

Laura Waldon

Principal of the Year

Laura Waldon has been an educator at the elementary level since 1989, where she has worked in both private Christian and public schools. After earning her Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Florida Atlantic University in 1989, she has taught second, third, fourth and fifth grades. In 1997, Ms. Waldon completed her Masters of Science in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. She and her family moved to the Cayman Islands for a year where she taught pre-kindergarten, fourth and fifth grades; and began her administrative career as an assistant principal. Ms. Waldon and her family relocated to Highlands County in 2002. She has been a teacher, reading coach and administrator at Woodlawn Elementary, a principal at Fred Wild Elementary, and has been serving as the principal at Memorial Elementary for the past two and one half years.

Ms. Waldon volunteered for her first leadership opportunity as a beginning teacher. She continued throughout her career to serve in leadership roles, such as team leader, inservice coordinator, and administrative liaison for discipline, and as an administrator. Ms. Waldon has served in leadership roles at the district level by serving on the Insurance Committee, the IPARC Committee, the Appeals Committee, has presented to aspiring administrators in the ASAP program, and has mentored several assistant principals and beginning principals in Highlands County. Most recently, Ms. Waldon and her staff have been recognized by Governor Scott and Commissioner Pam Stewart for raising the school grade from an “F” to a “B” in one school year.

Ms. Waldon holds certifications in Elementary Education 1-6, Educational Leadership K-12 and has earned her ESOL endorsement K-12. Ms. Waldon has presented the Charlotte Danielson rubric for observing and evaluating instructional personnel to Heartland superintendents. She has had the honor of serving on the Florida Commissioner’s Leadership Academy. In addition, Ms. Waldon has also been a member of a panel that presented to Heartland Consortium district representatives about the Commissioner’s Leadership Academy. Additionally, Ms. Waldon has been selected to serve a second year on the Commissioner’s Leadership Academy as a facilitator in training. She has also worked with various community groups. Ms. Waldon has been a guest speaker for the Sebring Women’s Club. She has piloted a backpack program which provides food for students who may not otherwise have food available over weekends and holidays. Furthermore, Ms. Waldon has collaborated with the Highlands County Sheriff’s Office on an essay contest for elementary students as well as a mock active shooter scenario training.

Ms. Waldon has been honored to work at three schools in Highlands County with staff members who have dedicated their lives to loving and serving children. Ms. Waldon believes that building relationships with students will encourage them to do their very best. She looks forward to serving Highlands County for many years to come by educating students, modeling a strong work ethic, and teaching students effective social and life skills so they will make a positive impact on their community when they are adults. Superintendent Wally Cox states, “She has one of the biggest hearts for kids and does everything in her power to make sure that they succeed. As Superintendent, I believe that leadership starts on the inside with a servant heart, then moves outward to serve others. Ms. Waldon is the epitome of what I believe is a servant leader.”