



Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

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Contact: Raymond Johnson
johnson_r@cde.state.co.us

POUDRE SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHER AWAITS ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL TEACHING AWARD

Amanda Sutton, a sixth-grade teacher at Leshar Middle School in Fort Collins, was selected as a 2022 Colorado Finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

Sutton, a 13-year veteran teaching in Poudre School District, is one of six Colorado teachers of mathematics awaiting an announcement of the PAEMST awards, the nation's highest honor for U.S. K–12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teachers. The awards program is administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

State finalists represent the most outstanding teachers Colorado has to offer and serve as both a model and an inspiration to students and fellow teachers.

"I took a risk in applying for the math award despite being more confident in my science teaching," says Sutton. "I try to model risk-taking for my students and being selected as a state PAEMST finalist is a great honor." Sutton's PAEMST application noted her desire to support all students and help them not just develop their skills but also to develop a positive attitude towards mathematics. "I struggled through most of my math classes and developed a mindset that I didn't have what it takes to be successful," says Sutton. "Now, I strive to help all students find a connection to mathematics in a way that encourages them to find success," added Sutton. "Amanda is a driven and highly motivated educator," says Jesse Matthews, a former colleague of Sutton's at Leshar Middle School. "She is highly deserving of recognition for her leadership in teaching and her desire to provide the best opportunities for her students."

Sutton joins a prestigious group of recent Colorado mathematics teachers who all await award announcements from the White House, including Erin Wahler-Cleveland of Harrison School District 2 (2022-2023 7-12 finalist), Sidney Cerise of Greeley-Evans School District 6 (2022-2023 7-12 finalist), Amanda Perkins of Denver Public Schools (2021-2022 K-6 finalist), Natalie Sprigg of Douglas County Schools (2020-2021 7-12 finalist), and Aaron Thompson of Adams 12 Five-Star Schools (2020-2021 7-12 finalist).

Each year, a national committee of prominent mathematicians, scientists, mathematics/science education researchers, district-level personnel, and classroom teachers recommends up to 108 teachers to receive PAEMST awards. Up to two teachers—mathematics or science—from each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories as a group (comprising American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and schools operated in the United States and overseas by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) receive the award. Teachers who are selected as PAEMST awardees receive a trip to Washington, D.C., where they attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities. They also receive a \$10,000 award from NSF, a Presidential certificate, and join an elite cohort of award-winning teachers who can influence state/jurisdiction and national STEM teaching.