

EDUCATOR RECOGNITION

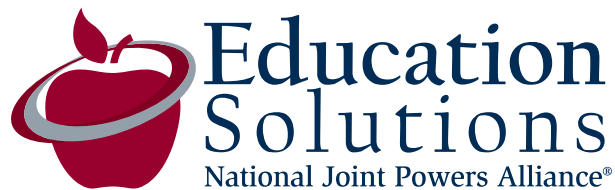
April 27, 2016

2016 TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS BANQUET

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| 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
Dr. Joe Martin |
| 7:00 p.m. | Awards
Rynell Schock, Leader of Education Services
Paul Drange, Director of Regional Programs
Horace Mann Insurance |
| 7:45 p.m. | Closing Remarks
Rynell Schock, Leader of Education Services
Dr. Chad Coauette, Executive Director |



TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS BANQUET



Teachers of Excellence Awards Banquet

NJPA Education Solutions recognizes the profound impact of educators and we want to celebrate this work. We are honored to support this Teachers of Excellence Awards Program, soon to be called the Educators of Excellence Awards Program.

Applications for the awards were sent to all schools in Region 5. Nominators were asked to select a teacher from their school who has shown leadership and innovation in an area of expertise, which has led to student learning. These teachers will receive a Teachers of Excellence Award. In addition, schools could nominate educators for two new awards: Team of Educational Excellence and Leader of Educational Excellence. These applications were reviewed by a selection team to identify one team and one leader for these regional awards. Award recipients are honored and celebrated at tonight's banquet.

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TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE

2016 TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE BANQUET



ELISE LEMAY

Bertha-Hewitt School | Nominated By: Eric Koep

Elise is quick to respond to concerns or questions from parents. Her friendly, open attitude along with her energy and excitement is reflected by actively engaging students. She incorporates best practices in her daily instruction and uses data to drive her instruction. Elise's involvement with district initiatives and PLC's is demonstrated in student achievement. Her colleagues benefit from her contributions, which enhance teacher's instruction.



WENDY GINDORFF

Cuyuna Range Elementary School | Nominated By: Kurt Becker

Wendy is a dedicated teacher who positively impacts her classroom and the entire school community. She is determined to ensure all students are successful and she accepts challenges that come with change in schools. Wendy has been a leader in the implementation of balanced literacy model, she mentored new teachers and has been a valuable resource to new staff. Her willingness to try new strategies allows her to lead by example. Wendy is also involved with organizing school events.



KRISTINE ANDERSEN

Crosby-Ironton High School | Nominated By: Jim Christensen

Kristine is recognized for her work with a student group, Service Adventure Leadership Team. Annually students are involved with local and global projects; recycling, recreation area clean-up, Brainerd Soup Kitchen and "Walk for Water for Kenya". The experiences and service learning projects have assisted students with carrying their leadership skills in their classrooms.



ANNETTE KLANG

Crosslake Community School | Nominated By: Todd Lyscio

Annette, a veteran teacher, has an innate ability to connect with some of the most difficult students and get results. She has a unique blend of compassion, patience and a no-nonsense way with students that truly brings the best out in all. Annette has the ability to differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of her students. In her classroom, there is focused energy, consistency and stability. As a skilled teacher, she is a great role model for other staff and continues to learn about effective instructional practices.



KAMI VAN HAL

Eagle Valley School | Nominated By: Barry Johnson

Kami is a K-6 Title 1 teacher who has been instrumental in getting the district to streamline benchmark data and monitor progress to identify the needs of every student. She has a positive attitude, an enthusiastic demeanor, and she continues to grow professionally through supporting and encouraging other staff. Kami organized and facilitated the 1st annual Holiday Family Fun Night and co-teaches in a second-grade classroom. Kami demonstrates a "we can" and "kids first" attitude.

TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE



MARGARET GRONDAHL

Freshwater Education District | Nominated By: Lori Murdock

Margaret is an intervention provider and facilitates the assessment team to complete comprehensive reports. She is the lead on writing the initial intervention plans. She continually makes sure time is spent in assessments that make sense. Margaret is also an occupational therapist for Wadena Elementary and is often asked to assist, coach and train other providers. She is part of a professional learning community which is studying developmental curriculum for birth to three-year-old children. She has developed various data collection tools for staff which have been incorporated throughout many programs.



ANTHONY KULA

Little Falls Community High School | Nominated By: Timothy Bjorge

Anthony developed a new math course, Senior Math Topics, as a refresher for topics previously studied. Topics include history of mathematical concepts, problem solving methods, application, probability, statistics, and advanced geometry. These will support students for their college or career readiness plans and teach them to take control of their own mathematical education. Students interviewed used words such as excitement, inspiring, upbeat and fun to describe the class. There is a focus on life skills and project-based learning. Anthony has shared this individualized learning approach with his colleagues.



JOEL HOLEY

Little Falls Community Middle School | Nominated By: Wade Mathers

Joel serves as a special education teacher and role model. His positive attitude, selflessness, openness to new ideas, and sense of humor lifts everyone up around him. He works with some of the hardest to reach children and starts with the heart. Joel has a way that causes students to feel comfortable, believe in themselves, and believe that hard work and persistence will trump academic talent. Joel's example in the classroom, hallway, and extracurricular arena of "if you start by being a good person, add hard work and persistence...anything is possible".



ROGER FREGIN

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

Roger is a fourth-grade teacher and has taught for 30 years. He has a "can do" attitude with a mindset centered around what is best for students. Roger uses data to guide his instruction to meet the individual needs of students. Roger first establishes a positive rapport with his students and families, and then is able to challenge his students academically to meet his expectations. He is involved with students through coaching and after school activities. Roger, a respected veteran teacher, shares his ideas with colleagues.



TONI KATHREIN

Little Falls: Lincoln Elementary School | Nominated By: Larry Edgerton

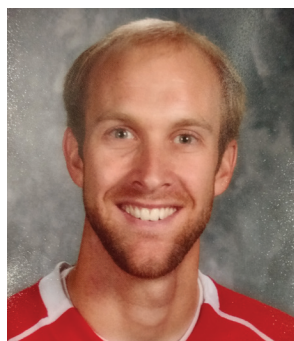
Toni is an EBD teacher and has been teaching for four years. She is the lead special education teacher and is responsible for scheduling paraprofessionals. She has a positive, calm demeanor and is a team player. She impacts students with her time and effort and helps them develop social skills. Students are more successful both academically and behaviorally in her classroom. Toni is a valued member of the Student Assistant Team, which puts academic and behavior interventions in place. Toni's expertise is utilized by putting positive intervention plans together that allow students to be more successful.

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

Gail is an outstanding, dedicated educator providing the best education for all her students. She is the first in the building and the last to leave. She looks for new and creative ways to make students' learning exciting and engaging. She creates a safe, loving environment where all students flourish. Gail creates memory books with her students as an artifact of their learning. Students are able to work on writing and reading standards through this project. She encourages her families and students to contact her if they need help and has a willingness to go above and beyond. As a veteran teacher, she has mentored several colleagues and has been a leader as the district added technology to the classrooms. She led the charge with Smart Boards and iPads.

**LAURA KOETERS****Long Prairie Grey Eagle Elementary School** | Nominated By: Peter Lingen

Laura has played a significant role with the Assistance Support Team, looking at data and progress monitoring the students in the areas of math and reading. Her role in the improvement of the building level support team and her knowledge of AIMS web data and progress has contributed to the BLAST team. Laura is instrumental in helping implement the PBIS system. She made instructional videos for all staff to use to understand the process. Her expertise as a member of the leadership team and helping the PLC process has been very beneficial. Laura also helped obtain the ADSIS interventionist and reading and math corps tutors. She has helped develop the student referral process and provided necessary data. She is also a teacher in BOLT – the after school program.

**ISAIAH HAHN****Menahga High School** | Nominated By: Ann Wotho

Isaiah has taught developmentally adaptive physical education since 2009 and also coaches many of these students in Special Olympic competitions, which is a true passion of his. One of the goals was to organize and coordinate the team which Isaiah met in 2010. Currently there are 10 athletes on the roster with hopes of increasing to 15. Isaiah assists other schools to plan athletic events. Isaiah's goal is to provide opportunities for adaptive students in which every person is accepted regardless of ability or disability. His enthusiasm and determination in creating a successful Special Olympics program benefits all our teachers.

**MINDI BRILL****Pequot Lakes Eagle View Elementary School** | Nominated By: Melissa Hesch

Mindi is a leader in many aspects of education and in the building and district. She serves as a member of her grade level team and the building leadership team. She also represents the union on the Alternative Career Pathways team developing the district's plan with other schools. Mindi is recognized by her peers for her expertise in curriculum and instruction, guided reading and classroom management. She develops a classroom based on the value of each student and holds them accountable. Mindi personalizes instruction, meeting students where they are at and accelerates the learning with small group instruction in reading and math. Mindi's professionalism impacts all who work with her and poses important questions regarding vision and process in all areas that impact students.

**KARIN WOLTER****Pequot Lakes Middle School** | Nominated By: Mike O'Neil

Karin is a veteran teacher and recently joined the PLMS family. She is a middle-level interventionist and has a profound influence with some at-risk students. She is eager to work with some of the most challenging students, and has brought the intensity and drive to this new position. Students are empowered, supported and uplifted. Karin's impact on students extends beyond the realm of academics. Karin holds her students accountable in their character, executive functioning skills and homework. Her leadership in instructional tactics, targeting students who struggle, has helped broaden the skill set of teachers.

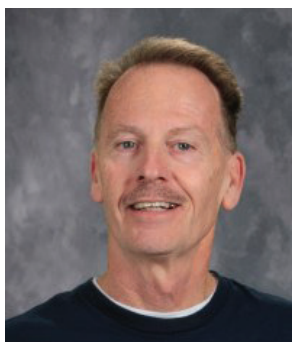
TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE



DAVID GUENTHER

Pequot Lakes High School | Nominated By: Chip Rankin

David has been an instrumental leader and has taught art for over 34 years. He started the art program and has been instrumental in developing and delivering curriculum to nearly 8,000 students. He delivers instruction as a member of the community and region. David also is a highly respected coach sending multiple teams and individuals to state wrestling and track meets. He's had countless artists go on to be recognized for their skills on a regional, state and national level. He takes kids who may not want to be in art and makes an awesome experience for them. He has served on numerous teams and panels, been an advisor and helped the start of the art curriculum committees.



KEITH MAGSAM

Pierz Pioneer Elementary School | Nominated By: Tom Otte

Keith teaches elementary music and choir and is very dedicated. He is a leader amongst his peers and has taught for 36 years. He has a soft touch with students and an ability to work with every student for a chance at success. He has a drive for excellence and has served as a music teacher and musical director, union president, contract negotiator, and a member of the teacher evaluation committee. Parents and grandparents recognize him as a respected teacher from years prior. Music is the medium he uses to guide children down a path of good choices, leading to success. Teachers look to him for advice, support and guidance.



SARA UNDERHILL

Pierz Healy High School | Nominated By: Karrie Boser

Sara has taught art grades 7-12. Students who enter her classroom leave with a talent and skills many did not know they had. She is always smiling and interacts with students with a sense of excitement and passion. Last year, her colleagues voted her as Teacher of the Year and staff look to her for guidance and leadership. She believes in giving back to the community and started an event called "Empty Bowls Soup Supper Benefit." It is a collective effort with the FACS instructor where students make pottery bowls and donations are offered in return for tasty soup made by the FACS class. Sara has a vision and does not stop until it comes to fruition. She has a way to tap into every student's creativity.



DARLA MARCY

Pillager Elementary School | Nominated By: Wanda Bell

Darla is a regular education classroom teacher and has embraced the implementation focus areas and encouraged other teachers. A new reading curriculum, guided reading and professional development were quickly set up in her classroom. She welcomed a special education teacher in her classroom for two years, embedding the co-teacher model. Darla implemented the ENVoY program into her classroom and is certified in both whole group and small group. She has volunteered as an ENVoY demonstration teacher. She's an example of a teacher that calls parents and brings them on board and shares professionally with colleagues.



JORDAN HERMAN

Pillager Middle School | Nominated By: Scott Doss

Jordan is a teacher after the heart of every student. He focuses on "I can" statements in his class. The kids learn their strengths through his use of choice assessments. His students are encouraged continually to learn and want to be in his class. He is a hand changer and leads by example through his charismatic personality. His leadership and influence goes beyond the middle school walls as he is respected by his peers.

**JACOB MEHR****Pillager High School** | Nominated By: Josh Smith

Mr. Mehr is an extremely important member of the team. His knowledge in the field of mathematics and willingness to improve current practices and ability to lead colleagues makes him a Teacher of Excellence. He teaches high school and CIS classes and continually blends his knowledge with solid instructional strategies. He has a calm personality and high expectations for students while holding himself to a high standard. Mr. Mehr leads by example and utilizes technology, tries new things and contributes to the District Leadership Team.

**VICKI BURNSIDE****Royalton Elementary School** | Nominated By: Phil Gurbada

Vicki has performed at an exceptional level as an elementary music teacher for over 25 years. Her teaching talent, dedication and work ethic are unmatched. Every year she presents musical productions that play to standing-room-only crowds. All of her students have benefited from carefully designed curriculum and instruction. They gain a sophisticated musical understanding that benefits them for their whole lives. She is professional in every way, always respected, organized and prepared.

**RANDY THIELGES****Royalton High School** | Nominated By: Joel Swenson

Randy teaches in the math and science department and is a tremendously good teacher. He is a team-first guy and has been trained in Project Lead the Way. He is the head basketball coach, assistant football and junior high baseball coach. Randy is a quiet leader who leads by earned respect and example. Alumni and students rank Randy as one of the top teachers.

**BRENDA WEGSCHEID****Sebeka School** | Nominated By: Jill Walter

Brenda has been a physical education teacher in our elementary school for 37 years. She has modeled lifelong learning and leads the way with technology in her classroom. She is dedicated to her teaching and determined to have her students grow in their skills. She continually looks for opportunities to challenge her students. Brenda has been a coach and mentor and also district curriculum coordinator, data team manager and elementary schedule writer. She is very knowledgeable, and our district has benefited from her expertise.

**ROBIN KAUTTO****Staples Elementary School** | Nominated By: Kathy Johnson

Robin has been teaching for many years as a third-grade teacher. This year, she changed roles and took over a first-grade classroom and is a member of the RTI team. She is a very positive team member, working hard to achieve great success with her students. Robin has impacted students in her classroom with strong classroom management and extensive content knowledge. She is a strong leader in our building and shares her experiences with teachers in PLC.

TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE



LARAE BJORGE

Staples-Motley Middle School | Tom Riitters

LaRae was nominated by a number of co-workers who made comments “no one is more deserving” and that “she is a great example of what all should strive for”. She focuses on both the academic success and social well-being. Students respect her as a teacher and friend. They show tremendous growth in their test scores under her guidance. LaRae is a servant leading in the building. She tirelessly goes out of her way with goals and initiatives in the building. LaRae serves in a number of leadership roles and is always an advocate for the staff.



CHAR BINEK

Staples-Motley High School | Nominated By: Mike Schmidt

Ms. Binek has masterfully cared for and educated special education students. She delicately tends to the educational, physical and emotional need of her students. Ms. Binek is mindful of their tendencies, needs, and aspirations, which are all met by her kindness and dedication. She can sense students’ needs from an incredible perspective and her talent is how she works to educate; her gift is how she delivers it.



DONNA BESTLAND

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

Ms. Bestland has the highest of integrity and expectations in everything she does. Her students respect her, and her coursework is rigorous. She mirrors what’s expected in the medical field regarding integrity, personality and dedication to the patient. She prepares students for the care and nursing profession. She is one of our advisors for Connections High School. She’s a humble educator dedicated to Career, Technical Education in the medical and nursing fields.



NEAL WEISZ

Swanville Elementary School | Nominated By: Gene Harthan

Neal has consistently been one of our strongest teachers in elementary. When the school was not making AYP, he was on the leadership team, attended data retreats and wrote the school improvement plan. Neal has done a lot of coaching, helps run the elementary Knowledge Bowl and is involved in the elementary trip to Deep Portage. Neal’s students respond well and perform well. He works very hard to help his students succeed. He has emerged as a leader and is willing to learn new things, such as guided reading and Marzano Framework of teaching.



PAM CZECH

Swanville High School | Nominated By: Sheryl Johnson

Pam has worked very hard on implementing and adopting the Marzano Framework in her classroom. Students are engaged and able to tell about lessons and goals. Pam has a good relationship with all students and knows how to set the stage to have fun while learning. She has drastically changed her teaching style. She adopts new technologies easy and shares with other staff. Pam is willing to work with other staff and maintains professionalism.

**CURTIS ROBERTSON****Upsala High School** | Nominated By: Vern Capelle

Mr. Robertson pioneered the robotics program in Upsala and has increased STEM opportunities as well as basic engineering curriculum beginning in ninth grade. The integration of robotics and engineering concepts into his curriculum has given students a practical way to apply learning from multiple disciplines. The problem solving that occurs in Mr. Robertson's classes enables teachers and students to make connections across the curriculum.

**HOLLY BECKER****Wadena-Deer Creek Middle/High School** | Nominated By: Tyler Church

Holly was selected because of the amazing work she has done for the students over the past 10 years. Her work as a math teacher in the district exemplifies the positive impact one teacher can have on so many students. She is an amazing teacher leader and one of the first to try new initiatives. Her passion for helping students is second to none and has the ability to make learning fun and exciting for her students. Holly is always willing to listen and she is the type of colleague everyone wants. She has taken an active role in the math department PLC and the Marzano work.

**THOMAS MCIVER****Walker-Hackensack-Akeley High School** | Nominated By: Dave Wineburner

Thomas is a consummate professional. He is willing to ensure all students in high school are accounted for both academically and through relationships. His approach is for all students to be college and career ready while maintaining expected rigor in the classroom, hallway, commons or at extra-curricular activities. His insight and caring approach with all staff allows each member to feel a part of the overall mission and goals in our building.

2015

It was an honor to be recognized and to spend an evening with such passionate and dedicated professionals."

—Past Attendee



TEAM & LEADER OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

TEAM OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE:



ANITA LARSON, BECKY ABBOTT, MICHELLE BREKKEN, LAURA DECHAIINE
Little Falls Community Schools | Nominated By: Wade Mathers, Jill Griffith-McGraith, Larry Edgerton, Tim Bjorge, Mike Olson

The four staff comprise the district Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. This team serves social work and each member goes above and beyond their role on the PBIS team. The team's dedication ensures each site implements with fidelity. The SWIS data continues to show positive trends. The Flyer Pride-Respect, Responsibility, Positive Attitude, and Safety has directly impacted students. Teaching students what positive behavior looks like while focusing on "what to do" versus "what not to do", assists students to reach expectations. The work has been shared through site level PBIS meetings. Each site team leads a site PBIS team to develop and share plans, evaluate data and develop goals. Staff attend training to grow in philosophy and understanding. A major part is to ensure sustainability. Plans are continually developed and implemented to further deepen buy in from all staff.

LEADER OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE:



CATHERINE BETTINO
Pine River-Backus Schools | Nominated By: Lee Westrum, President of Region 5 MASA

Cathy Bettino is a model instructional leader who has positively influenced the lives of students. Cathy is a leader who is committed to teacher development and understands that high-quality staff development doesn't happen by accident and providing support for teachers is absolutely crucial to improving student achievement. Cathy is very proud of the Pine Rive-Backus School District and all the great things that have been accomplished during her tenure. However, she is very humble and quick to pass out credit to her team and always stress the importance of collaboration. Cathy is a great leader, colleague and person.

2014

"Being a part of an event honoring educators was uplifting, encouraging, and makes me want to continue to learn and grow in this wonderful, but challenging, profession!"

—Past Attendee



Student Art Gallery Artists

NJPA is honored to highlight regional student artwork in the main lobby of our headquarters. The following pieces were featured this year in our Student Art Gallery.



KYLAN BENNING
Wadena-Deer Creek
Elementary

Teacher: Tracy Fruechte



MATTHEW KOPP
Wadena-Deer Creek
Elementary

Teacher: Tracy Fruechte



BRANDON GEISER
Wadena-Deer Creek
Elementary

Teacher: Tracy Fruechte



COOPER DANLO
Wadena-Deer Creek
Elementary

Teacher: Tracy Fruechte



GRACE COUCHEY
Browerville High School

Teacher: Jody Hagenson

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Who is NJPA?

At its core, 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. Education Solutions 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.

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