

## Tiffany Watkins Lynch



Tiffany Watkins Lynch, a ten-year veteran who teaches English at Park View High School in Mecklenburg County Public Schools, is the Region 8 Virginia Teacher of the

Year. Mrs. Lynch earned a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in English, at Peace College (now William Peace University). She received a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from Radford University.

As a young college undergraduate, Mrs. Lynch explained, she was not interested in a career in the field of education. She decided to pursue a degree in English because of her love of the subject, but she was unclear about the career she would seek. Her college did not offer an education program; therefore, she did not explore the option of teaching. Her professors were very passionate about literature and sharing it with their students. That was when the “first spark became apparent,” but she said, “she still did not take the leap.”

She graduated from Peace College (now William Peace University) and became employed, but the job was not what she wanted to do long term. She ultimately decided to apply to a graduate program to earn a master's degree and become licensed as an early/primary preK-3 teacher. After spending some time in a variety of early childhood classes, she decided elementary education was not the best fit for her. After marrying and moving to Roanoke, she transferred to the Radford University graduate program and decided to pursue a license in English. Her middle school and high school practicum experiences solidified her decision to teach English.

Mrs. Lynch and her husband had their first child and decided to move back to Mecklenburg County, where they were born and raised, to be closer to family. Mrs. Lynch applied for a teaching position and began her teaching career as an eighth-grade reading teacher. After five years at the middle school

and experiencing varied opportunities, such as serving as the lead teacher of Power Hour, establishing the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant Program, and coaching the ACE Quiz Bowl team, she assumed an English position at the high school level in the fall of 2012.

“The rewards of teaching keep me dedicated to the profession,” wrote Mrs. Lynch. “The students I teach on a daily basis are from a wide range of academic ability levels. I teach students who receive a great deal of support at home to students who may not have any support at all. The most rewarding experience in my profession is to see the joy and triumph on the faces of my students once they have accomplished a goal which will help them towards their future. I consider it one of the greatest honors to deliver good news to my students and for them to know that all of their hard work and dedication has paid off. The stress of teaching can be overwhelming, but the look of relief and happiness on the faces of my students when they have reached success after much trial and tribulation trumps any stress or frustration that may come with the profession.”

Community and school involvement is important to Mrs. Lynch. She is involved in her church, Olive Branch Baptist Church, working with the basketball program and serving as a Sunday School Leader. Mrs. Lynch assumed roles as the Senior Class Sponsor and Prom Coordinator at Park View High School.

Ms. W. W. Kidd, English Chairperson at Parkview High School, wrote, “There are multiple reasons for Ms. Lynch's great success at Park View High School. First and foremost, Ms. Lynch loves the students. She cares about them and demonstrates that empathy and sensitivity at all times. However, she also is firm with them. As a result, Ms. Lynch rarely, if ever, has any discipline problems. Students abide by the parameters she sets for her classroom and for general school behavior. They know that she says what she means and means what she says. Furthermore, Ms. Lynch is very knowledgeable about her subject

matter. Now a teacher who specializes in the eleventh-grade general English classes, the end-of-course SOL [Standards of Learning] class, Ms. Lynch is thorough, organized, comprehensive in her approach, and dedicated to basing her instruction on Virginia's Standards of Learning. As well, she pays great attention to individual students and their needs. She never ignores those in her classes and always provides additional help and guidance wherever it is needed. ...Ms. Lynch is exemplary. She has excellent ideas, which she expresses articulately, both orally and in writing. She does not hesitate to speak up when she thinks an issue needs to be addressed. Ms. Lynch – a professional educator at all levels – is no ordinary person. Her desire to be a team-player, her love of teaching, her ability to work with students, and her dedication to Park View High overall are reasons why she is one of the best teachers on the faculty...”

Director of Instruction, Joan Hite, stated, “...One thing that I have witnessed on countless occasions with Mrs. Lynch is her willingness to give up her planning period... to meet with students for remediation, makeup work, or just to offer ‘pep talks.’ ... She is extremely passionate about her work and it resonates in her voice as she talks about her successes with students and her heartache over others. We have stood and cried together and shouted for joy at other times. It is just her nature to take it all very personally, and she acknowledges that sense of responsibility that rests on her shoulders. Mrs. Lynch would not have it any other way. ...I am extremely proud of Mrs. Lynch and all that she represents as an educator.”