



NEWS RELEASE

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NACS honors “Teachers of the Year” at each school

Fort Wayne, Ind. (May 27, 2022) –Officials today revealed four exceptional teachers who were selected after review of nominations by a panel of administrators. The teachers were surprised at final school gatherings this week and officially recognized as “Teachers of the Year” at Northwest Allen County Schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

“These deserving recipients have earned esteem from their peers, students, parents and administrators alike,” said Dr. Steve Yager, temporary superintendent, Northwest Allen County Schools. “We value the exemplary skills and compassion each of these teachers embody. NACS has many worthy of such recognition, but these four stood out.”

Here are excerpts pulled from nomination forms for each recipient. Several of the nominations for the secondary recipients came from students this year, however, nominations may also be submitted by parents, colleagues and administrators.

Nanette Houser, reading interventionalist, Arcola Elementary School

“Since working with Mrs. Houser, my son’s reading level has greatly improved and his excitement for reading has grown...Mrs. Houser has helped to give him the ability to comprehend what he is reading and that has allowed him to learn to love to read. I am very grateful for the work she has done for my son and I imagine all the children she works with at Arcola Elementary.”

“Year after year I have watched her completely change the lives of students through her care and instruction...Nanette is positive, hardworking, and dedicated. She has a ‘teacher’s brain’ and a mother’s heart and will use all her gifts to help our striving readers become our READERS.”

Sarah Vargas, 1st grade teacher, Cedar Canyon Elementary School

“Mrs. Vargas has gone above and beyond to make my son’s first grade year amazing! She has provided community building activities outside of school time, given me updates on behavior and academics before I ask for them, and gives the kids a myriad of activities to connect book knowledge to the real world...The activities she plans for the classroom are extremely beneficial to helping my son learn in a hands-on manner. He’s excited to go to school and it’s because he knows he won’t be stuck in his chair all day.”

“The amount of work that she is able to cover with her quiet demeanor is nothing short of amazing...Our son has grown leaps and bounds since he came into Mrs. Vargas’s class. We are very grateful to have had her assist our kid in his knowledge journey.”

(MORE)

(NACS Teachers of the Year 2022, p. 2)



Northwest Allen County Schools

Blake Williams, 7th grade social studies teacher, Carroll Middle School

“As a parent of a child with autism, Blake Williams has gone way beyond educating and has aspired to inspire our son beyond what we ever thought possible. Blake is an experienced voice that is backed by his example of leadership and care that makes NACS produce great students and people. I have seen Blake empower our son, and many others, to reach higher in the classroom but he also does that in track/field and in cross country. Blake has that perfect blend of IQ and EQ to make him effective. He is a man of character that is consistent in all these settings and he is also competent, able to find solutions and strategies that help students achieve the NACS higher goal of producing lifelong learners...I coached basketball against Blake for years and was always impressed at a distance how he represented Carroll so well. But now to have him on our son's team, has been a dream come true.”

“Mr. Williams is not only a great teacher but an amazing running coach. In and out of class he pushed each of his students and athletes to strive to be better than you believe you can be...He's helped me believe that I can do amazing things in and out of school. He's just an amazing teacher/coach!”

Jordan Fernandez, AP Psychology and AP World History, teacher, Carroll High School

“Jordan has been our department chair for a few years now, and I think she handles this responsibility extremely well and manages our team of social studies teachers with grace. She is an excellent example of high-quality teaching to her department, as she continues to look for ways to improve her craft and help students. I moved my classroom next to Jordan's a few years ago and now I get to truly witness her excellence in not just pedagogy or content, but in relationship building. It is astonishing how many students come down our hallway to say hello to Mrs. Fernandez and talk to her about their day. The students sincerely love going to her class every day, as we share many of the same students. Overall, Jordan is a great example of teaching, leadership, relationship building, and simply being a fantastic person. She deserves this recognition and has worked very hard to earn it.”

Two elementary teachers or counselors are selected from eight elementary schools, one from the middle schools and one from the high school. To qualify for this recognition, teachers and counselors must have an evaluation rating of “highly-effective” or “mentor.”

Information about Northwest Allen County Schools may be found at nacs.k12.in.us. The mission of Northwest Allen County Schools is to develop the talent and nurture the creativity of each learner. We attain our mission by providing healthy and safe learning environments that engage, support, and challenge each learner in a culture of achieving excellence so each learner can become a leading member of our community. NACS serves 7,922 students spanning 108 square miles in Allen County, Ind.

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