



## NEWS RELEASE

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# SOUTH SIOUX CITY ELEMENTARY TEACHER NAMED NEBRASKA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

***Editor's Note: Photos attached, Nebraska Teacher of the Year and Awards of Excellence winners. Photos are also available using the following link. <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B3poK2xDtLk3NW9aM2lvdFZSRW8>.***

Michelle Helt, a third grade teacher at Cardinal Elementary School in South Sioux City, was named Nebraska 2018 Teacher of the Year today during a surprise award presentation.

Nebraska Commissioner of Education Matt Blomstedt presented the award.

Helt was one of three finalists for Nebraska Teacher of the Year. The following teachers were finalists and will be recognized as Awards of Excellence winners:

- Joni Ebel of Columbus Middle School in Columbus
- Rachael Ann Burns of Omaha Northwest Magnet School in Omaha

Helt has spent her entire career at Cardinal Elementary. She began in 2002 as a resource and Title I reading teacher at both Cardinal Elementary and St. Michael's Catholic School. She then served as an ESL and resource teacher for one year at Cardinal Elementary before becoming a third grade teacher where she has taught since 2004. In addition to her classroom experience Helt is also on the school improvement team, the South Sioux City Professional Development Committee, and is a mentor for practicum students from area colleges. Helt was also a founding member of the South Sioux City District Curriculum Council.

Helt wrote in her Teacher of the Year application that teaching and learning are synonymous and she learns something new every day. She hopes her teaching style encourages her students to do the same.

“My commitment to the profession of teaching has never wavered. I have always known teaching to be my calling and passion in life, Helt wrote. “I feel my greatest accomplishment in education is consistently creating a positive, encouraging learning environment that allows all students to be successful and active participants in their education. Two important factors in helping students reach their potential is helping students understand the “why” behind every standard and student involvement.”

Helt is a 15-year veteran teacher who earned a Bachelor's Degree from Buena Vista University and a Master's Degree from Wayne State College.

A panel of Nebraska educators selected Helt as the 2018 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 who have the ability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.

Helt and the Awards of Excellence winners will be honored by the State Board of Education at a November luncheon.

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

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