



MEDIA RELEASE

November 8, 2021

919 N Broad Street • Brooksville, FL 34601

## District Announces Leaders of the Year for 2022

**Brooksville** - Superintendent John Stratton, School Board members and executive leaders gathered early this morning to conduct two surprise school visits. Bringing balloons, confetti and messages of congratulations, the group's mission was to make a little noise and announce the school district's 2022 Principal of the Year and Assistant Principal of the Year. Hernando High School Principal, Leechele Booker was surprised at finding out that she had been named Principal of the Year, which was announced at a Veterans Day program outside the school. And Nature Coast Technical Assistant Principal, Josandra Maner, was brought to tears as she was named Assistant Principal of the Year.

"I am so overwhelmed," Ms. Booker said at the announcement," as students, staff and visitors cheered. "I love my students, I love my faculty and staff. ...Thank you for allowing me to serve you every day!"

Before she began her tenure as principal of Hernando High in 2012, Ms. Booker was principal, assistant principal and a teacher at D.S. Parrott Middle. Throughout her 26-year career with the school district, she has earned a reputation as a steadfast champion for her students and an encouraging leader for her staff. There are few students she can't name and all students are on her graduation radar. Ms. Booker is both compassionate and patient in support of her colleagues, which led her to being the choice as Lead Principal for the district.

"Leechele Booker is a principal who is humble in her leadership and fierce in her dedication to students and staff. Along with being an exemplary leader who sets high academic expectations, she believes in promoting strong school pride by creating deep connections to the community. Leechele embodies the best qualities of respected school leaders," Superintendent John Stratton said.

At Nature Coast Tech, Josandra Maner turned away and wept as her announcement was made. "I am extremely humbled and thankful," she said. "I don't do this for recognition. I just love what I do. I work with a great team."



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Ms. Maner has been with the school district since 2005 when she began as a substitute teacher. It did not take long before she was in charge of her own English Language Arts classroom at D.S. Parrott Middle. By 2015, Maner began her first leadership assignment at Powell Middle School as assistant principal. As a school leader, Ms. Maner is deliberate in her work with students, making it her priority to know each of them personally. Creating strong connections with students, families and the community is one of her many strengths.

Nature Coast Principal Toni-Ann Noyes was not surprised at Ms. Maner's win. "Josandra does what she does naturally, and we are so blessed to have her. When I was out (for an extended period of time), she kept the shark tank afloat, and made sure no 'fish' stopped swimming. She kept everyone afloat," Noyes said.

"Ms. Maner looks at challenges as the next opportunity to improve. She does not get frustrated. Instead, she brings her calm demeanor, her creativity and her ability to work with her staff and colleagues to create new and better systems. She is an outstanding school leader," Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Gina Michalicka said.

Ms. Booker will represent Hernando for the state level 2022 Principal Achievement Award for Outstanding Leadership. Ms. Maner will represent the school district for the Outstanding Assistant Principal Achievement Award nomination.