

## Christy Welch is Watauga County Schools Counselor of the Year

Written by Steve Frank  
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Mabel School Counselor Christy Welch has been chosen as the Watauga County Schools Counselor of the Year for 2011-12. Her selection was welcomed by Mabel Principal Mark Hagaman, who praised Welch for “consistently going far above and beyond the requirements of her role to help students, family, and faculty members at Mabel. In addition to carrying out her considerable workload of routine duties, she has helped a number of families grieving the loss of parents, implemented the Pioneer Prom Boutique to assist less fortunate students obtain prom dresses, and established a parent resource center to provide information about coping with the challenges of parenting. She is also proactive in addressing bullying and other interpersonal issues and is a main cog in our efforts to recognize and celebrate student accomplishments. Her honor is very well deserved.”

Responding to the award, Welch said “an effective counselor has to have great support from the school. I have a really amazing school supporting my work and that makes all the difference in what we’re able to do for our students at Mabel. I love it here.”

Welch was congratulated on her award Monday at Mabel by Principal Mark Hagaman, a number of Mabel students, and a delegation that included Board Chair Deborah Miller, Board members Delora Hodges and John Welch, Associate Superintendent Dr. Scarlet Davis, Executive Director of Learning Development Dr. Wayne Eberle II, and Student Services Director Clarissa Schmal.

Board member John Welch is married to Christy Welch and the couple’s daughter Madison is a first grader at Mabel. Madison was present when her mother’s award was announced.

Welch came to Mabel as an intern and is now in her tenth year as the school’s counselor. She completed her bachelor’s degree at Wingate University and earned a graduate degree at Appalachian State University. She has also achieved National Board Certification and currently serves as vice-president of the NC School Counselors Association.

2011 has been a year of recognition for both Christy and husband John Welch. Earlier this year, John Welch was presented with the 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award by Wingate University. The Distinguished Alumni Award honors Wingate graduates whose professional excellence and personal dedication have made them leaders in their professions and communities.