2026-2027

Congratulations to the Private and Public School Winners and the Finalists!



Skyla Holmes-Hood

Private Program TOTY

Angel's Paradise Higher Learning Academy

I am Skyla Holmes-Hood. I have been a Georgia's Pre-K teacher since 2014 and have called Angel's Paradise Higher Learning Academy home since 2019. I am a certified Georgia teacher with degrees in Early Childhood Education, Special Needs Preschool, and Elementary Mathematics.

For me, teaching Pre-K is about so much more than getting children ready for kindergarten. I want my children to feel loved, seen, safe, and excited to come to school. I believe learning should include conversation, laughter, play, hands-on experiences, family and community connections, and, of course, a little fun! I am truly honored to represent Georgia's Pre-K and excited to share my love for early learning while celebrating the amazing teachers, children, and families who make Pre-K so special.

Outside of the classroom, I am a military wife and proud mom of two, including a little one experiencing Pre-K this year right along with me. Being both a Pre-K teacher and a Pre-K mom has given me an even greater appreciation for the trust families place in us every day.



Leah Mays

Public School TOTY

Jefferson City Center for Early Learning

My name is Leah Mays. I live in Hoschton with my husband Bryan, and we are empty nesters after 31 years of marriage. We are blessed that both our daughter Kathryn and our son Hayden live close to home. I grew up in South Carolina, moved to Indiana during high school, and went on to graduate from Ball State University with a degree in Elementary Education (K-6) and an endorsement in Kindergarten.

Over the years, I have taught Kindergarten, First Grade, and preschool (2s and 3s). This is my fifth year teaching Pre-K at the Center for Early Learning with Jefferson City Schools. The littles truly make my heart sing! They are my people! I love that I get to sing, dance, read, and play every day. Watching the children discover something new or accomplish a skill for the first time, make new friends while learning to be away from their families, and curl up with a good book makes PreK my favorite!

Outside the classroom, I enjoy finding new teaching ideas, reading by the pool, trying new recipes, or taking a nap on our screened porch (especially on rainy days). Every fall, our family heads to the beach —my ultimate spot to relax and recharge.

2026-2027 Teacher of the Year Finalists

Kellie McCormick, Cedars Preschool at Hudson Bridge (Henry County)

Shawn Meyers, Sunrise Learning Academy (Gwinnett County)

Lacy Parish, Robinson Elementary School (Dawson County)

Marisol Rivas, West Green Elementary School (Coffee County)