

## Education Minnesota

# Ten selected as Teacher of the Year finalists

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ST. PAUL, Minnesota. April 7, 2020 – Ten teachers from across the state have been named finalists in the 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year program. An independent selection panel of 24 leaders in the areas of education, business, government and nonprofits selected the finalists from a group of 36 semifinalists. There were 135 Teacher of the Year candidates for this program year.

Because of safety precautions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the previously scheduled Minnesota Teacher of the Year banquet on May 3 at the Saint Paul RiverCentre has been postponed until further notice.

The selection panel is tentatively scheduled to meet in mid-August to conduct individual interviews with each of the 10 finalists and to cast votes for the 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year. For a look at how the selection process works, go to <https://www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.aspx>. Plans are still in the works for the time and location of the announcement of the new Teacher of the Year.

The 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Jessica Davis of South St. Paul Secondary School in South St. Paul, will announce this year's honoree.

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, ECFE and ABE teachers from public or private schools. The Minnesota Teacher of the Year Program also receives support from the following organizations: The SMARTer Kids Foundation, the Harvard Club of Minnesota Foundation, United Educators Credit Union, Educators Lifetime Solutions, EFS Advisors and Education Minnesota ESI.

The 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists (listed alphabetically along with district, school, subject and grade[s] taught) are:

- **DeWayne Combs**, Saint Paul Public Schools, Murray Middle School, physical education, grades 6-8
- **Katie Coulson**, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School District, Thomas Lake Elementary School, elementary, grade 4
- **Shannon Finnegan**, Hopkins Public Schools, Hopkins High School – Hopkins Achievement Program alternative program, social studies, grades 10-12
- **Qorsho Hassan**, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District, Gideon Pond Elementary School, elementary, grade 5

- **Maya Kruger**, St. Anthony-New Brighton School District, St. Anthony Middle School, language arts, grade 6
- **Ryan (Caleb) Larson**, Pine City Public Schools, Pine City Junior/Senior High School, English, grades 8 and 9
- **Omar McMillan**, Richfield Public Schools, Richfield STEM School, elementary, grade 4
- **Rachel Steil**, Stillwater Area Public Schools, Stillwater Area High School, English/journalism, grades 10-12
- **Maria Villavicencio**, Eden Prairie Schools, Eden Lake Elementary School, elementary, grade 1
- **Katie Watland**, Lake Park Audubon School District, Lake Park Audubon High School, science, grades 7 and 8

Top row (left to right):



DeWayne Combs, Katie Coulson, Shannon Finnegan; middle row (left to right): Rachel Steil, Maya Kruger, Ryan (Caleb) Larson, Omar McMillan; bottom row (left to right): Qorsho Hassan, Maria Villavicencio, Katie Watland.

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