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BREAKING NEWS:

OCS Kindergarten Teacher Named North Carolina Teacher of the Year

Lisa Godwin takes top honors among nearly 95,000 classroom teachers

April 6, 2017 – Dixon Elementary kindergarten teacher Lisa Godwin has spent 19 years encouraging her students to love learning. Now, as North Carolina's top teacher, she'll inspire educators and children across the state.

Godwin was named the 2017 Burroughs Wellcome Fund North Carolina Teacher of the Year at a ceremony in Cary today. She was one of just nine regional finalists selected from North Carolina's 94,421 classroom teachers for their dedication, innovation and ability to inspire students to achieve.

"We are proud of Ms. Godwin's achievements and excited that she received this well-deserved recognition," said Onslow County Schools Superintendent Rick Stout. "She makes a difference every day in her classroom, and now children across North Carolina will benefit from her expertise."



Godwin began her classroom career in 1997 as an instructional assistant. She served as a kindergarten teacher, fifth-grade teacher, administrative intern and assistant principal in Sanford, N.C. before joining Onslow County Schools in 2012 as an assistant principal at Meadow View Elementary. In 2014, she went back to the classroom as a kindergarten teacher at Dixon Elementary School in Holly Ridge, N.C.

"Our teachers do such important work every day, both in the classroom and in our community," Onslow County Schools Board of Education Chair Pam Thomas said. "The Board of Education continues to support their efforts as they improve our students' lives and futures."

Godwin's mission to help children started at a young age. "My dad inspired and taught me to love others with an open heart and to serve with helpful hands. This ideal became the foundation for my personal and career choices. I always knew that I wanted a career which served children. As a child, I could either be found playing school with my dolls or I would be using my doctor's kit to diagnose and make them well again!"



Torn between a career in medicine or education, Godwin chose pediatric nursing, but she still felt like she was missing something. When her twin sons entered kindergarten, she did, too – as an instructional assistant. After the first week, she knew she was home.

Godwin earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Andrews Presbyterian College, then her master's in school administration from UNC Chapel Hill.

"I entered administration to serve as a voice for teachers and students," she said. "While I experienced much success in this role and learned much as an instructional leader, I truly missed the daily, positive interaction with my own classroom of students and knew that I could be a greater change agent from within, so I made the decision to return to teaching."

Outside the classroom, Godwin partners with parents to ensure they are involved with their child's education.

"I have facilitated workshops in churches and at local events within my students' communities to encourage parents to feel comfortable outside of the school setting. Podcasts and videos linked to my webpage also work well and allow parents to see what instruction looks like in my classroom," she said. "I also provide parents with specific tools to use at home such as flashcards, books, supplies and strategies on how to reinforce academic review. Just as a student responds to a caring teacher, a parent responds likewise."

Godwin serves as an example to her students and her colleagues. "She is a true professional who embodies not only the spirit of what a great educator should be, but is the model of what many of her peers aspire to be," said Dixon Elementary Principal Glenn Reed. "Her advocacy for students and dedication to her profession has impressed me from the moment that we stepped on campus together just two short years ago."

As the North Carolina Teacher of the Year, Godwin will spend the next school year traveling the state as an ambassador for the teaching profession. She will receive an automobile to use during the year thanks to Flow Automotive, the opportunity to attend a seminar at the NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching, a mobile device from Lenovo valued at approximately \$1,600, an engraved vase, a one-time cash award of \$7,500, a trip to the National Teacher of the Year Conference and International Space Camp, and the opportunity to travel abroad through an endowment sponsored by Go Global NC.

Onslow County Schools also has one of just eight finalists to be named the 2017 Wells Fargo North Carolina Principal of the Year. Northside High Principal Maria Johnson was selected from nearly 2,500 principals across the state; a state selection committee will now review their portfolios and conduct an extensive interview process. The winner will be announced during a luncheon in Cary on May 12.