



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kathryn Harvey

[kathryn@neuesouth.com](mailto:kathryn@neuesouth.com)

646 234 0734

[Media Files](#)

## Spartanburg Science Center announces 2024 Spartanburg County STEM Educator of the Year, Awards \$20,000 to seven local teachers

**Spartanburg, SC** - Yesterday evening the Spartanburg Science Center honored seven public school educators who were district finalists for the 2024 [STEM Educator of the Year Awards](#) celebrating the creativity, perseverance, and fortitude of our K-12 public school educators in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

Educators from each school district were awarded a check for \$2,500 and professional development opportunities from the Center, and Spartanburg County School District Three's own **Melanie Painter**, a STEAM Coordinator at Broome High School was awarded the countywide winner receiving an additional \$2,500.

*"As a math teacher, I want to see an increase in professional development statewide that gives teachers the tools they need to effectively teach their content in parallel with the other STEM fields," Melanie said. "Students need to see the connection and the real-world relevance. Furthermore, this needs to be a K-12 initiative, not just secondary education. I want teachers to have the confidence and tools they need to successfully design curriculum that is relevant to the real-world and shows the beautiful connections between STEM on a systematic level."*

Educators were nominated by peers, administrators, students and community members this past Spring, and a blind judging process took place over the summer with representatives from Wofford, VCOM, and Park National Bank.

*"Once again, this year, we are honored to celebrate a STEM Educator from all seven school districts in Spartanburg County," said Executive Director, Mary Levens. "It takes a special educator that is not only well qualified in one, two, three or all four areas, but possesses the ability to transfer that knowledge and excite our youth, our future."*

### The STEM Educator of the Year Finalists include:

- D1—Sundra Proctor-Smith**, Chapman High School, Special Education- Inclusion Math Teacher
- D2—Jolene McCall**, Boiling Springs Middle School, STEM Teacher (6-8th grade)
- D3—Melanie Painter**, Broome High School, STEAM Coordinator
- D4—Laura Matz**, Woodruff High School, Chemistry & Environmental Science Teacher
- D5—Peyton Proffit**, Byrnes High School, PLTW Engineering Teacher
- D6—Karen Crossley**, Dorman HS Freshman Campus, STEM & science teacher & DHS STEM Coordinator
- D7—Endra Biggerstaff**, Spartanburg High School, Special Education Teacher





In addition to celebrating educators during the event, the Science Center honored their 2024 Corporate Partner of the Year, Crown Cork & Seal; 2024 Community Partner of the Year, PetCo; 2024 Educational Partner of the Year, Wofford College; and the 2024 John F. Green Award for Student Excellence in STEM to Ellie Mier.

##

About the Spartanburg Science Center: The John F. Green Spartanburg Science Center has remained the premier STEM educational resource for educators, parents and students in Spartanburg County for over 45 years. We excite and engage students in STEM exploration, and envision a community of problem solvers, ignited by a spark for STEM. Learn more at [spartanburg science center.org](https://spartanburgsciencecenter.org).