

2006 HONOREE

Susan R. Bradburn

West Marion Elementary School, Marion, NC
Intermediate Elementary Education • 3rd Grade



Years Teaching: 25

Average Class Size: 22

Classes Taught Per Day: N/A

School's % of ESL Students: 6%

School Type: Public, Rural

Type of Class: Self-contained

“My goals as a teacher are pretty simple. First and foremost, I want to turn my students onto learning. I have found that once students are motivated, you no longer have to ‘teach,’ rather you guide. I want to make a difference in my students’ lives. I want to go beyond just teaching the necessary units of study for that particular grade level, and create a desire to learn and instill the desire to do something with that knowledge. Is this not the wish of all teachers? It has taken me years of trial and error, but in the last several years I think I have discovered a way to make this wish come true. Bringing the outside world into the classroom through focused teaching on the environment, a progression into the world of research, and finally, a personal involvement with the natural world, has created a true love of learning, not fragmented bits of knowledge with no connection to the real world. So now, learning comes naturally. Given a desire to learn and a strong knowledge base to work from, students will feel as if they can accomplish anything – and they can.”

“I have been teaching long enough to have been through various methods of ‘accountability’ and know that the present form will probably change in the years to come. The area where I



want to be held accountable, which will not change, is with my students. The important question should be, ‘Do my students enjoy learning?’ Of course, you have to meet the state’s criteria, that is very important, but one should also ask, ‘Where are the children in the learning process?’”

“Mrs. Bradburn thinks as an individual and that’s why I like her so much. She doesn’t do the same thing every day because that gets very boring. I was always excited to go to her class because I never knew exactly what the day might hold, but I always knew that it would be interesting and fun. I can say with no doubt that she is the best teacher I ever had and she is still a very good friend to me.”

– former student

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS:

USA Today First Teacher Team (1999) • Disney Learning Partnership Grant, Co-writer and Lead Teacher (1999) • Milken Award (1998) • Toyota Tapestry (1998) • Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (1997) • Christa McAuliffe Fellowship (1995) • First ‘Green Hero’ - NC Museum Natural Sciences (1995) • First Honor Roll Teacher - National Association of Science Teachers (1992) • Teacher of Excellence - Belize Grant (1991) • Formed first partnership in the state with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences creating in-school museum, named The West Marion Student Museum of Natural Sciences