

June 3, 2019 – Staunton City Schools Names Division Teacher of the Year

Contact: Stephanie Haskins
540-332-3920 Fax: 540-332-3924
shaskins@staunton.k12.va.us



STAUNTON CITY SCHOOLS NAMES DIVISION TEACHER OF THE YEAR

STAUNTON — Staunton City Schools is pleased to announce that Michelle Freed is the 2019 Teacher of the Year.

Freed teaches sixth-grade math at Shelburne Middle School and has been in education for 13 years, 11 of those with Staunton City Schools. She began her career working with children at the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents, an acute mental health facility, after majoring in recreational therapy. Through her work, Freed realized her heart was in classroom teaching, so she returned to school to pursue a teaching career.

“Selecting only one teacher to serve as Division Teacher of the Year is probably one of the hardest decisions we have to make every year,” said Executive Director of Instruction Stephanie Haskins. “We are very proud to call Michelle Freed our 2019 Staunton City Schools’ Teacher of the Year. She is an educational expert, collaborator, leader and innovator, and exceptional communicator.”

A teacher is selected for this top honor through a process that begins at the school level. Teachers at each school select and vote on candidates to hold the title at their respective schools. Then, a committee selects and names a division teacher of the year from the school-level teachers of the year.

A division teacher of the year must meet the following standards, as outlined by the state:

- be an expert in their field who guides students of all backgrounds and abilities to achieve excellence;
- collaborate with colleagues, students, and families to create a school culture of respect and success;
- deliberately connect the classroom and key stakeholders to foster a strong community at large;
- demonstrate leadership and innovation that embodies lifelong learning; and
- express himself or herself engagingly and articulately.

Shelburne Middle School Principal Jennifer Morris said: “Michelle is a dynamic teacher who loves kids and works to engage them every single day in learning math. She creates a learning environment that makes me smile every time I walk into her classroom.”

“Freed’s students are consistently engaged in high-level, fun mathematics tasks, where every student is eager to do math,” Haskins added. “Every minute of the classroom is maximized, as she provides support and continuous learning for all students. The positive relationships and learning that she fosters creates an equally positive impact on results, as her students exceed state assessment benchmarks.”

Freed also goes beyond her classroom doors to support a community of learners. At Shelburne, she serves as the Math department chair, team leader, and representative for the Staunton Teacher Advisory Council. She has also served as a mentor for student teachers and new teachers. Freed also works with students beyond the school day through her Active Builder’s Club, a club designed to engage students in hands-on, community-building projects. Some of their projects have included creating pumpkin catapults, escape room lock boxes, and outdoor garden benches.



In the community, Freed has volunteered at People Places, a therapeutic foster care agency, and has been involved with Relay for Life, a rally to support cancer research development and survivors. She is a continuous learner and is currently completing administrative coursework.

Freed will be transitioning to the role of Math Coach at Bessie Weller Elementary School for the upcoming school year, where she will have the opportunity to support and engage even more teachers and students.

###