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## SOUTHERN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE



Photo caption: Pictured above is SSCC Assistant Professor of Education, Nicole Sheppard.

### **Nicole Sheppard Named 2026 Teacher Educator of the Year for Southwest Ohio**

The Southwest Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children (SWOAEYC) is proud to announce that Nicole Sheppard, Assistant Professor of Education at Southern State Community College, has been selected as the 2026 Teacher Educator of the Year, recognizing her outstanding contributions to early childhood education and her dedication to serving young children and families across the region.

Sheppard was nominated by a peer who deeply respects her commitment, leadership, and impact in the field of early childhood education. A selection committee composed of early childhood education leaders from several highly regarded organizations throughout Southwest Ohio carefully reviewed nominations and unanimously chose Sheppard for this prestigious honor.

As Southern State's Assistant Professor of Education and Division Coordinator for Art, Humanities, and Education, Sheppard exemplifies excellence through her dynamic leadership in Early Childhood Education. She also serves as Program Director and has streamlined multiple teacher education pathways for students and established 3+1 partnerships, enhancing transfer opportunities and affordability.

According to Dr. Erika Goodwin, Southern State's Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Sheppard consistently demonstrates a profound commitment to higher education. "Nicole brings an extraordinary level of passion, expertise, and care to the preparation of future educators," Goodwin said.

"This recognition speaks to the meaningful connections she builds with students, her commitment to innovative and inclusive teaching practices, and the lasting influence she has on the profession. Her work extends far beyond the classroom – shaping confident, capable teachers who go on to make a difference in their own communities," Goodwin added.

Southern State is proud to celebrate this well-deserved honor with Sheppard and the example she has set for excellence in educator preparation, and is fortunate to have such a dedicated leader shaping the next generation of teachers.

To learn more about Southern State's Education Program, academic pathways, and transfer opportunities please visit <https://www.sccc.edu/academics/programs/education.shtml>.

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