

Education Minnesota

Shakopee alternative high school teacher is Teacher of the Year

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Bloomington, Minn., May 6, 2018 – Kelly D. Holstine, an English teacher at Tokata Learning Center in Shakopee, is the 2018 Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

Holstine is the 54th recipient of the prestigious award, and the first from the Shakopee district.

An independent selection committee representing Minnesota leaders in education, business and government chooses the Minnesota Teacher of the Year from individuals who are nominated and who then choose to become a candidate.

The Tokata Learning Center is an alternative high school that serves students in grades 9 through 12 in the Shakopee district and surrounding areas.

“It is true that our population can consist of students with varying abilities and temperaments, but these same students are also some of the most creative and brilliant humans with whom I have ever worked,” Holstine said. “And, without fail, the students who arrive angry, sad, hurt and/or scared reveal their vulnerability, brilliance and beautiful selves when they feel safe and valued.”

“Many of Tokata’s students are facing struggles that make it difficult to thrive in a standard public school setting,” wrote Amy K. Mytnik, a parent of two of Holstine’s students, in her nomination letter for Holstine. “So it is important for the teachers to be able to adapt their teaching styles to meet a variety of learning setbacks and behavioral concerns. Kelly’s willingness to meet her students where they are and use the most effective methods to foster an environment of safety and healing is most effective in this environment.”

Holstine has taught at Tokata since 2012, and has been teaching in Minnesota since 2007. She holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Massachusetts and a master’s degree from Augsburg College.

Education Minnesota, the 86,000-member statewide educators union, organizes and underwrites the Teacher of the Year program. Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers and Adult Basic Education teachers from public or private schools. The Minnesota Teacher of the Year Program also receives support from the following organizations: The Radisson Blu Mall of America, the Harvard Club of Minnesota Foundation, United Educators Credit Union, McDonald’s Restaurants of Minnesota, Educators Lifetime Solutions, EFS Advisors and Education Minnesota ESI.



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