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Six Wisconsin teachers named finalists for national award

Educators nominated for outstanding success in teaching mathematics, science, and STEM

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction today announced six Wisconsin educators have been named finalists for a national award honoring mathematics and science teachers for their achievement in teaching the subjects. The 2024 Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is considered the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government for math and science teachers.

“These amazing teachers, all finalists for Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, exemplify what it means to be an effective educator,” State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly said. “They have expertise in math and science, and they have an unwavering passion and commitment. I know they inspire their students – they inspire all of us – and I congratulate them and thank them for going above and beyond in supporting their students.”

The teachers were named finalists for their deep knowledge of the subjects they teach, in addition to facilitating and encouraging success among students in those areas. Wisconsin’s finalists for the 2024 PAEMST are:

- **Jacquelynn Bazylewicz**, fifth grade teacher (mathematics finalist), Edgewood Elementary, School District of Greenfield
- **Debra Heitman**, fifth grade teacher (mathematics finalist), Coleman Elementary School, Coleman School District
- **Mary Ellen Kanthack**, sixth grade teacher (science finalist), Brookwood Middle School, Genoa City Joint 2 School District
- **Sheila Kohl**, fifth-sixth grade STEM teacher (science finalist), West De Pere Intermediate School, School District of West De Pere

(more)

- **Melissa Sperle**, fifth grade teacher (mathematics finalist), Winskill Elementary School, Lancaster Community Schools
- **Rhonda Veroeven**, sixth grade teacher (science finalist), Glacier Creek Middle School, Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District

Presented annually since 1983, K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teachers from across the nation are nominated for the award. States establish committees who select finalists based on criteria required by the national PAEMST program. Applications from Wisconsin's finalists will be judged at the national level by a committee organized by the National Science Foundation, which administers PAEMST on behalf of The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. One awardee in mathematics and one awardee in science will receive a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation, professional development opportunities, and are honored at an award ceremony in Washington, D.C.

For more information on this program, [visit the U.S. Department of Education's program webpage](#).

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