

Darcy Grimes is Northwest Region Teacher of the Year

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Watauga County Schools Teacher of the Year Darcy Grimes has been named the Northwest Region Teacher of the Year in North Carolina, making her one of just nine teachers out of 97,000 statewide who are still in the running to be the NC Teacher of the Year. She won the regional honor in competition with Teachers of the Year from the nineteen counties that make up the Northwest region. Grimes teaches third grade at Bethel Elementary and was chosen as the Watauga County Schools Teacher of the Year last May.

The formal announcement of her regional award was made in Bethel's gym Monday afternoon by reigning NC Teacher of the Year Tyronna Hooker and was greeted with the immediate screaming approval of the assembled students. In her remarks, Hooker congratulated Grimes on her achievement and cited the high praise Grimes has received from both her colleagues and her students.

Those visiting Bethel Monday to celebrate the award included Superintendents Dr. Marty Hemric and Dr. Dick Jones, Board of Education Chair Deborah Miller, Human Resources and Auxiliary Services Director Marshall Gasperson, several school principals and other school system personnel, and Ms. Grimes' husband Joseph Grimes.

One of her colleagues at Bethel said that "even on a bad day, Darcy is still the best teacher around." Marshall Gasperson said that "if my child were in the third grade again, I would want Darcy Grimes to be her teacher." Bethel Principal Randy Bentley described Grimes as "a person born to teach. She has a passion for teaching that transforms into student excitement about learning. If you are feeling down and watch her at work in the classroom, it makes the whole world better." Bentley also praised Grimes for her skilled use of technology to enhance classroom instruction and for how her students enjoy learning with her.

A graduate of Appalachian State University, Grimes first joined the Watauga County Schools as after school site director at Blowing Rock while she was a student at ASU. She began her teaching career at Moravian Falls Elementary in Wilkes County and served there for three years before coming to Bethel in August of 2009. Grimes is certified as an Intel Master Teacher and is currently pursuing a master's degree in instructional technology at ASU.

Grimes was awarded \$2,500 from the Watauga Board of Education for her selection as Regional Teacher of the Year. Although state level awards are subject to change based on corporate sponsorships and budgetary restrictions, the state Department of Public Instruction expects to award each region's Teacher of the Year a stipend of \$5,000 as well as financial support to attend a national professional conference for teachers.

Starting early next year, Grimes and the other eight regional winners will go through additional interviews and other assessments at the state level that determine the selection of the NC Teacher of the Year. The awards for the NC Teacher of the Year include a check for \$7,500, use of a state vehicle for one year, a technology package from Smart Technologies, and a two year appointment to the State Board of Education.