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July 9, 2021

Sarah Manus named 2022 NWESD Regional Teacher of the Year

Manus teaches seventh grade English Language Arts at Evergreen Middle School



Everett, WA—Evergreen Middle School Language Arts Teacher Sarah Manus has been named the 2022 Regional Teacher of the Year by the Northwest Educational Service District 189 (NWESD). Manus was selected from a competitive group of fifteen teacher nominees from across the NWESD region.

During remote and hybrid learning, Manus saw many students struggling emotionally and academically, and recognized the need to empower them by celebrating their efforts as well as their achievements. One way she did so was by incorporating lessons from Habits of the Mind into her teaching and feedback processes. As explained by the Center for Teaching and Learning at Oregon State University, “the Habits of the Mind are an identified set of 16 problem solving, life-related skills necessary to effectively operating in society and promote strategic reasoning.”

Habits of the Mind emphasizes problem-solving through concepts like persisting, thinking flexibly and independently, creating, innovating and more. “I would hone in on things I saw kids doing so I could share successes with every single family, even with the kids who I’d never even seen their faces because that was the reality this year,” explained Manus.

Remote and hybrid teaching and learning were challenging this year so connecting with students and families individually was a way to form bonds and encourage a growth mindset. “I could call families and say things like ‘your kid is really persistent,’ or ‘your kid has a great sense of humor and is really creative’ as these are indicators of success in future life so I wanted kids and families to know that.”

Evergreen Principal Michele Waddel said Manus is not only an amazing teacher but also “an instructional leader beyond her years of experience.” In the classroom, she observed Manus creating a “warm and welcoming environment where students felt safe.” In the classroom “she created opportunities where kids could make a choice — and feel empowered. It was beautiful.”

As part of the application process for the award, Manus explained her teaching philosophy. “Teaching is an opportunity to show my students I respect them as whole people. I trust them enough to invite complex issues into the classroom. It is their job to think; it is my job to invite the question, to let them exercise their autonomy. This shows what I believe about teaching; it is an active effort toward social justice.”

In addition to her inspiring approaches in the classroom, Manus excels as a leader among her colleagues. She facilitates teacher training, advocates for student-centric teaching and grading practices and is a key member of the school’s equity team.

"I am so proud of Sarah's incredible achievement. She represents the very best in the teaching profession," said Superintendent Ian Saltzman. "Her innovative approaches focused on growth mindset, equity and collaboration are making a difference every day for our students, families and staff."

As a regional Teacher of the Year, Manus will compete against eight regional finalists from Educational Service Districts across Washington for the title of 2022 State Teacher of the Year. The Washington Teacher of the Year program is organized by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

To learn more about the OSPI Teacher of the Year program, visit:

<https://www.k12.wa.us/educator-support/awards-recognition/educator-awards/teacher-year>

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For more information:

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