



NEWS RELEASE

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Papillion La Vista Band Teacher Named Nebraska Teacher of the Year

Photos and video of the Nebraska Teacher of the Year and Award of Excellence winners are available using the following link.

[2027 Award of Excellence Winners](#)

Zac Konrad, a band teacher at Papillion Middle School was named the 2027 Nebraska Teacher of the Year during a surprise award presentation today.

Nebraska Commissioner of Education Brian Maher presented the award.

Konrad was one of three finalists for the Nebraska Teacher of the Year award. Christina Schik of Bancroft Elementary School in Omaha and Lisa Elsasser from La Vista West Elementary School in La Vista were also finalists and will be recognized as Award of Excellence winners.

Konrad has been a teacher since 2006. He started his career as a 5th-12th grade band teacher in Auburn for three years. He then taught band at Plattsmouth High School before taking on his current role in 2017 as band teacher at Papillion Middle School.

In the classroom, Konrad is deeply student-centered, relationship-focused, and committed to ensuring every student feels valued and capable of success. He consistently creates inclusive learning experiences that meet students where they are, whether through adapting music instruction for students with significant needs, empowering students to recognize and celebrate one another's strengths, or building opportunities that connect students to their broader community. His philosophy is rooted in the belief that all students can learn, that education is fundamentally about relationships, and that meaningful growth happens when students are challenged, supported, and given a sense of belonging.

"I believe all students can learn and that music is for everyone," Konrad wrote in his application. "When societal detractors say, 'Kids these days aren't like they used to be...' I push back because I've seen firsthand their potential. We owe it to these future generations to set them up for the greatest amount of success possible. I want our students to know that, when they become young adults in the community, the impact of our culture-building is long-lasting. We are building future greatness in our schools and I am proud to see our students leading the way."

As the 2027 Teacher of the Year, Konrad wants to focus on the enduring value of relationships in education. He believes teachers are uniquely positioned to inspire, encourage and prepare students for life beyond the classroom. He seeks to

elevate the teaching profession, foster strong school and community partnerships, and remind Nebraskans that educators remain essential to helping students thrive in a rapidly changing world.

"Teachers are the great unifiers in a world in need of harmony," wrote Konrad. "As I watch our world change faster than I ever could have imagined, nothing has rung truer to me than this: Teachers are irreplaceable because we believe in what we do. We believe we make a difference."

Konrad has both a Bachelor of Music and a Master of Music from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He has served as a representative for the Nebraska State Bandmasters Association, on multiple committees and teams for Papillion La Vista Community Schools, was an Ambassador for Education for Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium and is on the Papillion La Vista Education Association Board of Directors. He was also the Secondary Teacher of the Year for Papillion La Vista Community Schools for the 2025-2026 school year.

A panel of Nebraska educators selected Konrad as the 2027 Nebraska Teacher of the Year. The Teacher of the Year program recognizes the contributions of classroom teachers who are exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, skilled, and who have the ability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.

Konrad, Schik, and Elsasser will all be honored by the Nebraska State Board of Education at a reception in January.

Konrad will also participate in the National Teacher of the Year competition later this year.

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