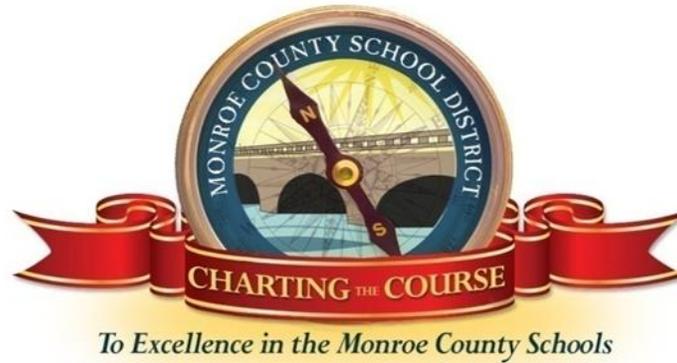


MARK T. PORTER
Superintendent of Schools



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 15, 2016
Please contact Theresa Axford, Executive Director, Teaching and Learning
Monroe County School District, 305-293-1400, Ext. 53392

Horace O’Bryant School Teacher selected as Monroe County School District’s 2015 Teacher of the Year

Superintendent Mark T. Porter is pleased to announce HOB teacher Nicole Smith as Monroe County’s Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Smith currently teaches 7th and 8th grade math at HOB School. She holds a Master’s Degree in Special Education from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia where she graduated Summa Cum Laude. Nicole has been teaching at HOB since 2013. She also taught at Key Largo Elementary School.

Nicole’s classroom is enhanced by her innovative use of instructional materials and methods and her ability to foster excellence in all of her students. Her extensive knowledge of Exceptional Student Education Students and English Language Learners allows her to differentiate instruction to meet student needs. Her particular focus is on helping students gain self-knowledge thus enabling them to think critically and advocate for themselves. Assistant Principal, Denise Santiago states, “She challenges students to reach their highest potential and goes about it so that their confidence levels go up as significantly as their academic levels.”

Nicole’s philosophy of student empowerment can be seen in her commitment to programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Where Everyone Belongs (WEB) and Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS). Through her roles as AVID Site Coordinator, WEB organizer and PBIS Coach, Nicole has contributed to not only student achievement but to the climate and culture of the school overall.

Above all, fellow educators say that Nicole Smith doesn’t accept the problems and challenges in her classroom life; she finds ways to fix them. Her positive attitude and outstanding ability make her a “game changer.”

According to her Principal Mike Henriquez, Mrs. Smith’s greatest asset is her “infectious personality and sense of humor” which enables her to develop trusting and caring relationships with students.

Superintendent Mark Porter stated, “Nicole Smith is an outstanding example of the fine teachers that we have in the Monroe County School System. She clearly demonstrates the importance of strong relationships with students as a vehicle for success and she is a truly deserving recipient of this recognition.”