to do that every day!