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Five educators selected 2025 Wisconsin Teachers of the Year

Recipients honored for commitment to students, colleagues, school and community

MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction today announced five educators from across the state have been named 2025 Wisconsin Teachers of the Year. The group received the honor for their dedication to the education profession and for the impact they have on their students as learners and individuals. The group was notified of their selection by State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly at separate, surprise ceremonies at their respective schools throughout the last two weeks.

“This group of educators are a tremendous source of inspiration to their students, their schools, and everyone across Wisconsin,” Dr. Jill Underly said. “They go above and beyond to support students in many unique ways, providing a safe, inclusive environment for kids to unlock their potential and grow as individuals. It was my honor to travel across Wisconsin to surprise each of them in front of their students, colleagues, and families. I congratulate them on being named Wisconsin Teachers of the Year, and I thank all our state’s incredible teachers for all they do for our students and our communities.”

The 2025 Wisconsin Teachers of the Year are:

- **Ana Báez**, bilingual counselor at South Division High School (Milwaukee Public Schools)
- **Bethany Counard**, English language arts teacher at West De Pere Middle School (School District of West De Pere)
- **Brian Counselman**, a science teacher at Malcolm Shabazz City High School (Madison Metropolitan School District)
- **Sarah Krajewski**, art teacher at Cambridge Elementary School (School District of Cambridge)
- **Rachel Sauvola**, agriscience teacher at New Richmond High School (New Richmond School District)

Photos from each of the surprise ceremonies can be found [on the DPI’s Facebook page](#).

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Each teacher of the year receives \$3,000 from the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation. Through an interview process, one of the five teachers will be selected to represent Wisconsin in the Council of Chief State School Officers National Teacher of the Year program. The Teachers of the Year will interview with a committee that will select one of the five to represent Wisconsin in the National Teacher of the Year program. More information on the Wisconsin Teacher of the Year Program [can be found on the DPI's website](#).

Additional background information on each 2025 Wisconsin Teacher of the Year is below:

Ana Báez, bilingual counselor at South Division High School (Milwaukee Public Schools)

Báez is the daughter of Puerto Rican immigrants, growing up in Milwaukee and graduating from Milwaukee Public Schools. At the state's largest bilingual high school, Báez supports students in achieving their full potential through career and job preparation. Through her work at the school, Báez helps English language learning students identify and remove barriers from pursuing and achieving academic success. Prior to working at MPS, Báez was a bilingual case manager, advocating for bilingual families so they could receive education on receiving healthcare services.

Bethany Counard, English language arts teacher at West De Pere Middle School (School District of West De Pere)

Counard has taught eight-grade ELA at the school since 2018, guiding students as they explore new topics and encouraging them to ask questions, be authentic and creative. Counard helps students become competent and conscientious members of society by promoting the growth of the whole child – academically, socially, and emotionally. She strives to create a student-led environment, and involves students in all aspects of her classroom, providing opportunities for them to realize the relevancy of what they are learning. Counard is also an advisor to the school's National Junior Honor Society, where students address needs within the community.

Brian Counselman, a science teacher at Malcolm Shabazz City High School (Madison Metropolitan School District)

Counselman has taught science and experimental education at Malcolm Shabazz City High School, an alternative school in the Madison Metropolitan School District, for the past seven years. He also is the

school's project-based learning coordinator and is credited with creating impactful and meaningful lessons inspiring students to not only make changes in themselves, but also within their respective communities.

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Sarah Krajewski, art teacher at Cambridge Elementary School (School District of Cambridge)

Krajewski has taught at the school since 2015 and has 13 years of overall teaching experience in which she's helped shape the lives of students while teaching them a love of creative expression through art. Krajewski's classroom features a painting of her teaching philosophy: "My job is to BE HERE for you, mentally, emotionally, and artistically." Those values hold true to her teaching and the support she provides to her students, ensuring their needs are met and that they have fun learning and engaging. As the art club advisor, Krajewski organizes an art show, which has featured a petting zoo, food trucks and a scavenger hunt prior to unveiling a large-scale collaborative art project featuring thousands of pieces of student art.

Rachel Sauvola, agriscience teacher at New Richmond High School (New Richmond School District)

As an agriculture teacher at the school, Sauvola developed the Students Opportunities with Agriculture Resources educational center and manages the school farm, which gives students the opportunity to produce goods for school lunch. She is also the National Association of Agricultural Educators' mentor facilitator, where she helps agriculture teachers from around the nation develop inquiry-based instruction modules for students.

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NOTE: This news release is available online [on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's website.](#)