

Carol Baird

John Hopkins Elementary, Jackson, MS
Early Childhood Elementary Education
1st Grade



2005 Honorees



“Children are more motivated to learn when they seek answers to questions of interest to them. As they apply their learning to something they care about, they are more likely to

remember what they have learned. Using curriculum with a balanced approach to literacy and teaching phonics along with language skills within the content, makes more sense to children than being taught skills out of context. Therefore, at the beginning of the school year, my students brainstorm topics of interest to them. I use this list to develop themes that correlate with our state and district competencies. As the year progresses, children revise the list, adding and deleting topics as appropriate. Since 90% of our students are from low socioeconomic backgrounds and have been exposed to fewer life experiences, I maintain a classroom that has a print-rich environment and full of hands-on activities. For my students to become fluent readers, vocabulary development is an important goal. I utilize a word wall, and later in the year personal dictionaries, to teach high-frequency words and other sight words. My students post interesting content-related words on the word wall. In addition they dramatize words, make word posters, word maps, word sorts, word chains and mobiles. Giving my students the opportunity and encouraging them to read is the most important way I can promote vocabulary... Whether my students are reading to each other, a group of Kindergarten students, other adults at our school, or parents, they are actively engaged in meaningful, language-rich tasks.” – *Carol Baird*

“Mrs. Baird’s classroom and lessons differ from other teachers. Her classroom environment excites everyone who enters, both children and adults alike. It is filled with live insects and animals for scientific observations and inquiries. Her first grade students have observed the life cycle of butterflies, built habitats for animals, germinated seeds, and observed plant development... She is well-known across our large inner-city school district for teaching all disciplines through science and has given numerous workshops and mini-lessons for her colleagues on using student-led inquiry to develop higher order thinking skills.”

– *Ollie Gentry, principal, John Hopkins Elementary School*



Other Highlights:

Presidential Awardee for Excellence in Science Teaching (2004)

Project NEED Teacher of the Year (2005)

MSTA, Teacher of the Year (2004-05)

Education Trust Fund Grants, Total of 17 grants (1994-2003)

Parents for Public Schools, Outstanding Educator (2002)

Lysol/NSTA Award Winner (2003)

NEED Project Scrapbook, Finalist, Primary Level School of the Year (2005)

National Board Certified Teacher (2001)

Member, Mississippi Science Teachers Association (MSTA)

Member, National Science Teachers Association

Member, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Member, International Reading Association

Years Teaching: 35

Average Class Size: 20

Classes Taught Per Day: n/a

School’s Percent of ESL Students: 0

School Type: Public, Medium-Small City

Type of Class: Self-contained