

Education Minnesota

New Teacher of the Year to be named this Thursday

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ST. PAUL, Minnesota. Aug. 3, 2020 – The new Minnesota Teacher of the Year will be named this Thursday, Aug. 6. The Minnesota State Capitol hosts this year’s Teacher of the Year event.



Jessica Davis, the current Minnesota Teacher of the Year, will announce her successor at the ceremony. This is the 56th year for the program. Minnesota has produced four National Teachers of the Year, more than any state except Washington and California.

The ceremony takes place at 7 p.m. on the Upper Mall of the State Capitol complex. The surprise announcement of the new Teacher of the Year should take place between 7:30 and 8 p.m. In addition, the announcement will be broadcast live on Facebook on the Minnesota Teacher of the Year Facebook page.

NOTE: Reporters attending the event are advised to arrive by 7:15 p.m. The new Teacher of the Year will be available for interviews on-site immediately following the ceremony Aug. 6 and during the day Aug. 7. For reporters who cannot attend, there will be conference call with the new Teacher of the Year at 8:15 p.m. Aug. 6. The call-in details will be provided on request to accredited media by Chris Williams and/or Doug Dooher (contact info above).

The 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year will come from a field of 10 finalists. There were 134 candidates in this year’s original field. This year’s finalists (listed alphabetically, with school, district, 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

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.

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