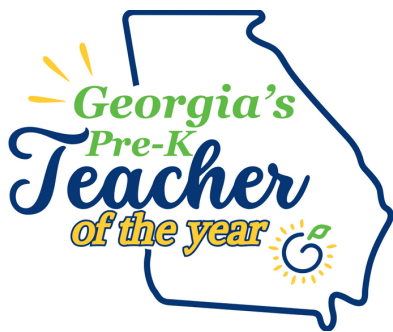




2025-2026

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



Autumn Hart
Private Program TOTY
Bundle of Joy Academy

Autumn has dedicated 18 years to the field of Early Care and Learning, beginning her journey as a director of a childcare center before discovering her true passion for teaching young children. She joined Georgia's Pre-K program in 2013 as an assistant teacher while pursuing her bachelor's degree in early care and education at Kennesaw State University, which she completed in 2020. Throughout her career, Autumn has built lasting relationships with her students and their families, often teaching siblings and cousins to extend her classroom community year after year. Autumn is married and has two adult children. Her son is currently studying music education at the University of Georgia, and her daughter works with children and families in a pediatric office. Teaching and caring for young children is truly a passion that runs in her family. In her free time, Autumn enjoys watching her son perform in music and theater, traveling with her husband, family, and friends, and spending time with her granddaughter.



Teresa Swaim
Public School TOTY
West Jackson Elementary

Teresa is a dedicated early childhood educator with over 18 years of experience in Georgia's Pre-K program. She began her career as a paraprofessional in 2006, where she discovered her passion for teaching young children. Inspired by her love for the classroom, Teresa pursued her degree in Early Childhood Education at Ashford University, graduating Summa Cum Laude. Since 2012, she has proudly served as a lead Pre-K teacher at West Jackson Elementary School, where she brings joy, energy, and creativity to her classroom each day. Teaching is more than a career for Teresa—it's her passion. She finds every day with her students rewarding and fun, creating an environment where children feel loved, inspired, and ready to learn. Beyond the classroom, Teresa has been married to her high school sweetheart, John, for 42 years. Together they have three children, six grandchildren, and a tiny Yorkie puppy named Honey. In her free time, she enjoys camping at her favorite getaway, Jekyll Island, and biking along its scenic paths.

2025-2026 Teacher of the Year Finalists



- Shawanna Butler, Castial Academy (Barrow County)
- Sheba Hill, Gems Learning Academy (Fulton County)
- Erica Mimbs, Bleckley County Primary School (Bleckley County)
- Katonia Williams, Sallas Mahone Elementary (Lowndes County)