

Anna Crooke:
2010 North Carolina Middle School Association Region 7 Teacher of the Year

Anna Crooke has been a math teacher in Caldwell County for thirteen years, serving the last ten years as a critical part of the William Lenoir Middle School faculty. She is a leader in her school and district because she is committed to middle school students and to promoting the importance of middle school concepts and practices as an integral part of Caldwell County students' education. Anna is well versed in middle grades education and holds both undergraduate and graduate degrees in middle grades education. She has also achieved National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification in Early Adolescent Mathematics. She has worked with her colleagues at William Lenoir Middle School to plan and implement an effective advisory program for the purpose of making the school more developmentally responsive to the needs of young adolescents.

In the classroom, Mrs. Crooke is a very effective teacher. She strives to share her love of math with her students and to make math meaningful to them. Mrs. Crooke is willing to try innovative ideas with her students to help them construct meaning. She has designed and adapted activities and projects to give her students a deeper understanding of the math curriculum and to help them see how math applies in a real-world context. She collaborates frequently with other teachers in the school, including her teammates, the EC teacher assigned to

her grade level, and the AIG teacher to make her classes meet all students' needs. She incorporates hands-on activities, song and dance, games, and cooperative learning into her teaching. Every year she has her students find applications of math in the real world by having them investigate a career and find the uses of math in their field of interest.

Mrs. Crooke serves as teacher-leader in her school in a variety of roles. She is currently the eighth grade chairperson. As such, she leads grade level meetings, disseminates pertinent information, serves as liaison with the school administration, and coordinates the eighth grade trip to Washington, DC. Mrs. Crooke also serves as our school representative to the countywide Algebra I council. She has also served as Math Department chair for our school and as a school representative to multiple district-level councils and committees.

Mrs. Crooke works closely with Appalachian State University (ASU) as a part of their Middle Grades Advisory Council. She also serves as William Lenoir Middle School's site coordinator and acts as a liaison to ASU in their Public School Partnership. She is in charge of placing ASU interns and student teachers in her school and with communicating with ASU faculty about experiences and expectations for interns.

Mrs. Crooke is always willing to attend or lead staff development. She has presented at the state level conferences or organizations such as the North Carolina Council of Mathematics Teachers and the North Carolina Middle School Association. She has also presented at several district-level staff development meetings and is eager to share her ideas with other teachers. She has also worked in conjunction with teachers across the district to develop mathematics pacing guides and lesson plans.

William Lenoir Middle School students not only respect Mrs. Crooke but also feel a strong connection with her because she maintains excellent student-teacher rapport. She recognizes that one of the most important aspects of being a middle grades teacher is valuing students' experiences and

opinions. Mrs. Crooke works to establish meaningful relationships with students in her classroom, in the Beta Club (for which she is the sponsor), and through a community-tutoring program. She also takes time to get to know students' parents and other family members. She maintains open lines of communication with students and their families. She often works with eighth graders and Beta Club members in service projects and fundraisers to better our school and community.

Mrs. Crooke is an excellent example of an outstanding middle level teacher. Her commitment to students and the teaching profession make her a role model for others and a very deserving recipient of the North Carolina Middle School Association Region 7 Teacher of the Year Award.

Information in this feature was provided by Jamie Lewis (ASU B.S., Middle Grades Education, 1992; M.A., Middle Grades Education, 2006), Rachel Main (ASU M.A., Middle Grades Education, 2006), and Meghan Falzone (ASU B.S., Middle Grades Education, 2009), William Lenoir Middle School Colleagues who nominated Ms. Anna Crooke (ASU M.A., Middle Grades Education, 2002) for this award.