This year the NC SIP Project Director’s Award was presented to Dr. Rebecca Felton. She has been involved with the work of NC SIP since it’s very inception and throughout the past 20 years has provided exceptional service to the project and to students with disabilities in North Carolina. Her deep understanding and leadership supporting the goals of our North Carolina State Improvement Project has been evidenced by modeling and encouraging best practices, promoting and supporting the use of K-12 education evidence-based practices, and advancing the critical elements to build capacity and sustainability throughout NC.

Dr. Felton has a distinguished record with over 40 years of conducting valid educational research in the field of literacy for students with disabilities and adult learners. She has worked with a combination of private, federal and state institutions as well as local education agencies. Her contributions to our field include juried journal articles in at least a dozen publications. Her research for the Bowman Gray Learning Disabilities Project has been an important component of her life-long work to help those who struggle to learn to read. She is a co-author of “Basic Facts About Assessment of Dyslexia, Testing for Teaching” published by the International Dyslexia Association.

As a result of her effort, Dr. Felton is a significant influencer in the field of reading science providing visionary leadership for those involved with our state’s long-term project. Her knowledge of the research and her experience provided both the catalyst for the creation of a strong curriculum, and support for the most current version of *Reading Research to Classroom Pratice* and implementation of initiatives. She has helped us to scale this initiative through the use of evidence-based practices delivered with fidelity. Her effective communication with teams and groups across the state made her a torch-bearer and promoter of the NC SIP goals and objectives. Through her guidance NC SIP included a process for data driven decision making to improve instruction for students.

Dr. Crawford noted in her remarks at the Spring Network Conference that it was “impossible to sufficiently recognize the support, magnitude of influence and leadership over the years since 2001 – the full life of the NC SIP grant” that Dr. Felton has demonstrated. Speaking for those of us on the Program Improvement and Professional Development Team, both our professional and personal lives have been enriched by working with her and we are very grateful for all of her many contributions to this important work.