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ECSD NEWS RELEASE

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ECSD (FLA) Announces this Year's School Librarian of the Year and the ECSD School Library Principal Advocate of the Year

Sara Ratliff, Escambia County (FLA) School Librarians' Association Secretary, and Michelle White, ECSD's Coordinator of Media Services, had the honor of presenting this year's Dr. Paula Gleason School Librarian of the Year Award to Laura Hobbs, Lincoln Park Elementary School's Media Specialist. Every librarian knows that strong school library programs also rely on the support and advocacy of school leadership. Ratliff and White also had the honor of presenting this year's Dr. Paula Gleason School Library Principal Advocate of the Year Award to Ernest Ward Middle School's Principal Nancy Gindl-Perry.

They each received a plaque to display in their office or their school's library.

Read below to learn about the amazing effort Laura Hobbs puts into Lincoln Park's library program: "My focus has always been to create lifelong readers. I believe children should develop as readers for both information and pleasure. In developing our curriculum, I target Library Media standards in five areas under a general theme: Library Skills, Literature, Digital Citizenship, Research and Makerspaces. As the year progresses, students develop literacy skills, face literacy challenges, and earn rewards."

Hobbs continued, "During library visits, students practice research skills using Kids InfoBits, Google Docs, and digital reference materials. Students practice Library Skills, searching Destiny and locating materials using call numbers. Digital Citizenship standards are practiced through approved sites like Netsmartz and Common Sense Media. Students participate in school, county, state and national reading challenges and events to promote quality literature. Makerspaces are woven throughout the curriculum."

"I've worked to transform Lincoln Park Elementary School's library from a book and technology poor site to a well-stocked library with an updated collection and accessible technology. We currently have twelve desktops, a self-check-in station and two catalog search stations. Through grants, we obtained nine iPads, green screen technology for projects and our morning news program, extra seating, hundreds of books by level or topics, as well as Makerspace materials like Ozobot coding robots, engineering kits, and more. Materials that didn't

support our curriculum were weeded and replaced with more appropriate books. Our collection increased and is more relevant to our population's needs, and the physical library is more usable and modern. To promote at-home literacy, I host an annual book fair, and normally maintain a "free books" shelf. This year the book fair was digital, and MyOn was promoted for at-home reading. I also coordinated a book giveaway for students through the Studer Group."

Collaboration is a huge part of every librarian's position. Hobbs collaborates with faculty to plan and implement literacy and STEM events, assist with testing, collaborate and co-teach on research projects, and serve as a materials and technology resource. She also hosts a weekly Sunshine Book Club for students, and she serves as the Battle of the Books competition coach.

In addition, as the Yearbook Coordinator she organizes school pictures, and she runs their student-filmed daily news show. At the county level, she serves on the ECSLA board. In the past few years, Hobbs served at the state level on the SSYRA Elementary Committee, and was recently asked to apply for a SSYRA JR committee position.

"I am honored to have been nominated for this award," said Laura Hobbs.

Read below to see how Principal Gindl-Perry supports Ernest Ward Middle School's library program: "Principals such as Mrs. Perry are important to the success of libraries because they control the factors that determine the quality of the school library program," explained Ernest Ward's librarian Sherri Stallworth in her nomination submission.

"As we know, effective library programs require budgeting, support, and promotion. For example, it takes money to staff and build a current and adequate collection size. Mrs. Perry continues to consider the needs of her library every year as she generously appropriates funds to provide qualified staff and grow the size of our collection. Last summer, Mrs. Perry participated in a major overhaul of my library. She physically worked with a team including the assistant principal, two teachers, a paraprofessional, and myself to revamp the library. We worked together for two weeks to weed books, rearrange bookcases, and genrefy books."

To genrefy books is to organize books by genre, a way that many believe will help students find books that might interest them.

"In addition," Stallworth continued, "she generously allotted over \$2,500 of Title I funds and \$2,000 of District funds to allow me to purchase new books for the library. Nevertheless, an extensive collection would be nothing without students and teachers to use it. Principal Perry has created a school environment where student library use and faculty/librarian interaction are valued. When approached about student access this year, Mrs. Perry graciously approved a schedule that

allowed teachers of elective courses to work within Covid guidelines to bring their students to the library twice a month. Finally, Mrs. Perry provided student assistants to aid in the duties that are required to keep the library accessible throughout the day. Consequently, principal support of successful libraries must be broad-based and multi-dimensional, and I appreciate all of the support Mrs. Perry gives me and our library,” Sherri Stallworth

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Photos will be posted in an album of Facebook, on the page Escambia Schools Public Relations.

Media queries about Escambia County School District topics should be directed to Kim Stefansson, at (cell) [850-393-0539](tel:850-393-0539) or kstefansson@ecsdfl.us. Like and share posts about ECSD found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ecsdfl Go to the Escambia Schools Public Relations page on www.facebook.com/ecsd.public to see pictures of recent events. Visit ECSD’s web page at www.escambiaschools.org
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