

TEACHER RECOGNITION

April 29, 2015



2015 TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS BANQUET

- 5:00 p.m. Registration
- 5:30 p.m. Welcome
Paul Drange, Director of Regional Programs
- 5:40 p.m. Dinner
- 6:15 p.m. Keynote Speaker
Willow Sweeney, Top 20 Training
- 7:00 p.m. Awards
Rynell Schock, Leader of Education Services;
Paul Drange, Director of Regional Programs; and
Judy Walker, Horace Mann Insurance
- 7:45 p.m. Closing Remarks
Rynell Schock, Leader of Education Services; and
Dr. Chad Coauette, PhD, Executive Director

WHO WE ARE



“Thank you so much for the wonderful honor and great night. I will remember it always!”

—2014 Attendee

WHO IS NJPA?

At its core, National Joint Powers Alliance® (NJPA) is a member-driven service cooperative with a membership now exceeding 50,000. NJPA offers a multitude of programs, contracted products, equipment and service opportunities to education, government and other non-profit entities. Locally in Minnesota, NJPA offers regional programs for counties, cities and schools that comprise an area known as “Region 5.” We successfully aid in the planning, development and provision of services in a vast array of fields, including student academic programs, technology services, curriculum solutions, staffing, health & safety, risk management and more. At NJPA, our mission is to build valued relationships, deliver innovative solutions with integrity and exceed the expectations of our members.

WHAT IS NJPA EDUCATION SOLUTIONS?

Education Solutions delivers high quality services and professional development for regional schools. The dedicated staff work towards developing characteristics of effective schools, including supporting schools with developing collaborative professional cultures, effective data, assessment and curriculum practices, highly effective instruction, and family engagement/community partnerships.

In addition, Education Solutions seeks to equip systems with strong vision, leadership, and organization. NJPA is committed to building the capacity of leaders and learners through the implementation of professional learning to increase principal and teacher effectiveness, grounded in research-based practices of the profession and applied to daily teaching for results in student learning.



Teachers of Excellence Awards Banquet

“Thank you for an evening to celebrate hard work and dedication. I appreciate the thought and effort that went into planning this event and making the time both enjoyable and meaningful.”

—2014 Attendee

NJPA Education Solutions recognizes the **profound impact** of teachers and wants to **celebrate** this work. We are honored to support this Teachers of Excellence Awards Program. Nomination applications were sent to all schools in the **Region 5** area. Nominators were asked to identify a teacher or teacher team who has shown **leadership** and **innovation** in an area of expertise which has led to student learning. Nominees are honored and celebrated at tonight's banquet.

In addition, nominees were invited to apply for NJPA's **Academy for Teachers of Excellence**. Members of the Academy become a part of Education Solutions' training staff as contributing consultants. They lend their **expertise** to their peers across the region as presenters for professional development sessions.



Horace Mann
Educated Financial Solutions

This year sponsored in part by:

2015 WINNERS



JEAN TOBIN

Bertha-Hewitt School | Nominated By: Mary Merchant

Jean demonstrates solid instructional skills on a daily basis. She strives to improve student achievement especially in the areas of reading and mathematics. Jean consistently demonstrates solid planning skills and focuses on data to drive instructions. Whether students are working individually or in groups, lessons include a variety of motivating activities that provide opportunities for students to become excellent learners. She has been a positive role model for her students by word and example.



KARI CARLSRUD, ANN MARIE BERTRAM, VICKI POLICH

Cuyuna Range Elementary | Nominated By: Kurt Becker

These three teachers have gone the extra mile in ensuring that their students develop the literacy skills necessary to be successful in school and in life. All three continue to implement new and proven strategies to differentiate their instruction in order to meet the needs of their students. These teachers are tenacious in ensuring that all students grow. The excitement shown in their teaching has transferred into a great deal of excitement in the learning, leading to a greater love for reading and higher test scores.



LISA RYDBERG

Crosby-Ironton High School | Nominated By: Jim Christensen

Lisa took on a new role this year as the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator for Crosby-Ironton School District. In this role, she has taken on a number of leadership activities including leading the district's Data Leadership Team and guiding the district's "content teams". She has also worked with students by teaching bullying prevention lessons in K-3, and going over test results with secondary students. In the words of a colleague, she "has been a tremendous help with kindergarten PLC's, testing and report cards this year. She has taken the time to understand the needs of K students and teachers (a bit different than 1-6) and is an efficient communicator."

**KAYLA BELL****Eagle Valley School** | Nominated By: Barry Johnson

Ever since Kayla started working with the school she has made a significant impact on staff and students. She has led the way in the successful implementation of an effective PBIS program for the district. Kayla has taken the initiative to acquire numerous grants outside of her realm of responsibilities as a teacher. She has been instrumental in implementing an inclusion model serving the needs of Special Education and students at risk. Kayla has served as a new teacher mentor and a member of the Focus Team and Leadership Team. In addition, she has developed a project-based middle school curriculum and reignited the Gifted and Talented program.

**HEIDI LARSEN, BILL MUSHEL, RENEE TABATT, LYN GWOST, STEVE WILGER, NANCY KAPSNER, TONY KULA, SHEILA ROMAN, ANN GRAEVE, TARA SCHLAGEL, DOUG PLOOF****Little Falls Community High School** | Nominated By: Mike Olson

These teachers have worked hard to make the Excel program in their school a success. The work of the team has assisted students in credit recovery, study skills, and goal achievement, developing a habit of "Excellence" in their students. The program has more than doubled since it began in 2013 and these at-risk students have been able to find success. In the words of a student, "This program was so helpful to me. I was able to get back on track for graduation. The teachers didn't act like just teachers, they acted like they truly cared and gave me the support I needed to be successful, sometimes lending a friendly ear and other times kicking my butt."

2015 WINNERS



BOB STARK, RACHAEL COTA, JEFF OPELIA, SUSAN BENJAMIN, CHAD KADDATZ

Little Falls Community Middle School | Nominated By: Wade Mathers

These science teachers consistently provided above the line opportunities for their students. They develop student-centered units and activities, which engage students in learning throughout the year. They have highly engaging classrooms due to their use of technology and investigative or inquiry learning, and the way they promote a growth mindset with their students. Within their PLC they have focused on identifying critical content along with implementing tools and strategies for students to monitor their own learning. The teachers are true team players and understand that working together for the benefit of students is much more powerful and effective than working in isolation.



JILL TOMALA

Little Falls Dr. S.G. Knight Elementary School | Nominated By: Larry Edgerton

Jill is a hard-working individual who does an exemplary job bringing out the best in her students. Students respond to her in a positive manner because of her ability to establish positive relationships with each individual. She does a great job delivering instruction to her students to meet their individual needs and implements the use of technology on a daily basis. She has put a lot of effort into designing lessons to enhance her kindergarten program. Jill is able to work on and develop a variety of skills with her class in a given class period. She has always been willing to do whatever it takes for what is best for her students.

The National Joint Powers Alliance Mission is to *build valued relationships, deliver innovative solutions with integrity, and exceed the expectations* of our members.

Here to *serve* highly effective schools! Here to *provide* quality programs!



CAROL LARSON, DEB LENTNER, KATIE BOSER

Little Falls Lincoln Elementary School | Nominated By: Larry Edgerton

This group exemplifies the meaning of team. They meet on a regular basis above and beyond the normal school day to plan lessons and activities. They use data to guide their instruction during their Daily 5 and Math blocks of time. The impact on their students is reflected by the academic gains being made indicated in our data collection. Not only do they have an impact on students academically, but also socially and emotionally. They truly do what is best for students and connect with each student as an individual.



CHERYL OVERN, JEANYNE GOMEZ, KENT GOMEZ, LAURA DECHAIINE, COLLEEN JOHNSON

Little Falls Lindbergh Elementary School | Nominated By: Jill Griffith-McRaith

This group of teachers are members of the SAT (student assistance team). The team developed a systematic approach to identify the target behaviors/skills, match research-based interventions with the needs, collect and monitor the data. They are also directly supporting students by delivering many of the interventions. The team volunteers their time and talents to support students and their needs. The team believes that "it takes a village" and they work every day to provide students with opportunities to learn and grow. The work of SAT has created a culture of support for teachers and students. Through the SAT process, Lindbergh has been able to reduce the number of students referred to Special Education, and their interventions have been successful in helping students gain both academic and behavioral skills.



CHRISTINE LAKE, AMY MALIKOWSKI, ADELE ESALA, DEB MADSEN, SHELLY HAMBLIN
Menahga Elementary School | Nominated By: Ariana Wright

This team has worked together to raise the achievement of sixth grade students in the area of literacy. As classroom teachers, Mrs. Lake and Mrs. Esala have implemented learning goals and performance scales to clarify the level of rigor and expectation for students. They have also integrated a literature circle structure for fiction and nonfiction texts. Mrs. Madsen has provided support for the class by implementing an EIR intervention. In addition, Mrs. Hamblin and Mrs. Malikowski support students with strategy review focused on their individual needs based on assessments. The work of this team has resulted in student growth for both struggling and high achieving students.



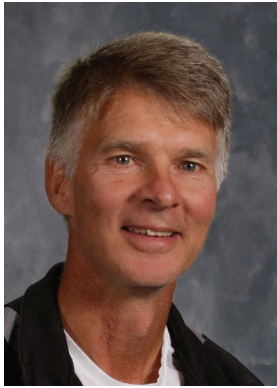
BRAD SCHULTZ, KRISTI LUNDSTEN
Menahga High School | Nominated By: Dan Stifter

This duo has been a vital and consistent part of their Special Education department. They work above and beyond the highest of expectations for educators. This year they have become mentors to two brand new Special Education teachers in our high school. They have consistently mentored our new staff on the best practices for student achievement and engagement. Even with this added responsibility, they have taken on a leadership role in the High School Star Team. They meet every week and help create intervention plans for students in our regular education classes. They have been an outstanding resource for not only the new teachers in Special Education, but for our regular education teachers as well.



MIKE SOMMERNESS
Pequot Lakes High School | Nominated By: Chip Rankin

Mike was recognized as educator of the year at ISD 186. His ability to connect with students is second to none. He has built the music program through persistence, his musical talents, and his ability to light the passion for the arts in all his students. Under his direction, the high school band has doubled in size. Mike also serves on various leadership teams in the district and shares his techniques and strategies with fellow teachers.

**MARK JENSEN****Pierz Healy High School** | Nominated By: Karrie Boser

Mark has been teaching Physical Education for twenty-eight years. In his tenure, he has been a true proponent of Health and Wellness along with encouraging students to always give and do their best. He was an advocate for developing an "advanced" curriculum. Because of his research, budgeting and passion, a new Advanced (college) Physical Education class was created. This class allows students to experience endurance along with being able to participate in activities they may never experience again in life, such as wall-climbing, canoeing, skiing, etc. Academically and physically, students have done nothing but benefit from Mark and his desire to bring out the best in all his students. Not surprisingly, other teachers look to Mark daily for his opinion, guidance and leadership. He is a respected and commendable leader.

**SARA SCHREIFELS****Royalton High School/Middle School** | Nominated By: Joel Swenson

Students often report that Ms. Schreifels is one of the best teachers they have throughout the day. Sara joined an already strong English department and has strengthened it with her ideas for creating a great learning environment for students. She runs an efficient and well-run classroom and is proficient in technology. She led the charge in the development of our middle school concept and spent a lot of time working to create better opportunities for the middle school. For example, she developed a fundraiser to raise money to provide opportunities for their middle school students to participate in class field trips for the first time in over a decade. Students are very fortunate to have the opportunity to have Ms. Schreifels as a teacher.

**CAROL SCHELLACK, KATHY FJELDHEIM, TAMMY KOPACEK, RUTH BOWMAN, TIFFANY SCHROER,****Sebek School** | Nominated By: Jill Walter

The collaboration of this team of special education teachers is unparalleled. They support one another and are committed to their students. This team works together to communicate the needs of students and seek out resources both inside and outside of our school walls. These teachers know their students, know their families, and know how to work to build relationships with our students that hold learners accountable and provide positive learning environments to increase student motivation. From weekly (often daily) check-ins with students to interactive learning and use of technology, these teachers plan lessons and support teachers to close the learning gap. These professionals are sought after for their insights, resources, knowledge base, and experience.



CONNIE ROLINE

Staples Elementary School | Nominated By: Kathy Johnson

Connie Roline has shown her passion for early education with the starting of our Jump-Start Kindergarten. This Kindergarten classroom was designed to teach kindergarten standards while focusing on the behavioral needs to set students up for successful learning in their education. This extra year gives the young five year-olds an opportunity to mature and fine-tune their skills, making them successful in their school year. It is our hope that these students will be ready to take on learning in Kindergarten and subsequent years and be at the top of their class. Parents have been tremendously supportive and have provided extremely positive comments. They feel this is a wonderful opportunity for their child.



LORNA BENDSON

Staples-Motley High School | Nominated By: Mike Schmidt

This science teacher has the highest of integrity and expectations in everything she does. Her coursework is rigorous and well-designed. Her students respect her...period. They work hard out of respect for how hard she works for them. Her engaging management style solicits high results and tremendous student engagement. Amongst the students, you'll hear she is "fair and honest". She creates better students. As a result, there has been growth and high achievement on the state test scores in biology. This is a great accomplishment, reflective of her teaching and her connection to the state standards and best practices. Ms. Bendson also serves as a leader and mentor to new teachers.



LISA KAJER

Staples-Motley Connections High School | Nominated By: Mike Schmidt

Mrs. Kajer was one of the key people involved in the plans for the development of the school, speaking to the way she teaches, how she connects with students and the level of integrity she brings to her profession. Her nurturing, high expectations have cultivated into expanded and new opportunities for students. This is appreciated and recognized post-high school by the students she has taught. They speak of her highly with respect and a touch of endearment. Her desire to see students achieve, yet explore, is constant in her delivery. She understands and appreciates their curiosity. She's also a trusted colleague and community member. She is a fine example of how true educators never stop teaching, learning, and sharing their talents.



THERESA BISEK

Swanville Elementary School | Nominated By: Gene Harthan

Theresa has been teaching for many years. She has taught almost every grade level in the elementary and currently teaches first grade. She is a very dedicated teacher who spends many extra hours at school. She has very high expectations for her students and works hard to help them succeed. She uses the interactive white board and other technology to help keep her students interested and motivated. She recognizes students have different learning styles and needs, and she adapts her teaching to meet those styles and accommodate those needs. She is always looking for ways to improve our school and has volunteered in many ways over the years, including serving on committees and mentoring younger staff. She is a true asset to the school and community.

**THOMAS BZDOK****Swanville High School** | Nominated By: Sheryl Johnson

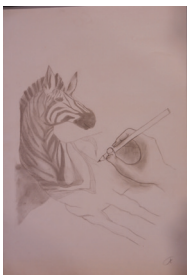
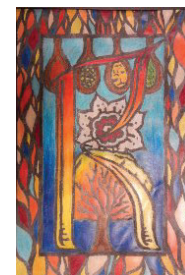
Tom has been called upon to use his expertise in many different ways this year. He has been exceedingly flexible and innovative. He maintains his professionalism constantly. He has increased his use of technology and is enjoying and capitalizing on different techniques. Tom has an excellent rapport with all students, and they deeply respect him. Students leave Tom's room with the necessary knowledge to be successful. He is also looked to as one of the senior members of the staff for insight on many different issues, relating to both students and the school overall.

**VICKI SMITH****Wadena-Deer Creek Elementary School** | Nominated By: Louis Rutten

Vicki is an outstanding mentor for new staff (even principals), an excellent teacher and coach, and demonstrates her continual improvement in the profession by always learning about how to become even better. Vicki has led her colleagues in a variety of school improvement initiatives. Students have benefitted from her work in many ways. They have become better readers with her modeling of reading strategies and gradual release of responsibility. Her supportive instructional stance gives students the confidence to take risks they may not otherwise take. Her empathy and concern for others is apparent in her classroom and her students continue to demonstrate these character traits as well. They are truly fortunate to have her as their teacher.

Student Art Gallery Artists

This year NJPA launched a Student Art Gallery in the main lobby of our headquarters. The following artwork was featured this year.

**STUDENT: BARBARA KENYON****Browerville High School** | Teacher: Jody Hagenson**STUDENT: JACEY RYDBERG****Cl Cuyuna Range Elementary School** | Teacher: Andrew Otterstad**STUDENT: RAYCHEL VERNIG****Pierz Healy High School** | Teacher: Sara Underhill**STUDENT: SARAH WILLGOHS****Staples-Motley High School** | Teacher: Jill Schneider



EDUCATION SOLUTIONS

Making a Difference with Professional Development that is Different

NJPA Education Solutions exists to...**Build valued relationships** with professionals as leaders and learners: in schools, in partnership with service and governmental organizations, and in other educational entities. **Deliver solutions** for the complex demands in education - Solutions that are focused on the value for the capacity developed when individuals work together with flexibility, interdependence, efficacy, craftsmanship, and consciousness. **Exceed the expectations of our members** to bring results to learning and leadership by serving with an attitude of humility for the honor that has been given to us to teach and learn with learners of all ages.

NJPAcoop.org • 888-894-1930



202 12th Street NE • P.O. Box 219 • Staples, MN 56479 • 888-894-1930