Christopher Smith ’06, band director at Chesnee Middle School and assistant director at Chesnee High School, has been named the 2013-14 Spartanburg School District 2 Teacher of the Year.

Smith, initially selected as Chesnee Middle School’s Teacher of the Year, was selected by a committee from a group of 15 school teachers of the year to receive the district honor and was recently recognized during a special district ceremony.

Spartanburg District 2 administrators described Smith as a model teacher who goes far beyond the call of duty. “Chris is extremely motivated to serve the students, faculty, school, and community as a role model, mentor, confidant and friend,” said Dale R. Campbell, principal of Chesnee Middle School. “He has excellent rapport with his students and their parents. As a band teacher and band director, he is truly an instructional leader.”

Since joining the Chesnee faculty during the 2008-09 school year, the middle school band program has grown from an enrollment of 49 students to 87 total members and the middle school band now performs regularly at the Carowinds Festival of Music and the SCBDA Junior Concert Festival, receiving excellent and superior ratings. Students from the middle school band have been chosen as members for the South Carolina Region and All-State Bands and many have participated in SCBDA Solo and Ensemble events. In 2012, the Chesnee Marching Band was named 2A Upper State Champions and State Silver Medalists by the South Carolina Band Directors Association.

Smith graduated from Furman University magna cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in music education. While at Furman, he was an active trombonist performing in the Paladin Regiment Marching Band, the Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Symphony Orchestra, the Jazz Ensemble and various chamber groups. He was a two-time participant in the Sewanee Summer Music Festival and received a Furman Advantage fellowship in 2004 for performance abroad in Rome, Italy. Smith was named the 2005-2006 Furman Presser Scholar and was chosen as a 2004 Honors Recital performer.

Smith continued his education at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, where he received his master’s degree in trombone performance in 2008. He served as the principal trombone with the Indiana University Wind Ensemble as well as trombonist with the New Music Ensemble, the Concert and Festival Orchestras and the Bloomington Camerata Orchestra. He was also a member of the IU trombone choir and Food4Thought trombone quartet.

Smith’s primary trombone teachers have been Denise Hembree, Mark Britt, Carle Lenthe, and Peter Ellefson. He has also received conducting instruction from Leslie W. Hicken, Jay Bocook, Patrick Casey, and Scott Weiss. He is a member of Phi Mu Alpha, SCBDA, Phi Beta Kappa and NAFME.

He maintains an active local studio of middle and high school trombonists and performs with the Spartanburg Philharmonic and the Hendersonville Symphonies. He currently resides in Boiling Springs with his wife, Leiloni, and son, Holden.