

# **Dodds Named 2023 ISBE Early Childhood Teacher of the Year**

by Chris Mitchell  
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GRANITE CITY – Prather Early Childhood Coordinator Marci Dodds has been named the 2023 Early Childhood Teacher of the Year by The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), as announced Thursday by ISBE.



Dodds was recognized Thursday with an assembly at Prather, and ISBE will celebrate the awardees at a banquet on April 29.

Out of almost 500 applicants, Dodds was selected for this honor because of her commitment to the students and staff at Prather. You can read more about Dodds and the entire cohort of 2023 Teachers of the Year on ISBE's program page.

"I am grateful to be a part of a child's first experience with school. Being part of the team can show them that this is a safe place where they can learn new skills and meet new friends," said Dodds. "Being able to assist parents with the transition to their child being at school. It's just amazing to be able to be a part of so many firsts for families."

Dodds is in her 18th year in the Granite City Community Unit School District #9, and her eighth year as the Prather PreK Coordinator. She also spent 10 years as an Early Childhood Special Education at Coolidge, Lake and Prather.

ISBE's annual Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Awards celebrate incredible classroom teachers, administrators, teams, volunteers, and school support personnel who have made lasting impacts on the students, families, and fellow educators in their school communities. See a full list of awardees from all seven professional categories.

"Ms. Dodds serves as the face and heart of Granite City's Early Childhood program. She is driven by supporting families and creating the best early learning experiences possible for ALL students," said Prather Principal Genie Bratten. "Marci has served as a teacher leader in support of inclusionary practices and seeking innovative professional development opportunities for GCSD9's Early Childhood Program."

ISBE received a record number of nominations and applications for the 2023 Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Awards. A committee of administrators, teachers, educational service personnel, student support personnel, and past Illinois Teachers of the Year selected this year's awardees. The Illinois state superintendent of education will select the 2023 Illinois Teacher of the Year from the finalists later this spring. The Illinois Teacher of the Year will represent Illinois in the Council of Chief State School Officers' National Teacher of the Year Program.

"The district is so incredibly proud of Ms. Dodds. I have often witnessed her passion and dedication for our students and staff, and her energy and positivity are contagious to everyone around her," GCSD9 Superintendent Stephanie M. Cann said.

Please visit the ISBE website for photos and bios of the 2023 Illinois Teacher of the Year finalists along with more information about the awards.