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### **Harris selected as 2020 South Dakota Teacher of the Year**

OACOMA, S.D. – Amanda Harris, a fourth-grade teacher at Endeavor Elementary in the Harrisburg School District, has been named the 2020 South Dakota Teacher of the Year. Secretary of Education Ben Jones made the announcement this evening at a banquet at the Cedar Shore Conference Center in Oacoma.

“Teachers are on the front lines of raising up the next generation. It’s important we celebrate the work they do,” said Governor Kristi Noem. “Amanda has consistently gone above and beyond in her classroom and in her school district. I’m confident she will represent our state’s teachers and students well in the coming year.”

Harris has taught in the Harrisburg School District since 2013. She has served on curriculum committees in her district and regularly presents at educator conferences. She has started several afterschool clubs at her school, including a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) club and stop-motion movie making club. She also helped start her school’s theater company. Harris is a previous recipient of a South Dakota Education Association/National Education Association Educational Innovation Grant.

“The South Dakota Teacher of the Year program is all about celebrating the vital work of educators and their impact on the lives of students,” said Secretary Jones. “Over the coming year, Amanda will be an advocate for teachers and students across South Dakota. She will do a tremendous job as State Teacher of the Year.”

A statewide panel of educators selected Harris from among five regional finalists. The other finalists were Jean Gunderson, K-6 Title reading, Elkton Elementary; Dina Vander Wilt, kindergarten, L.B. Williams Elementary (Mitchell); Nicole Dallman, third grade, Mobridge-Pollock Upper Elementary; and Penny Shuster Louks, eighth grade English language arts, Belle Fourche Middle School.

As recipient of the honor, Harris receives prizes including a \$5,000 cash award from the West River Foundation and a \$1,000 honorarium from the South Dakota Board of Regents to present a series of professional development seminars to aspiring teachers. Prize packages are made possible through the generosity of private businesses and organizations, including the South Dakota Retailers Association and the South Dakota Education Association.

In addition, Harris will represent South Dakota as a 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 2020 National Teacher of the Year will be announced during a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in the spring.

Access a [playlist of videos featuring Amanda Harris](#) on the Department of Education’s YouTube channel.