Seneca High again selected as finalist for Palmetto's Finest

BY GREG OLIVER
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SENECA — Last spring, nearly 50 Seneca High School faculty, staff, students and district office representatives from the School District of Oconee County watched a webcast of the Palmetto's Finest award presentation in the hopes of being selected as the top high school in the state.

Although that hope failed to materialize, the school and its supporters will have another viewing opportunity this year. Seneca officials recently learned the school has been selected as a finalist for the 2017 award, with the announcement made at Tuesday night's meeting of the Oconee County School Board.

"To be a Palmetto's Finest finalist for the second consecutive year is a testament to our outstanding students, as well as our dedicated faculty, staff and community," Seneca principal Cliff Roberts said. "This award is not just about Seneca High, it is a reflection of the entire One Seneca family."

Last year, the school received its finalist award from Palmetto's Finest committee member Kevin Black. However, the top high school award went to St. James High School in Murrells Inlet.

The Palmetto's Finest awards are presented annually to the top two elementary and one middle and high school in the state. Presented by the South Carolina Association of School Administrators, the awards are given to schools that offer the best in innovative, effective educational programs. In its 38th year, the Palmetto's Finest Award is considered the most coveted and respected of awards among South Carolina educators.

To be eligible to apply, the principal must be a member of SCASA and have been principal in the applicant school for the entire previous two years. The school's state accreditation must be in good standing, and winning principals must be able to serve on the Palmetto's Finest selection committee for future awards.

Schools that are selected as finalists receive statewide recognition and a plaque, and the winners also receive a "Palmetto's Finest School" banner, bumper stickers for all their staff members and a "Palmetto's Finest" lapel pin for the principal. James M. Brown Elementary and Ravenel Elementary are the most recent Oconee County schools to receive the award, while Clemson Elementary has been among the finalists from the Pickens County schools.

The winning schools will be officially announced March 21.