

WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER NAMED NEBRASKA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Michael Fryda, a science teacher at Westside High School in Omaha, was named Nebraska Teacher of the Year during a surprise presentation in his classroom today.

Nebraska Commissioner of Education Roger Breed presented the award to Fryda.

Fryda was one of four Nebraska Teacher of the Year finalists.

The following teachers were finalists and will be recognized as Awards of Excellence winners:

- Thomas Jaworski, an instrumental music teacher at Adams Central Public Schools in Hastings.
- Amanda Stalnaker, a special education teacher at Millard North Middle School in Omaha.
- Wanda Stelk, a media technology and gifted education teacher at West Lawn Elementary School in Grand Island.

Fryda has the ability to “light up the classroom with one exceptional lesson after another,” according to one of Fryda’s colleagues. “Mike is a “one-in-a-million educator,” the colleague wrote, an educator who is changing how high school science is taught, how professional development is embedded into teaching to improve teaching and learning and how technology is implemented and integrated across the school district. Fryda was described as a “master teacher and leader, who always finds time to build solid, lasting relationships with his students.”

“The driving force behind Michael’s teaching is his consistent effort to make abstract scientific concepts more tangible and meaningful for students of all abilities,” another colleague wrote. “He works with some of the most challenging students in our school and helps them to succeed in a subject for which many of them lack confidence.”

Fryda has been teaching biology and natural science to Westside High School students for six years and is the school’s natural science team leader. He has worked on state science assessments, a learning task force and the district’s staff development program. He received his Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and completed a Master’s Degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as well as a program on assessment leadership. Currently, Fryda is working on a Doctorate Degree at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in science education and assessment.

A panel of Nebraska educators selected Fryda as the 2010 Nebraska Teacher of the Year. The Teacher of the Year program recognizes the contributions of classroom teachers who are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled and teachers who have the ability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.

Fryda and other Awards of Excellence winners will be honored by the State Board of Education at a luncheon on Nov. 4 at the Nebraska Governor's residence in Lincoln. Fryda will participate in the national Teacher of the Year competition later this year.