

Finishing Term, Message From Darcy Grimes

Written by Steve Frank
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Like most of you, I cannot believe it is already May and the end of the school year! It feels like just yesterday I was sitting in front of my computer attempting to write my first Teacher of the Year message. Last May, I had no idea what to expect about the upcoming school year. I was filled with many emotions: nervous, excited, happy and sad. I was nervous about representing all of you and was unsure if I could be successful. I was excited about the opportunity to travel across the state and meet so many amazing teachers. I was happy that I was going to be able to learn from the best teachers in the state whether in the mountains, Piedmont, or the coast. But, most of all I was sad that I was going to be away from my students for an entire year. I have shared with many of you that I have wanted to be a teacher my entire life and the thought of not having students for an entire school year made me extremely sad.

What I quickly realized though, is that while I might be away from my students at Bethel Elementary, I was able to reach, teach, and help thousands of students across our state by the work that I was doing as Teacher of the Year. This year I have been on countless committees at the Department of Instruction, an adviser to the State Board of Education, met with numerous state senators and representatives to discuss public education, participated in meetings at the US Department of Education, co-chaired the first annual District Teacher of the Year Summit, worked with both public and private colleges to discuss their education colleges and programs, and collaborated with teachers across our state and nation.

Although this has been a wonderful year filled with many life-changing experiences, I won't lie by saying that this has been an easy year. It hasn't, as most of you would agree. For many this year has been a year full of change, struggles, and frustrations. We as teachers were given a new curriculum, new assessments, and a new way to teach. In August, for a countless number of teachers across the state, this was a daunting task that I observed first hand as I traveled. But, as the months went by I saw a change in the teachers who held on. I saw teachers who were collaborating with teachers in their school and across our state. I saw determination in the eyes of teachers who knew they needed to keep their students at the center focus in order for the students to be successful.

With change and determination comes growth. Although you may not be able to tell, I know I have changed and grown this year. As have all of the teachers and students in our state. Although I believe in growth, I do not believe growth can always be measured mathematically. If I took a test will it show that I have grown this year? Probably not, but it is something I can feel so deeply in my heart that I know it is there. And that is something we need to remember as we look in the eyes of our students. Look at where they were as they came into your classroom in August to a new curriculum and look where they are now. That is where the growth can be found.

Although this is my last message as the NC Teacher of the Year, I am not finished growing and changing. I will continue to work hard for the teachers and students across our state because I believe every student deserves the best education possible. Before I end, I do want to say thank you to each of you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of the time and hard work you put into teaching each day. Thank you for not giving up when things became difficult. But, most of all thank you for what you do for students every single day!

Darcy Grimes, 2012-13 NC Teacher of the Year