



In April, Fox Elementary School Music Teacher Linda Smith, second from left, was named the Macomb Intermediate School District Elementary Teacher of the Year. She also was recognized as Chippewa Valley Schools Elementary Teacher of the Year. She is pictured with Chippewa Valley Schools Superintendent Ron Roberts, fellow Chippewa Valley teachers of the year Wyandot Middle School Teacher Chris Thompson, Chippewa Valley High School Teacher Ken Osear, and Chippewa Valley Schools Board Member Denise Aquino.

Photo provided by Diane Blain

Fox Elementary's Smith named Teacher of the Year

By: Alex Szwarc | Macomb Township Chronicle | Published May 15, 2019

MACOMB TOWNSHIP — When Linda Smith leaves her home every morning, it doesn't feel like she's going to a job.

Instead, she feels as if she is going to a privilege she's been given to work with children.

Smith is a music teacher at Fox Elementary School in Macomb Township and was recently named the Macomb Intermediate School District Elementary Teacher of the Year.

"I am so humbled to have been chosen because I see so many teachers working so hard every day," Smith said. "The teachers love their students. If it wasn't for all the teachers working together as a team, it wouldn't have happened."

In addition to being named the county teacher of the year, Smith was also chosen as the Chippewa Valley Schools Elementary Teacher of the Year.

"I am absolutely honored and privileged to receive this recognition," she said at the May 6 Chippewa Valley Schools Board of Education meeting. "When I get up in the morning and go out the door, it is a gift. Who gets to get up in the morning and help shape our minds of tomorrow?"

Smith, of Clinton Township, began her Chippewa Valley Schools teaching career in 1998 as a music teacher at Cherokee Elementary in Clinton Township. From 2000 to 2015, she taught at Algonquin Middle School in Clinton Township, and she has worked at Fox Elementary since 2015.

“The day I found out I won Chippewa Valley teacher of the year, I was covering another class and I was shocked,” she said. “The way I found out from Macomb County I had won was very interesting.”

Smith recently moved and since the MISD didn't have her home address, Fox's Principal Frank Bellomo received the letter before she did.

Chippewa Valley Schools Superintendent Ron Roberts read from part of Smith's nomination form at the board meeting, stating, “Linda not only understands the needs of our Fox community and family, but also does everything in her power to make them feel connected. The relationship she has built with our Fox family is truly remarkable.”

Every year, the MISD recognizes outstanding teachers, nominated by peers, parents and students to be considered in their respective school buildings from their districts. From there, an Outstanding Teacher of the Year is named countywide at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

“Without a doubt, Linda is an advocate for students and that is seen on a daily basis as she challenges and engages K-5 children in hands-on learning experiences in the classroom,” Bellomo said. “The musical instruments are always out and played by kids. This is one of the reasons the children love her class so much. Not a day goes by where she doesn't go above and beyond to find hidden talents in all of her students.”

Smith complimented Bellomo by saying he is a joy to work for.

“It makes a big difference when you're in a building that functions like a well-oiled machine,” Smith said. “When you're in an elementary building, it's all about loving, nurturing and caring and doing whatever we can to help the kids out.”

Her passion for teaching music started when she was a young girl whose parents loved the fine arts.

“There was always a book on the coffee table about Michelangelo or other famous artists,” Smith said. “We listened to classical music all the time.”

All the recognized teachers for 2019 were honored during a special dinner April 17 at the MISD building in Clinton Township.

Smith was named Teacher of the Year along with Shayne Reckling, who teaches at Bemis Junior High, and Lisa Denomme, of Sterling Heights High School.

Smith earned a master's degree in education from Michigan State University and a bachelor's degree in music education from Oakland University.