



The Education Foundation of Martin County (EFMC) and the Martin County School District (MCSD) are proud to announce that Jensen Beach High School's Justin Pigott has been named the District's 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year.

The winner was announced during the Education Foundation of Martin County's Teacher of the Year Awards Celebration on Friday, November 9, at the Port St. Lucie Civic Center. The event is presented annually by Audi Stuart and Infiniti Stuart.

Mr. Pigott, an Advanced Placement Calculus teacher, has 16 total years of teaching experience, including nine in the Martin County School District. Beyond his classroom walls, Mr. Pigott serves as a student mentor for Indian River State College's "Take Stock in Children" scholarship program, regularly assists students with SAT and ACT test preparation before school and during his planning periods, and has served in the past as the sponsor of Jensen Beach High School's Math Honor Society. In addition, Mr. Pigott is a proud father and former foster parent. He was able to formally adopt his daughter in 2013 and happily serves as a "Girl Scout Dad", helping with cookie sales and camping trips.

Mr. Pigott's primary goal as an educator is to ensure his classroom is always a positive environment where each student feels accepted, heard and supported. "I strive to make each class feel like a functioning family," he shares. "Just as families do not all look the same; the relationships in each of my classes are distinctive. I allow elements such as time of day, individual personality, previous friendships, hobbies, sports and clubs to shape the landscape of my classes. Each class has a unique energy and vibe, like a family."

The "family vibe" Mr. Pigott fosters in his classroom begins prior to the first day of school each year, where he takes on the challenge of memorizing the names of the more than 90 students on his class roster. On the first day of school, students stare in awe as he walks around the room calling each of them by name. "My students know from the first day that I care about them and that this class is a wonderful learning environment," he shares. "The students trust in my teaching...and begin to believe they can achieve their own goals as well."

Superintendent Laurie J. Gaylord was proud to see Mr. Pigott take home this year's award. "Justin Pigott is an outstanding educator who recognizes that being a great teacher involves so much more than students' understanding of concepts and standards. He understands that children need someone to truly hear, see and inspire them. These intrinsic qualities are what define Mr. Pigott as a stellar educator, and I am honored to recognize him as the Martin County School District's 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year."

"The board members, staff and volunteers of the Education Foundation would like to sincerely congratulate Justin Pigott for winning this year's Martin County Teacher of the Year award," said Kelly Buist, president of the EFMC. "Our entire community is fortunate to have Justin and the other hardworking Martin County teachers like him who are dedicated to improving the lives of our young people. We will proudly follow Justin as he represents Martin County in the running for Florida's Teacher of the Year award."

"He [Justin] is the kind of teacher that truly makes a difference in the lives of students," said Principal Lori Vogel of Jensen Beach High School. "Mr. Pigott always has a positive outlook which overflows into his classroom and our school setting. His students thrive from his positive attitude, which improves their self-esteem and, in turn, improves their academic success."

Mr. Pigott will now represent the Martin County School District in the competition to become the Florida Department of Education's Teacher of the Year.

In addition to honoring the District's 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year; winners were named in the categories of Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers of the Year:

Elementary Teacher of the Year – sponsored by Publix Super Market Charities

Lori A. Davis, Pinewood Elementary School, Second Grade Teacher

An 18-year veteran educator, Mrs. Davis has served Martin County children for the past eight years. In addition to her role as a second-grade teacher, Mrs. Davis serves as Pinewood Elementary's Family Heritage Night coordinator and March of Dimes sponsor. She has served as the second-grade instructional team leader, PTA liaison for second grade, and school-based representative for the Parent Involvement Committee. In her spare time, she serves as the Roller Hockey Coach for Florida Gulf Coast University, and enjoys participating in the Martin County Rocks organization and the local chapter of March of Dimes.

Middle School Teacher of the Year – sponsored by Education Foundation of Martin County

Stephanie McCreary, Hidden Oaks Middle School, 6th Grade English Language Arts Teacher

Ms. McCreary has been a Florida educator for the past 22 years, spending the last 14 of those years serving children in Martin County. She has been named a Florida Department of Education “Teacher of Impact” and earned the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship for three consecutive years. Ms. McCreary is active in international causes, having sponsored the Hidden Oaks Walk-a-Thon for South Sudan for the past five years, and serving as a Honduras mission trip member with Treasure Coast Community Church in 2014. She also serves as a high school small group leader and Sunday School teacher at Treasure Coast Community Church.

High School Teacher of the Year – sponsored by Keiser University, Port Saint Lucie

Justin Pigott, Jensen Beach High School, AP Calculus Teacher

Winner of the 2018-2019 Teacher of the Year Award.