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NEWS RELEASE

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Fort Walton Beach High School Principal Lindsey Smith Named 2026 Bill Montford Administrator of the Year

The Okaloosa County School District is proud to announce that Fort Walton Beach High School Principal Lindsey Smith has been selected as the 2026 Bill Montford Administrator of the Year, an honor presented by the Challenger Learning Center of Tallahassee and the Florida Association of School Administrators (FASA). Established in 2023, the Bill Montford Award recognizes exceptional school leaders who demonstrate a strong commitment to inspiring students and teachers, particularly through STEM education. The Challenger Learning Center, operated in partnership with the FSU and FAMU Colleges of Engineering, engages students from kindergarten through high school in high-quality, hands-on STEM programming across Florida.

As part of this recognition, Principal Smith has been invited to select a class from Fort Walton Beach High School to visit the Challenger Learning Center and participate in one of its immersive, interactive STEM labs. Smith was joined at the award event by Fort Walton Beach High School science and math department chairs, Dr. Tavia Marez and Mrs. Jackie Sheffield. Principal Smith shared her gratitude and highlighted the importance of STEM education: “STEM education and engagement are important not only to ensure we keep up with the ever-changing advancements in technology and engineering as a community, but, now more than ever, STEM education is essential to students' understanding of the world around them. I am proud of our STEM and CTE programming at Fort Walton Beach High School and the incredible content experts who pour into our students every day.”

Superintendent Marcus Chambers praised Smith’s leadership and stated, “Principal Smith is a tremendous leader whose passion for student achievement is evident in everything she does. Her commitment to expanding STEM opportunities and empowering both students and staff is exceptional. This recognition is incredibly well-deserved, and we are proud to have her representing Okaloosa County at the state level.”

For more information about the Challenger Learning Center, please visit <https://www.challengertlh.com/>.



(Principal Lindsey Smith)

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