



NEWS

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TEA, TASA congratulate Amarillo ISD teacher named national TOY finalist

AUSTIN – Commissioner of Education Michael Williams and Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) Executive Director Johnny Veselka today congratulated Amarillo teacher Shanna Peeples who has been named one of four finalists for the 2015 National Teacher of the Year. Peeples is an English teacher at Palo Duro High School in the Amarillo Independent School District.

The National Teacher of the Year program, run by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), identifies exceptional teachers in the country, recognizes their effective work in the classroom, amplifies their voices, and empowers them to participate in policy discussions at the state and national levels.

“Shanna Peeples exemplifies the outstanding teaching taking place in the Amarillo ISD and across our state,” said Commissioner Williams. “I’m sure being named a national Teacher of the Year finalist is no surprise to her students and fellow teachers in Amarillo ISD. I thank her for her valuable work in the classroom and wish her the best of luck in Washington later this year.”

“We are honored to recognize Shanna Peeples as an outstanding educator who truly connects with her students, showing them that the possibilities for their future are limitless,” said Veselka in offering his congratulations to Peeples. “She cultivates a collaborative, engaging learning environment, serving as a model for her colleagues throughout the teaching profession.”

Peeples worked as a disc jockey, medical assistant, pet sitter and journalist before becoming a teacher, a profession that she says eventually chose her. She taught 7th grade English Language Arts for about six years before moving to high school. Peeples teaches AP English and serves as the English department chair as well as an instructional coach for other teachers.

“My students, survivors of deep and debilitating trauma, have shaped the kind of teacher I am,” said Peeples. “They have taught me to never make a promise I can’t keep because so many already have learned to see the world through suspicious eyes. To be the best teacher to them, I have to remember this and honor their background. I remember so I can gain their trust because I want them to read and write their way out of where they are.”

The Texas Teacher of the Year program is sponsored by TASA. Peeples was named the 2015 Texas Secondary Teacher of the Year. Each year, two teachers from each of the 20 regional

Education Service Centers become eligible for two titles, Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year and Texas Secondary Teacher of the Year. To achieve recognition, a teacher must first be chosen as a campus and a district Teacher of the Year, and ultimately a regional honoree. From this group of 40 regional teachers, six finalists are chosen and are interviewed by an independent panel of judges. The state's top elementary and secondary teachers are selected from these six outstanding finalists. As Texas Secondary Teacher of the Year, Peoples represents Texas in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

The National Teacher of the Year Program, presented by Voya, is a project of CCSSO in partnership with People to People Ambassador Programs. Every year, exemplary teachers from each state, the U.S. extra-state territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity are selected as State Teachers of the Year. From that group, the National Teacher of the Year is then selected by a panel representing 15 renowned education organizations, which collectively represent more than 7 million educators.

The President of the United States will recognize the National Teacher of the Year in a White House ceremony this spring.

To read a PDF copy of the TASA news release on Texas Teacher of the Year recipients, visit <http://www.tasanet.org/cms/lib07/TX01923126/Centricity/domain/106/pressreleases/2014/toy15.pdf>.

For more information on the National Teacher of the Year program, including previous recipients, visit <http://www.ccsso.org/ntoy.html>.

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