

Four Chowan County teachers earn National Board Certification

Four teachers in the Edenton-Chowan School System earned national certification this year from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Leverna Copeland, 6th grade teacher at Chowan Middle School; Sheila Evans, Assistant Principal at Chowan Middle School; Mary Ann Morris, AG Teacher at Chowan Middle School; and Suzanne Palmer, AG Teacher at D.F. Walker and White Oak School, were recently honored by the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education for their accomplishments.

National Board Certification is a rigorous, voluntary process, which requires teachers to complete a two-part assessment designed to examine talent, skills, and knowledge. Teachers must also compile a school-site portfolio that reflects various facets of teaching including student work with teachers' written comments, lesson plans, and videotapes of classroom interaction. Teachers must also participate in two days of performance-based assessment center activities, such as simulations, structured interviews, and collegial discussion.

"It's the hardest and the best thing that I've ever done," explained Suzanne Palmer. "I had to do so

much thinking about and analyzing what I teach as well as what I do for my students. Overall we both (teacher and students) benefited," she continued.

The state of North Carolina is committed to supporting teachers in the National Board Certification process. The state pays the \$2,000 fee for any teacher interested going through the year-long process as part of a statewide initiative to recruit and retain qualified teachers and for continued professional growth. Teachers who successfully complete the program receive a 12 percent salary bonus for ten years (the length the certificate is valid until renewal).

"Once committed to the process, the possibility of financial gain took a backseat to the rewarding experience of being actively and intensely involved in the challenge of the process and the collaboration with colleagues and mentors who share enthusiasm for teaching," said Mary Ann Morris. "I was supported by and learned from teachers and administrators in my school system, National Board Candidates and National Board Certified Teachers in the Northeastern counties who organized into an ongoing support group, and teachers and mentors from

across the state through the North Carolina of Educators and the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching," she added.

The National Board process is one of professional development that is equal to yet significantly different from pursuing a Masters degree. As a performance-based process, National Board Certification seeks to acknowledge those who are committed to students and their learning, who know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students. Teachers who participate in the process focus on the responsibility for managing and monitoring student learning and on thinking systematically about individual teaching practices.

"The most rewarding part of this experience was learning that I, too, am a learner," said Leverna Copeland. "Compiling a portfolio of my student's work to analyze my teaching style and taking assessment tests on instructional simulations was a soulsearching, grueling experience. I was made more aware of my teacher responsibility for student learning and my need to study educational research as a teaching base. I learned to think about my teaching practice, benefit from experience of success and

failure, and link in collaboration with teachers throughout the state," she commented.

Each of the four teachers who completed the process said that they would encourage other teachers to pursue National Board Certification. In particular, Sheila Evans remarked, "I would encourage all teachers to pursue National Board Certification. It is a difficult process, but a rewarding one. North Carolina recognizes the difficulty of the process and allows candidates to 'bank' their scores for three years. Therefore, it becomes a win-win situation."

"If by chance a teacher does not meet certification the first year, she or he has an opportunity to continue to improve and resubmit the portfolio for review. The rigor of this certification makes the field of education more professional in the eyes of educators, parents, and the community," commented Evans.

With the recent recognition of these teachers, there are now 6 National Board Certified teachers in the Edenton-Chowan School System. Several teachers are pursuing the certification designation this year.



Leverna Copeland



Mary Ann Morris



Suzanne Palmer



Sheila Evans

Brenda Winborne selected 1999-2000 Administrator of the Year

There are many challenges that school administrators are facing today to guide our teachers and students for the opportunities of tomorrow. Such challenges include coaching and counseling staff, giving and receiving feedback, encouraging risk taking, and fostering a positive and motivated school culture that embraces the helping hands of parents and the community for one intended goal...to cultivate the desire for life-long learning. Meeting those challenges requires a leader.

Brenda Winborne, Principal of Chowan Middle School, is running the race to meet all of these challenges. She has been selected by her peers as the 1999-2000 Chowan County Administrator of the Year. Brenda will compete with six other local award winners from the Northeast Region of the state in the Principal of the Year Program co-sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and Wachovia Bank. Regional award recipients will be selected in late March and the State Principal of the year will be announced in May 2000.

During Winborne's tenure as principal, the school has received many accolades. Among her many accomplishments, Winborne views as her most significant the transformation

to the notion of a building a team concept within the faculty and staff that resulted in a 'team-driven' school.

"We buy into that it takes all of us working together to have success. So when someone experiences success its not one individual, it's everyone that has contributed to that success," she explained. "We have finally reached the point where everyone in our school has input and helps to meet that success. Building that team where we know we're working together for success has been the big accomplishment."

Winborne attributes the school's improved test scores over the last three years to the team philosophy. For the past three years, test scores at the school have continued to rise resulting in the school reaching exemplary growth status in the state's ABCs Student Accountability Program for the past two years.

"Our test scores have continually improved because everyone has contributed working together to make that happen...communicating to students what the standards are and helping them to know that they can reach those standards and believing that they

can reach those standards," said Winborne. "We communicate to students what the standards are, how to reach those standards, and then provide the necessary support for them to reach their goals," she added.

The faculty and staff at Chowan Middle have one

our students to a higher standard knowing that they are capable of doing this and forcing ourselves to look at each individual student to see what it is we need to do together to reach that goal," commented Winborne.

Winborne said that a second

responsible students, respectful students...a school that's inviting to the public that comes in. That only happens when the students want it to happen. I want the students to actually take ownership for that and become the leaders of their school," she said.

And efforts are well underway to obtaining that goal. For the past three years under Winborne's leadership, the school has embraced a philosophy of citizenship called "Character Shines" that focuses on character traits like responsibility, respect, and compassion. "Character Shines helps our students understand their role as a citizen of the school...the importance of honesty, integrity, respect...assuming responsibility for themselves and for their peers," explained Winborne.

Winborne noted that the Character Shines program is beginning to make an impact on students and how they view their roles as citizens. She noted that as discipline is analyzed over the three years, last year's discipline referrals were half of the previous year's referrals.

Winborne emphasized that parents play a critical role at

Chowan and that there is always a need for more parent involvement. "One of the things that we're doing to increase parent involvement is the student-led conferencing," said Winborne. "Parents must come to school to conference with their child and share where they are with their academic growth and their behavior as a responsible citizen." During the student-led conferences students share their goals with their parents and where they are in obtaining their goals.

Challenges for the future lie ahead for the school. "The challenges are there as the state sets more and more accountability measures for our students and our schools," she added. "Those are challenges because finding the resources you need to provide the appropriate interventions and support is difficult. And, as the standards raise you need those supports for some of those students and the challenge is in finding those supports and interventions...I'm always looking where else can I go for those resources and help...because that's the only fair thing for our students. If we're going to set those high standards then its our responsibility as educators to help them reach those high standards."



Superintendent Allan Smith (right) congratulates Brenda Winborne (left) on being named 1999-2000 Chowan County Administrator of the Year.

again raised their expectation level for not only the students, but for themselves as well. Their goal for this school year is to be recognized as a School of Distinction and setting higher standards. "We are continually pushing ourselves and

goal is to help students assume more responsibility for their input in the school as citizens of the school. "I want students to take responsibility as citizens by making it a school that they can be proud of not only with the academics but with

January 2000 Calendar of Events

- 3 JAH Varsity Basketball - Manteo at Home
- 3-4 Acceleration Days K-8
- 6 Board of Education Meeting, Chowan Co. Office Bldg. 7.30 p.m.
John A. Holmes Fall Athletic Banquet, 6 p.m
- 8 JAH Wrestling at D.H. Conley
- 10 JAH Wrestling at Currituck
JAH Basketball - Currituck at Home
CMS Basketball at Williamston
- 11 CMS Wrestling at Elizabeth City M.S.
- 12 CMS Basketball - Roper at Home
- 13 CMS Wrestling - Williamston at Home
- 14 JAH Basketball at Plymouth
- 17 Martin Luther King Holiday

- 18 Chowan Arts Council Performance - Buffalo Soldiers (JAH), 1 p.m.
JAH Basketball at Northside
- 19 Chowan Arts Council Performance - Buffalo Soldiers (CMS) 1 p.m.
CMS Basketball - Hertford Co. II at Home
- 20 CMS Wrestling at Williamston

- 21 JAH Basketball at Perquimans
- 22 JAH Wrestling at Quad
- 24 CMS Basketball at Southwestern
- 25 JAH Basketball - Williamston at Home
CMS Wrestling - Elizabeth City M.S. at Home
- 26 Early Release Day K-8, 1:30 p.m.
JAH Wrestling at Plymouth
- 27 JAH Basketball - Williamston at Home
CMS Basketball - Robersonville at Home
- 31 CMS Basketball - Hertford Co. I at Home

