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Celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week and announcing Regional Teachers of the Year

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Kristi Noem has proclaimed [May 4-8 Teacher Appreciation Week](#) in South Dakota.

“While schools and communities won’t be able to hold face-to-face Teacher Appreciation Week celebrations this year, I hope they find some unique ways to thank teachers for all they do,” said Secretary of Education Ben Jones. “I continue to be amazed at everything our state’s teachers are doing to ensure that South Dakota students keep learning, even during these extended school closures.”

The Department of Education will be using the hashtag #ThankATeacher on social media throughout the week. Members of the public are invited to share a message of thanks for the teachers impacting students across the state and country.

As part of this special week, the South Dakota Department of Education is pleased to announce the following individuals as South Dakota’s Regional Teachers of the Year:

- Region #1: Lisa Weier, Project Lead the Way, George S. Mickelson Middle School (Brookings)
- Region #2: Marissa Whipple, second grade, Baltic Elementary
- Region #3: Amanda Hargreaves, sixth grade, Mitchell Middle School
- Region #4: Spencer Cody, science, Edmunds Central Middle and High School
- Region #5: Luke Erfman, computer/STEAM, rural schools, Meade School District

A statewide panel of educators will select one of these regional finalists to represent the state as the 2021 South Dakota Teacher of the Year. The 2021 South Dakota Teacher of the Year will be announced sometime this fall. That individual will be South Dakota’s candidate for the National Teacher of the Year Award.

The National Teacher of the Year Program began in 1952 and continues as the oldest, most prestigious national honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. The 2021 National Teacher of the Year will be announced during a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in spring 2021.

Editor’s Note: Please consider contacting your local school(s) for potential stories about Teacher Appreciation Week celebrations in your community.