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NEWS RELEASE

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MAES Teacher Named Gifted Teacher of the Year



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – Matt Arthur Elementary teacher Catherine Cooper was awarded **Gifted Teacher of the Year** for the Houston County School System. The surprise announcement was made at the Houston County Association of Gifted Children (HCAGC) meeting in December. Cooper was surprised and congratulated by her husband, three sons (pictured on left), Principal Dr. Jolie Hardin, and several teachers and representatives from her school who waited in the wings until the announcement was made.

Cooper serves as a lead Fostering Originality, Creativity, Unique Ideas and Self-direction (FOCUS) teacher at Matt Arthur Elementary. She also serves on the Better Seeking Team, co-sponsors the Ecology Club and Jump Rope Team and teaches at the Summer Enhancement Program. She has been teaching for 24 years, eight of which has been in the gifted education program.

On her application, Cooper wrote, “I have seen my students change from timid students who usually hide their various gifts to students who have allowed their true gifts to stimulate and challenge their engaging minds.”

Principal Dr. Hardin stated, “Mrs. Cooper’s constant desire to learn new and innovative ways to teach her FOCUS students is an unflinching reminder of her dedication to the profession. She is not one to be complacent or mediocre. She expects her students to be life-long learners and she models this behavior each and every day.”

MORE

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Dr. Mike Davis, a parent, wrote about Cooper, "Excellent teachers are versed in their subject matter and understand the developmental needs of their students...Mrs. Cooper is a delightful individual who absolutely loves the students she teaches. Genuine love cannot be faked."

Cooper was presented several gifts, to include \$100 from the HCAGC and a vacuum cleaner contributed by a Lake Joy Elementary parent. She also received gifts from the following sponsors: Books are Fun, Chick-fil-A, LongHorn Steakhouse, Stevi B's and The Swanson.

Criteria for Gifted Teacher of the Year include, but are not limited to:

- membership in HCAGC and GAGC;
- gifted program teacher for at least two years;
- commitment to teaching gifted students;
- advocacy for gifted education; and
- evidence of leadership within the school and the district.

Matt Arthur Elementary is located at 2500 Highway 127 in Kathleen. For more information about the Gifted Teacher of the Year, please contact Jan Jacobsen, director of gifted, at Jan.Jacobsen@hcbe.net or 478-988-6200, ext. 10393.

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