



Daviess County Public Schools

1622 Southeastern Parkway
Owensboro KY 42303
www.dcps.org

www.Facebook.com/DaviessCountyPublicSchools
Twitter: @dcpsKidsFirst
YouTube: DCPSTV

Superintendent Matt Robbins
matt.robbins@daviess.kyschools.us
Phone 270-852-7000

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DCPS educators honored for Excellence in Teaching

Three DCPS educators have been honored as recipients of the 2019 Campbellsville University Excellence in Teaching Awards.

Marcia Tomes, a primary teacher and interventionist at Southern Oaks Elementary School; Jennifer McFadden, social studies teacher at Daviess County Middle School; and Carrie Whitmer, a mathematics teacher at Daviess County High School, were nominated as representatives of DCPS elementary, middle and high school levels, and will be recognized during a statewide awards program at Campbellsville University on May 11.

The award recognizes teachers who have demonstrated energy and enthusiasm for teaching; efficient scheduling of time; reliability; professional integrity and cooperation. These teachers have also shown imagination and originality in meeting the diverse needs of their classrooms, have worked toward continuous improvement, maintain strong relationships between school and community, and have demonstrated exceptional character.

Marcia Tomes, who specializes in working with SOES students who are English language learners, arrives early at Southern Oaks every morning and can often be seen kneeling down to welcome students at eye-level as they arrive, sharing hugs and encouraging kids to make that day their best day! She radiates warmth as she makes each child feel loved and valued.

Her colleagues report significant improvements in the children with whom Tomes works. She is making a difference in their lives!

That commitment also extends to the families of her students. On at least one occasion, she made arrangements to meet on a weekend with a person who could assist her in writing a letter to a parent in their native language. This hand-written letter – done on her own time and of her own initiative – made a huge difference in this child's life and academic progress.

In addition to her responsibilities in working directly with EL students on language and gap areas, Tomes is also there for any child who needs love and support.

She demonstrates a growth mindset and leads by example as she challenges students to grow academically. Under her guidance, students learn that their efforts will make them stronger in school, but also in all areas of life.

She is there for her colleagues as well! Teachers at Southern Oaks look up to Marcia Tomes. She sets a positive example by volunteering at many school events and activities. She radiates happiness and sets a positive example of passion and flexibility. Tomes has taught at almost every elementary grade level, so is able to understand and communicate with her fellow teachers, sharing insights and ideas about meeting students' needs, strengthening curriculum or nurturing a positive environment in the classroom.



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Jennifer McFadden was one of the first at DCMS to embrace mastery grading and learning. She gives up her planning period to host “lunch and learn” sessions so students can reassess until they master concepts.

She is actively involved as a leader at Daviess County Middle School, contributing as member of numerous committees. She created the Elite Panther Award, recognizing students for community service and good attendance, behavior and grades. She is a dedicated academic team coach for social studies and language arts. When another teacher was out on an extended medical leave, McFadden stepped up to create all the sub plans and lessons for her colleague. She worked closely with the sub to ensure continuous learning for the students. What an awesome demonstration of dedication, teamwork and a Kids First philosophy!

As one example of her empathy and commitment to meeting individual needs of students, McFadden was aware of a student’s unstable home life. Several times during the school year, she surprised this student by bringing him a breakfast burrito or sausage biscuit to start his day on a positive note. Those items that most of us take for granted were a real treat to this student – but more importantly, he knew someone cared.

She is also highly respected among her colleagues for her understanding of content. McFadden serves as the chair of the DCMS social studies department, and organizes the annual Geography Bee that allows students to attend the state competition. She created a Historical Museum where students demonstrate knowledge about civilizations based on their preferred learning styles. She creates engaging lessons that bring learning to life for her students!

Carrie Whitmer quietly makes a difference every day through her commitment to the teaching profession and her willingness to serve others at DCHS – students and colleagues alike.

She demonstrates an outstanding “Kids First” spirit by dedicating her planning period to students. Rather than grading assignments and getting ahead on the week’s activities, Whitmer spends her prep period tutoring former students who are taking dual credit courses at Owensboro Community and Technical College.

She serves as Teacher Leader for the DCHS math department, a position she has held for many years. This commitment reflects her willingness to lead and highlights her ability to quietly but effectively make a difference in the lives of students – not only in her classroom, but for all members of the Panther family. As department chair, Whitmer is responsible for serving as liaison between her fellow math teachers and the school leadership team. She plans Professional Learning Community meetings and oversees the development of curriculum at each grade level, allowing her to positively influence the academic experience of all students.

In addition to all this – Whitmer mentors student teachers year after year. As a result of her willingness to open her classroom – and her heart – to future educators, Whitmer’s ripple of influence has touched the lives of countless students across Kentucky. One of those student teachers shared what Whitmer’s support meant to her: “Without Carrie Whitmer, I would not be where I am today. Her patience, guidance and consistent motivation led me through the best student-teaching experience I could have ever asked for. She was always open to incorporating my ideas into her classroom and she truly let me take the reins. Now that I’m teaching, I know how difficult it must have been for her to allow me to productively struggle through teaching lessons for the very first time, but she was always on board and helped me fill in the gaps to be more successful. She is also invested in my life outside of school and



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always checks in to make sure things are going well. That quality truly makes her deserving of the Teacher of the Year Award as she doesn't just teach her kids, she doesn't just advise the math department, but she is also genuinely interested in who we are. She inspires all of us at DCHS to be the best we can be in the classroom and in our personal lives."

"Marcia, Jennifer and Carrie are dedicated to our district's mission of putting 'Kids First' in everything we do," said DCPS Superintendent Matt Robbins. "They are truly making a difference in the lives of our students, and I am proud that these dedicated education professionals are being recognized for their commitment to excellence."

Note to media – Marcia Tomes, Jennifer McFadden and Carrie Whitmer are available for interviews:

Marica.tomes@daviess.kyschools.us or 270-852-7570 7525 U.S. 431 South

Jennifer.mcfadden@daviess.kyschools.us or 270-852-7600 1415 E. Fourth St.

Carrie.whitmer@daviess.kyschools.us or 270-852-7300 4255 New Hartford Road

For more information, contact DCPS Public Information Officer Lora Wimsatt
(270) 852-7000 ext. 215 Lora.Wimsatt@daviess.kyschools.us