



Brevard Public Schools Head Start Program Teacher Receives State Award from the Florida Head Start Association

For Immediate Release

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TALLAHASSEE, FL – December 1, 2024—Janice Smith, Head Start teacher at Enterprise Elementary, receives the highest distinction from the Florida Head Start Association (FHSA) as their 2024-2025 Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Smith has dedicated over a decade to serving the Head Start program at the Brevard Public Schools, where she began her education career as an Instructional Assistant and transitioned into teaching in 2015. As a veteran who served in the military for 11 years, her path to early childhood education was not direct. She earned her Master's degree in Hospital Administration and a Bachelor's degree in business administration. Through the years, earning a State of Florida Teaching Certification for Prekindergarten – 3rd grade and Certified as an English for Speakers of Other Languages under the State of Florida Department of Education along with various specialized certifications and training courses reflect her deep dedication to her professional development demonstrating her commitment in the education profession. Her exceptional teaching skills are reflected in her top-performing CLASS score, and her deep understanding of the CLASS framework allows her to create a positive, student-directed classroom environment that sets a high standard for her peers.

Ms. Smith's colleagues have observed her exceptional dedication to her students and their families. Her ability to foster a nurturing and stimulating environment that paves the way for meaningful learning experiences is remarkable. She is always looking for ways to assist her students and families, as evidenced by her initiative to secure 100 gym bags filled with blankets, health essentials, books, and uplifting messages for her classroom families. She also generously shared these bags with families in need. Her leadership and commitment resonate with her community, her students, their families, and her colleagues.

"She has a true passion for teaching, as seen daily when visiting her classroom," stated Kelli Dufresne, Principal at Enterprise Elementary School. "She has united her avocation with her vocation, loving what she is doing and doing what she loves-teaching. We are proud to have Mrs. Smith as part of the Head Start team at Enterprise, and she truly represents the best of the best."

The FHSA annual awards luncheon will occur on December 11, 2024, at the DoubleTree by Hilton at the Entrance to Universal Orlando as part of the association's 25th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Conference. Complete details are available at www.FLHeadStart.org.

About FHSA

The Florida Head Start Association (FHSA) is a nonprofit organization that empowers its members to advocate for and enhance education, health, and social services for 45,000 children and families in Florida.

Head Start is a key player in the early childhood education landscape, providing critical services, including school readiness and comprehensive health support, guided by the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Since 1999, FHSA has organized impactful events and training sessions to elevate discussions within the Head Start community. FHSA's dedication to this cause is unwavering, striving to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the most at-risk children and families.

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