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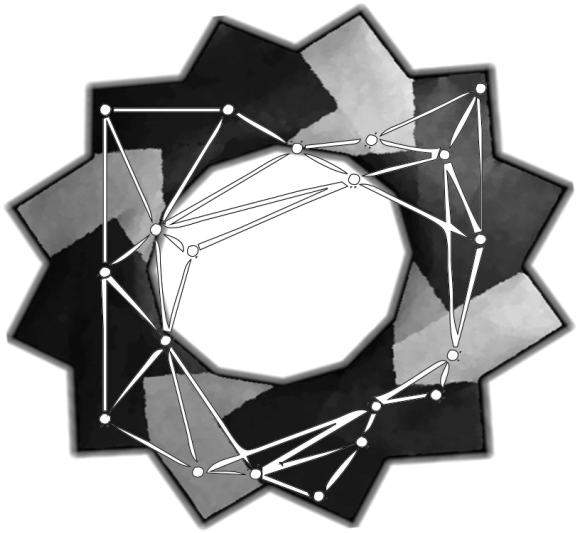

2017 Awards Banquet

Thursday, October 19, 2017
5:30pm

Greater Columbus Convention Center
C 170-172
400 North High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

The Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics wishes to express its gratitude to many who worked to make this banquet a true celebration of mathematics teaching.

We especially wish to thank:
McGraw-Hill and National Geographic/Cengage for financial support which provided some very special touches to the evening.

The musical ensemble from The Urban Strings Columbus Youth Orchestra for so greatly enhancing our reception time with their beautiful music.

Matt Carpenter for the thoughtful and creative editing of our video, giving us a real sense of the special qualities of our teacher awardees.

Danielle Flint for the cleverness and ingenuity that she brought to the creation of the slide presentation, "Getting to Know the Awardees."

Karen Daugherty, Monique Owens, Joan Smith, and Maria Vianello for the beautiful and unique centerpieces which exemplify mathematical connections in a real way.

All of the regional and state awardees for all they do every day to promote mathematics teaching and learning in Ohio.

Central District Awardee—Elementary

Jennifer Findell

Emerson Elementary School, Westerville City Schools

Experience: 2013-current date, Westerville City School District, Fifth Grade Teacher (Gifted Intervention Specialist: 2013-2015 all subjects, 2015-2017 Math and Science)

In the Awardees Own Words: Andrew learns mathematics quietly. Give him an interesting question and the opportunity to think. He'll invent the math and ask a question if he wants help. Callie, on the other hand, has real trouble applying herself to mathematical ideas, unless there is an opportunity for connection with other people. She doesn't often think things through, but is happy to offer her ideas and brainstorm. These are just two examples of countless students who do not learn mathematics the same way. Once upon a time, educators tried to change the children to fit the mathematics box. These days we're trying to let them build it. Because my highly gifted students are unique and often intense people, my fifth grade classroom is a very engaging place. When students are given a voice and the opportunity to create their learning, exciting things happen. There are sometimes rather heated debates. One day we were discussing powers of ten. A student asked what comes before ten to the first power. "What do you think?" I asked.

"Ten to the zero power?"

"Looking at the pattern, what do you think it would be equal to?"

"One."

"In fact, all numbers to the zeroeth power are equal to one."

"Mrs. Findell, I don't think zero to the zeroeth power is equal to one."

"Hmmmmmm."

A great debate ensued.

In addition to allowing students to have a voice and create their own mathematical concepts, I think it's important to stretch my students. If there is no challenge, no frustration, my students are not growing as much as they should be.

Accolades: Jenny Findell has a love for math that is infectious! She knows our state standards very well. She teaches in a way that has students not only learning skills, but applying those skills to real world problems. I have the pleasure of working with Jenny to run Math Olympiad at our school. What stands out to me the most is that she enjoys doing math and solving problems as much as anyone - such a fantastic model for our students! Lastly, she is a great advocate for her students, and keeps them appropriately challenged all year.

Central District--Middle

Stormy Hiram

Madison Plains Junior High School, Madison Plains Local Schools

Experience: 1997-present, Madison-Plains Local Schools, 7th and 8th Grade Math, Pre-Algebra, Algebra

In the Awardee's Own Words: My teaching style has evolved throughout my twenty years of teaching. However, having the opportunity to work with an Instructional Coach has had the greatest impact on my teaching. At one time direct instruction was the basis of my classroom. I would lecture to my students, while showing them examples, and then have them practice. Then they would have homework of several problems to complete on their own. At the time I thought I was an effective teacher. As years have gone by, and standards have changed, I now realize that was not the case. Today my classroom is full of activity. I am constantly using formative assessments to lead my instruction. Not only do I use them to know whether I can move on to the next lesson, but I also use them to create groupings. Keeping them moving and interacting with different classmates keeps them engaged and learning. I try to use activities that are interesting, and sometimes out of the box, to keep my students motivated. I know that students must be engaged in the math and that simply watching me do the math is not effective. Even though my teaching style has changed my teaching philosophy has not changed throughout my twenty years of teaching . I have always believed that ALL students can learn math and that it is not only for those with "math brains." I love helping students change their mindset and realize that they can do it. Jo Boaler's book "Mathematical Mindsets" has been a great resource and given me many ideas to use in the classroom. Even though I teach mainly 8th grade math, I still have many students come back to me throughout their high school years for help. I have tried to build my own toolkit of strategies and structures in the classroom by attending meaningful professional development and working with an Instructional Coach. Change is difficult and has led to moments of frustration, but when I see and hear the excitement of my students I know it was all worth it.

Accolades: Stormy goes above and beyond the expectations of teachers. She works with students during her prep time as well as before and after school. She believes that all students can learn math and works to make them enjoy the learning experience. She coaches the quick recall team in the spring and the fall, instilling the joy of learning in her students. Stormy takes pride in seeing students succeed and works had to continually raise the bar.

West District Awardee--Secondary

Tess Rivero

Bell Brook High School, Bell Brook-Sugar Creek Local Schools

Experience: High School Mathematics Teacher, Tucson, Arizona 1998-2001: West Carrollton High School, 2001-2005: Waynesville High School, 2005-2014: Bellbrook High School, 2014-present

In the Awardee's Own Words: Students learn mathematics by being immersed in rich problems in a collaborative setting. In my classroom, students are active learners. On a daily basis, I ask them to think and to work hard; I do not give them answers and ask them to trudge through formulas. I facilitate their learning rather than disseminate knowledge to them to be memorized. Students frequently work together to solve complex problems, such as the "finite differences" investigation in which they discovered how to write an explicit formula for a sequence that could not be modeled with a simple linear or exponential function. During this investigation, students worked together to discover different methods for finding the formula for a sequence. One method included discovering the relationship between the leading coefficient and the degree of the resulting equation. Students did not realize this at the time, but their discoveries are directly related to Taylor polynomials which they will study in calculus. I use this investigation as an example of my teaching philosophy because not only did I ask students to collaborate and to think at a higher level but also I collaborated with peers to develop and to refine the lesson. I regularly discuss teaching methods and mathematical concepts with peers in order to develop high quality materials and to share what I learn from participating in various professional organizations. In most of my courses we do not go through a textbook in order. I use my content knowledge and experience to blend topics together so that students can make connections and be more likely to retain information. Sure, sometimes they need to memorize formulas, but I stress understanding why formulas work and when to use them, rather than simply regurgitating mathematical facts. Students accomplish this in my classroom by working together and communicating their knowledge to one another and to me both verbally and in writing.

Accolades: Mrs. Rivero is a talented and effective educator. In her classroom she creates a vibrantly effective educational environment with a corresponding level of student satisfaction. Classes are actively engaged in their education under supervision. She is always looking for ways to improve. She is able to reflect on her lessons and determine improved methods and ways to better serve students. Students and colleagues benefit from her leadership. In her mind she teaches students and math is only one tool she uses to do so. She is an outstanding educator and person

West District-Middle

Kyle Ferguson

Bellbrook Middle School, Bellbrook-Sugar Creek Local Schools

Experience: 2006-2009-Kings Local Schools-6th grade math & science; 2009-2012: Kings Local Schools-8th grade pre-algebra & Algebra 1; 2012-present: Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Schools-7th/8th pre-algebra & Algebra 1

In the Awardee's Own Words: I view my role as a facilitator, not a lecturer. Face to face time with my students needs to be more meaningful than talking at them. I flip my instruction. My summer is spent recording my own lesson videos for the upcoming school year. Students complete lesson notes outside of class. This allows students to learn the information at their own pace, not feeling rushed and without the many classroom disruptions. In the classroom I am facilitating student learning by coaching them through the application of the concepts they learned from the previous night. Students are collaborating and discussing, working at the board with me or a small group. My instructional approach frees me up to work one on one with struggling students making differentiation easy. Students have direct access to me immediately when they have questions as opposed to struggling for hours at home and having to wait until they have class again.

Accolades: Kyle was one of the first teachers in our building to flip his classroom. He creates his own videos which include practice problems/checks for his students to view at home. The students then do "real world" application problems at school under his facilitation. The environment is very collaborative. His value-added scores are the highest that I have ever seen with his most recent growth measure of 19.34 (2 is considered accomplished). He holds study sessions on his own time after school. He also does an excellent of keeping his parents informed of their students' progress. He has established himself as a building leader amongst his peers. His high expectations along with his compassion for student learning are a great combination. As an educator he does an excellent job of reaching students of all abilities. He is truly a master teacher with an innate gift of connecting with students

Central District--Secondary

Jean Garrick

St. Francis DeSales High School, Columbus Diocese

Experience: 1988-present, Diocese of Columbus, St. Francis DeSales High School

In the Awardee's Own Words: My teaching style involves inductive reasoning and cooperative learning. At the beginning of a topic I prefer to place a problem in front of the students and ask, "What do you notice?" The "Think, Pair, Share" classroom works well in mathematics as students must reflect on past knowledge to bridge to new ideas. If I allow the students to come up with the theorem or solving process on their own, they will remember it better because they "own" the concept as opposed to me just giving them notes. By discussing their thoughts on a problem, students are more engaged in the lesson. When a student can convey their explanation of a problem to another, I am confident in their understanding. This method also allows students to process the information in a way more conducive to their own learning style. I am incorporating more technology into my lessons through smartboard and iPads. I have used the smartboard for several years, but am just learning how to integrate the iPad more. The newly hired teachers give me lessons, the students answer my questions, and the administration sends me to seminars and conventions. I remain hopeful. In my classes, I have been able to integrate several projects: Scavenger Hunt of pictures students identify place and math idea they noticed; Golden Ratio project where students present several items containing the Golden Ratio, mathematically prove the ratio in the picture, and calculate "phi"; Exponential Decay using skittles to demonstrate half-life and its graph; Euler and the Nine-point Circle to apply constructions; Kite Project where students learn some physics behind kite flying and then construct a kite, fly it, and develop angle of elevation problems. To sum things up. (who doesn't love a good math pun?) I enjoy teaching math and try to instill that same love, wonder, and enthusiasm into my students.

Accolades: First, Mrs. Garrick's attention to detail makes her a tremendous asset to the St. Francis DeSales High School Community. In the simplest of terms, with a work ethic that is second to none, Jean makes everyone around her better. Mrs. Garrick is a leader by example. In my tenure at St. Francis DeSales, I have witnessed Jean as the first to arrive and last to leave in the Mathematics Department as she prepared top notch lessons and made herself available to all students in need of a helping hand. As an educator, completing my 24th year of service to St. Francis DeSales High School, I can honestly say that Mrs. Jean Garrick is one of the finest teachers to have walked these halls.

East District—Elementary

Rachael Bassalla

Knox and Damascus Elementary Schools, West Branch Local Schools

Experience: 2006-2010 Alliance City Schools, Permanent Sub and 4th Grade; 2010-2013 8th Grade Math and Algebra West Branch Local Schools; 2013 - Current Math Coach West Branch Local Schools

In the Awardees Own Words: Contrary to societal beliefs, there is NO proven math gene. My mission is everyone can and will learn to be mathematical thinkers and problem solvers. For the past 4 years, I have been privileged to work in three different mathematics classrooms daily for 7 week sessions. The students, classroom teacher and I work closely, getting to know each other's strengths and challenges. Believing prior knowledge, learning styles, and ways we think are all unique; then why should each classroom look and feel the same? They shouldn't. This is why each teacher and I sit down together to write goals for ourselves to deeply impact the students learning. Students need to be the center of the classroom, driving the thinking. I believe the teacher should ask provoking questions and provide tasks to think about. A fourth grade teacher and I provided the students with a task to write a goal about something they wanted to save money for and how much it costs. Then they had to come up with a plan to earn and save money. It was amazing student work and discussions aligned to the mathematical practices. Students persevered in problem solving, they justified to classmates why their method would work and if it was reasonable. They made tables of their projected incomes for the summer and checked for accuracy. This lesson did not hit one isolated Learning Standard but addressed many to a depth of understanding that no individual set of questions could.

Accolades: Rachael is a tireless worker always looking to enhance mathematics instruction. For the past three years, Rachael has tackled the position of Elementary Math Coach for West Branch Local Schools. Her first year, she looked at the research for best practices to help our math instruction K-4. During her second year, she began helping our teachers implement a new math curriculum. After that first year of implementation, when many other local schools saw a decrease in mathematics scores, Rachael helped our teachers meet and exceed the state standards in grades 3 and 4. Rachael has taken the role of math coach and made it her personal mission to improve all teachers' practices in the classroom. Rachael's enthusiasm and drive are infectious! Leadership comes naturally to her as she leads meetings and professional development. Everything she does is for the betterment of our children and growing their love of math.

West District--Elementary

Laura Niswonger

Cookson Elementary, Troy City Schools

Experience: 2011 - 2012 - Cookson Elementary – Kindergarten; 2012 - 2013 - Concord Elementary - First Grade; 2013 - 2017 - Cookson Elementary - First Grade

In the Awardees' Own Words: In my classroom, I try to incorporate a well- balanced math program. I use the Whole Brain Teaching Method that emphasizes student based learning. Much of my daily math routine is hands on and student led. The daily math lessons include a calendar time, number of the day, math mania, number talks and math exploration. Math centers are utilized four days a week with STEM activities on the fifth day. All small group lessons and center activities are homogeneous and differentiated to meet the needs of each student. Students are grouped according to their developmental needs. Utilizing STEM activities in the classroom has been very effective means of engaging student learning and helping to build a concrete understanding of first grade content. For the activities, students are placed in heterogeneous groups and given a task to complete. They are encouraged to share their ideas with their partners before beginning the task and then write about the outcome of the task as well as state what went well and what was challenging after the task is complete. The math lessons incorporated in the classroom are cross-curricular as much as possible helping students gain a deeper understanding of the math concepts taught. I believe utilizing a well-balanced inquiry based program in the classroom is an effective means of building student understanding of the importance of math in everyday life.

Accolades : Laura Niswonger is a student's dream teacher! Laura's classroom is an exciting, intentional, student-centered and student-specific learning place! She creates a real-world learning experience everyday by offering authentic and cross-curricular learning experiences. She begins each day with a class meeting which transitions into a 15-20 minute number talk. Every one of her students is engaged in mathematical thinking and reasoning! When it is time for mathematics later in the day, students work in intentional and flexible groups with specific purposes and goals. In the mornings before school, what does a teacher like Laura Niswonger do--she is involved in regular professional development with her colleagues and district math coach. She is a very humble, forever learner, while she is also a tremendous mentor for our new teachers and those who want to learn about what she is doing/how she is doing it! Her understanding of student development, use of data for decision-making and lesson planning, knowledge of mathematics and her dedication of time and energy and resources to create appropriate learning experiences at just the right time is not only a student's dream--but also is a school's and profession's tremendous resource.

Southwest District Awardee—Secondary
Jo Guido
Clark Montessori School, Cincinnati Public Schools

Experience: 1985-present, Cincinnati Public Schools, Mathematics teacher

In the Awardee's Own Words: Today, the last school day of 2017, I received a card from a student that said, "Thank you for making me like math again. So much that I want to pursue it in college. I used to think that I just couldn't do it, and I don't feel that way anymore." This sentiment exemplifies what I believe and practice in my math classroom, that every student is capable of being successful in math. In my Montessori school, I teach the same group of students in 11th and 12th grade. On the first day of 11th grade, I introduce students to a Rubik's cube and tell them they will learn to solve the cube by the end of the year. Very few students believe me. We begin by learning to solve the white face. Each quarter we add another layer, until the end of the year when students simultaneously and quickly complete the cube. I use the Rubik's cube as a metaphor for learning math. One of the best things about teaching cube solving is that the students who often struggle academically tend to be the best and quickest cube solvers. Watching students help someone who they've previously considered as "better than me at math" is always a delight. For each objective that we study students are exposed to and can choose from hands-on group and individual activities, calculator based discovery lessons, group problem solving, independent practice, continuous spiraled review, traditional lessons, video recorded lessons, and projects. Montessori philosophy emphasizes "work of the hands" in addition to traditional academics. One of the first books I read as a beginning teacher was called, "Making Minutes Count." The advice I found in that book, that every single minute is important, is a philosophy and a habit I still embrace 32 years later. My students know that what they do every minute matters and that mindful attention to learning results in success.

Accolades: Jo has dedicated her life to making mathematics accessible and meaningful for all students. At Clark, we require four years of math for all students, and we face the additional challenge of merging Montessori methods with public school standards and high school sophistication. Jo has been a leader and visionary in making this happen at Clark. She is generous with her time, taking on leadership roles at the building and district level, helping students far beyond the school day. She has developed numerous math-related "intersessions," introduced robotics and computer programming courses, and takes students camping and hiking. Jo's classroom itself is inspirational, filled with images and models of the beauty inherent in mathematics. She is a model for all students and teachers.

East District--Middle
Stephanie Collier
Lincoln PK-8 School, Warren City Schools

Experience: 2009 - 2012, Eagle Heights Academy, 6th Grade Math/Science; 2012 - 2015, South Side Academy, 5th & 6th Grade Science, 7th & 8th Grade Math; 2015 - Present, Lincoln PK-8, 6th Grade Math/Science

In the Awardees Own Words: "Math is power." Those three words have resonated with me ever since 8th grade Algebra class. It was not until that class that I ever really appreciated and questioned the role of mathematics in my life and my future. During the class, I remember asking questions concerning the validity of my answers, critiquing my classmates' work, and solving problems using multiple strategies. My teacher, Mr. Deramo, always encouraged us to think critically and question everything. As my math education progressed, I had more teachers who shared this student-centered approach to teaching, which inspired me to give that same experience to students. At the heart of my teaching philosophy is growth mindset. From day one of instruction, I teach my students to not be afraid of failure and to persevere. They know that it is okay to make mistakes and that struggling is a "good" thing. One of the ways I build and shape this kind of thinking is through Socratic Questioning. In addition, student engagement and teacher excitement about the beauty of mathematics helps develop students' mathematical growth mindsets.. I tailor instructional approaches, class investigations, and homework assignments to fit individual students' needs. Lastly, I truly believe that the best learners are those who continually reflect on their progress and recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Each day, I give students the opportunity for this reflection through journaling. Overall, I believe that for students to appreciate the power of mathematics, teachers need to pose rich, open, and meaningful tasks and questions to students, appeal to individual learning styles and needs through differentiation, and give more student control in the classroom through Socratic Questioning and self-assessment. As a result, students will develop a growth mindset, take ownership of their learning, and become a reflective practitioner of mathematics.

Accolades: Stephanie is an innovator. She is extremely thoughtful and reflective in her practice, and is always seeking out a way to better while keeping the students in mind. She is consistently looking at ways to access what students know and can do, and to give them a platform in which to shine. She is pushing herself to really dive deeply into mathematical thinking with her students and to use the standards for mathematical practice in every lesson. Her students recognize this and typically rise to the challenge, with many taking ownership of their learning and understanding for the first time in years.

East District—Secondary

Amy Latsch

Alliance High School, Alliance City Schools

Experience: 2005-2010 Fairborn High School, 9-12 Math; 2010 - Present, Alliance High School, 9-12 Math

In the Awardee's Own Words: I believe that all students can not only "pass" math, but can truly understand it and grow every day in their mathematical skills and interests during standards based instruction. Teaching in a district that is 100% free lunch, there are often (understandably) values from my students' homes and lives that do not always prioritize mathematics. When a student is not sure there is going to be dinner, their math homework can seem trivial. I believe my job is to give those students back hope and an appreciation of mathematics. To accomplish this, I focus on interesting problems that answer the question "When will I ever use this?" When studying linear functions we discuss renting apartments, using the down payment as the y-intercept and the monthly rent as the slope. We discuss additional costs and the rates of change associated with them to see if they are linear. We check to see if there is a correlation between the cost of electric/gas bills to the month of the year and if we can create an equation of regression to help predict future bills. I once had a parent contact me saying that their student took what he had learned and helped plan their family budget. The parent was overwhelmed that her student not only had the skills to help, but took the initiative to ask about their budget and expenses. We work in pairs, small groups, large groups, stations, peer discovery groups, and peer taught groups. Students write on whiteboards and desktops, airdrop onto projectors and iPads, and present to their classmates. Knowledge is wonderful, but it means nothing if that knowledge cannot be shared and built upon by others. We are a global community in which students should actively contribute. My students actively contribute to that community. I believe my job is to make the standards come alive for my ALL of my students every day.

Accolades: Amy is a high-energy teacher who truly loves her profession and cares about kids. Amy's enthusiasm is apparent during every lesson that she teaches, and her energy is contagious. Amy has high expectations for her students. They will tell you that she is a great teacher and she is tough. Amy demands a lot from her students and will work with them before, during, or after school to get them where they need to be. Her students are excited to learn because Amy makes learning exciting. Whether she is running around the room helping students with group work or working with students one on one, Amy always gives it her all. Amy is a real asset to our school and our community, and especially to our students.

Southwest District--Middle

Joanne Aghotte

Harrison Junior School, Southwest Local Schools

Experience: 1996-2001, Lee County Schools-NC, 3rd and 5th grade; 2001-present, Southwest Local Schools, 3rd, 5th, and 6th grade-math

In the Awardee's Own Words: "I hate math! I'm not a math person." This is what I hear year after year from many of my students. It is my mission each year to change their mindset. There are several factors that I find help students develop a passion for mathematics. First of all, students must be actively engaged. In my classroom I use many different techniques to keep students engaged in their learning. I have a smart board and an on-line math program that provide students with interactive lessons. Secondly, it is important that students understand the "why" of math, not just the "how". For example, when teaching multiplying a fraction by a fraction, I give students a grid. We use yellow to shade the first fraction in rows, and blue to shade the second fraction in columns. The yellow and blue that overlaps changes to green, which is the answer to the multiplication problem. Students are able to see what is actually happening when you multiply a fraction by fraction. Third, students need immediate feedback and second chances. Second chances on tests are important for students. They need to understand that learning doesn't have to stop at the test. Students must analyze and tell me what they did wrong, tell me what they know now, and show me how they should have solved the problem. Finally, students who are lacking grade-level appropriate skills need time to develop these areas. Some of this can be done in the classroom but there also needs to be extra supports. This year, our building added an RTI bell but it was heavily focused on reading. After much research and planning, I was able to convince the RTI Coordinator and my principal to let me implement an RTI program focused on mathematics. The growth so far has been tremendous! I strongly believe that these factors are important in teaching math to. When parents say "Surprisingly, math is my child's favorite subject this year," I know that the mindset has been changed and a math lover has been created!

Accolades: Joanne is an amazing teacher who has worked across grade levels. Joanne has created and led our RTI program and looked not only to invent remediation for our students, but innovate others. She is a leader to her peers and amplifies leadership to her students. She has been involved in a variety of social growth projects. Joanne has the ability to connect with ALL students. She is patient and kind, supportive to her students, and most importantly she finds a way to push students from all levels. Her top academic students feel pushed and supportive by her, just as her low academic students do. She is hard working, caring, and compassionate.

Southwest District--Elementary

Jana Anneken

St. John the Baptist, Harrison Private School

Experience: 1989-1996 St. Ursula Villa, 4th grade Math/Science, 2008-2017 St. John the Baptist, Harrison Private School, Kindergarten or 4th grade Math/Science.

In the Awardee's Own Words: I believe each child can learn at his/her individual level. I have high expectations of each of my students and push them to perform at his/her potential. I take full advantage of the technology offered through Go Math, which is a standards-based interactive textbook to teach 4th grade Math. My Math classes are very interactive allowing students to ask many questions, rework problems, explain different strategies that work, and feel success along the way. The students have the freedom to sit where they are comfortable, stand if they need to, and implement tools that help them learn. Throughout my classes, I try to break the concepts down into very understandable parts to allow students the ease of learning without the typical math anxiety. As one of my past students once said, "... you keep the class going and you make things make sense." That is the best compliment I could have received. The students also enjoy Math in ways that are not as structured as a traditional classroom. For example, they use their knowledge of coordinate pairs to plot points which create a picture they can color. Many concepts they learn in the classroom are used to play games in small groups or as a whole class. The games that are used allow and promote success in all students. I have always enjoyed Math and strive to ignite that excitement in my students. Teaching Math is my passion. I enjoy witnessing the 'light bulb' moment as concepts begin to make sense to students. I also really enjoy changing the hearts and minds of students who used to dislike Math into students who are successful at Math and maybe even like it!

Accolades: This teacher is determined to help every child in her class meet their potential for mastering the math standards. She maintains high standards for everyone, but differentiates as needed in order to help each child believe in their ability to do math. The pacing is brisk and the activities engaging in both the math classes, producing great achievement results. The teacher uses Google classroom, Smart board technology, online instructional resources, and other supplements to support and review the standards and has built daily intervention and enrichment time into the end of her math instruction. She and two other teachers also have designed a school Math Club which meets after school and has become very popular. Our students love math!

Northeast District--Elementary

Nancy Tracz

Brentmoor Elementary School, Mentor Public Schools

Experience: 1996-2003, Mentor Schools: Substitute and Grade ITeacher; 2003-2005 (stayed home with children); 2005-2015 Rice Elementary Grades 1 or 4; 2015-2017, Mentor Schools, Grade 4 at Brentmoor Elementary

In the Awardee's Own Words: My math classroom is a busy place where students learn by hearing, seeing, writing, doing, and talking mathematics. I believe all students learn in different ways, and certainly at different paces. Whole group, direct instruction is still an important, but I limit it in order to provide ample amount of time for students to collaborate and practice to work towards deeper learning. Even during whole group math instruction, when a question is posed, all students are asked to "turn and talk" with a partner before a response is shared. This ensures that all students are engaged, accountable, and most importantly, thinking and talking about math! I use math stations as a way to personalize learning in my classroom. I place the letters M-A-T-H on my whiteboard to guide the stations. "M" stands for "Math with Mrs. Tracz". During this time I am able to intervene with small groups of students either to reteach, deepen understanding, or enrich. "A" stands for "At Your Own Pace". With digital personalized learning tools, students are able to work independently on lessons that are appropriate for them. "T" stands for either "Technology" or "Teach Someone Else". When I find a digital tool that will deepen learning of the standard, I will use Google Classroom to assign practice. Other times, students are asked to create their own lessons to teach others about the standard they are learning. Finally, the "H" stands for "Hands on Math". During this station, students engage in related math games or activities using manipulatives such as cards, dice, or task cards with self-checking opportunities to encourage problem solving. I find math stations a perfect supplement to whole group instruction. The incorporation of technology allowing for blended learning has significantly increased student engagement. Additionally, I am able to monitor progress on the personalized learning programs and make adjustments as needed. I am also able to make student groups flexible since they are based on formative checkpoints such as pre-tests, exit tickets, or observation to determine needs.

Accolades: Mrs. Tracz has increased our students' math scores over the last few years. Last year she had over 90% of her students pass the state test. She uses manipulatives and hands-on materials daily and is the best math teacher I have ever seen. She makes sure her students understand math concepts by asking questions, providing time for investigations and math talks, and by creating unique ways to present information. Her class is always engaged in activities that increase their knowledge and skills AND, at the same time, having fun doing so!

Northeast District--Middle

Christa Krohn

Brady Middle School, Orange Schools

Experience: 2002-2003, High School Math, IN; 2004 Arlington High School; 2005, Pandora School District; 2005- 2009, Lima High School of Multiple Intelligences; 2009-2010, MC2 STEM High School, Cleveland Metropolitan School District; 2010- 2014, Woodbury School, Shaker Heights School District; 2014- 2015 Instructional Math Coach, Shaker Heights; 2015-present, Instructional Math Coach K-8, Brady Middle School and Moreland Hills Elementary School, Orange Schools

In the Awardee's Own Words: I approach any opportunity to teach from a strength based, hands-on, and inquiry lens. I believe when learners have a compelling and relevant reason to learn they become motivated and engaged increasing their ability to make connections to other content areas. The inquiry lessons, sometimes PBL based lessons, that I write are always driven from the standards. Recently, I co-authored a performance based assessment (PBA) in my Stanford SCALE training. When I taught this math 6 PBA, students were highly engaged in solving a shipping dilemma using USPS boxes and rates to ship candy to a friend in another state. I have led our middle school math department in creating PBA's. It is vital to not only tend to the academic understanding but also to the emotions that also come up for students in mathematics learning. I work with students to understand that mistakes are valuable and that there is no such thing as math people and non-math people. I worked with our math department to identify areas where we could promote a growth mindset in our classrooms and we developed mini lessons and small warm up activities to teach the importance of having a growth mindset. Additionally, my work at a Multiple Intelligences school has helped me to develop the practice of looking at ways in which students learn and access information based on their learning styles. I am always careful to ensure that I facilitate learning utilizing various styles. I work with adults in my role as well. I always approach coaching conversations from a point of strength and inquiry.. I am a firm believer in professional reflection and often create time and space for the teachers in the math department to meaningfully reflect on their practice.

Accolades: Christa is our Math coach who goes above and beyond to help her colleagues. She strives each and every day to make sure we are doing what is best for our students to both high achieve and succeed. Recently, she has also been involved with coaching at the elementary levels and she has been a key part in the design of our FabLab for our STEM at Brady Middle School. Christa is also a part of our CBE team, PBA design with ILN, and PBL cohorts. She does so much with so little time - she is amazing.

Southeast District-Middle School

Shannon Leasure

Shenandoah Middle School, Noble Local Schools

Experience: 2009-2010- Ohio Virtual Academy Title I Mathematics, 2010-Present- Noble Local Schools 7th Grade Pre-Algebra, 8th Grade Math, and Algebra 1.

In the Awardee's Own Words: I believe before any true learning of mathematics or any subject can take place, students must first feel respected, valued, and confident in their ability to learn. They need to feel comfortable asking questions as well as making mistakes throughout the learning process so the learning can be authentic, meaningful, and relevant. I encourage students to help each other and provide opportunities for them to work collaboratively on a daily basis. Instead of traditional homework, I give students individual Khan Academy missions for which they can earn awards and an ice cream party at the end of the year. Students also create their own teams and compete weekly to determine which team picture will be hung in the classroom. Integration of technology into our classroom experience has helped students immensely in their individual growth. In my class, we believe learning is not an absolute, meaning knowledge of mathematical topics continues to develop even after a standard is taught. For this reason, I require my students to correct mistakes on each graded assignment with written explanations. After interventions and corrections, students are able to retake different versions of assessments. I also conference with each of my students after every graded assignment. More important than curriculum and classroom practice, you must demonstrate to children your dedication to helping them become academically successful. For this reason, from October until Mid-February, I offer free tutoring to 5-12th grade students on a weekly basis. I also volunteer coach our school Math Counts team, which placed second in our region this year; and one of our "mathletes" will be advancing to the state competition. Anything I can do to ensure our students become more successful particularly in mathematics, I will do in a heartbeat.

Accolades: I have been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to nominate Ms.Shannon Leasure for your award. Ms. Leasure teaches 8th grade math, along with an advanced Pre-Algebra and Algebra class. Her students score extremely well on the state test and her VA / SGM are always accomplished. Along with her class success, she works diligently with her colleagues to provide our students with opportunities such as Math Counts, Math and Science Nights and Khan Academy competition during our Flex periods. She serves on Ohio Range-finding and Public Validation for Grade 8 Math. I could go on about Ms. Leasure but, the real measure is that she gives of her own time during her lunch period and after school for extra help and tutoring.

Southeast District–Elementary

Darla Sheets

Alexander Elementary School, Alexander Local Schools

Experience: 2007-09 Alexander Elementary 5th grade Language Arts and Math; 2009-present Alexander Elementary 5th grade Math

In the Awardees Own Words: I believe students learn best by doing, and having the opportunity to experiment with and manipulate numbers to see how they behave. Students are more engaged in math when they are working to make sense of a concept rather than memorizing how to "do" math. My students work in an environment where they are given the opportunity to use their own knowledge to explore numbers and find a variety of strategies to solve math problems, many of which are word problems. Students share their success and failures with others and discuss their thinking and strategies with the class. I use two different learning experiences to give students the chance to explore in this manner. One way I present this type of learning is through Number Talks, from the book by Sherry Parrish. I use Number Talks because it gives students the opportunity to use learned strategies as well as student developed strategies to solve problems. We make connections between operations and discover how these operations relate to each other. Students gain a better understanding of how to use the properties of mathematics and how the properties make problem solving easier. I encourage student thinking by using standards-based problems that can be solved in a variety of ways. Students are given a word problem to solve using as many different strategies as they can. I end each year with Math Fair. Students each choose a standard, develop a word problem about that standard, then create a model to solve the problem. Math Fair gives students the opportunity to apply their learning to a real-world scenario, think through the process of solving, and show their process using their model. Projects are displayed in the gymnasium to share with our community.

Accolades: Darla Sheets is a veteran teacher in the fifth grade at Alexander. Since the implementation of the Ohio Learning Standards, Mrs. Sheets has been striving to improve outcomes for students. As a classroom teacher, she adopted best practices and implemented strategies for differentiating instruction with her Intervention Specialist co-teacher. Mrs. Sheets is a leader on the building Mathematics Committee and worked to adopt a new curriculum. She organized a book study, developed the agenda for the meetings, and led the discussions of the chapters. As a result, her STAR Math scores increased and value added scores in her classroom improved.

Northeast District—Secondary

Patricia (Patti) Talarczyk

Mentor High School, Mentor Public Schools

Experience: Mentor High School - 2008-2009 school year to present

In the Awardee's Own Words: My pedagogical goal is to create a learning environment where students use introductory principals and light instruction to engage in tasks that grow their understanding of deeper mathematical relationships. I work to achieve this using a variety of strategies including:

- Collaborative work: My classroom is structured to encourage collaboration in learning.. I create activities that require students to use prior knowledge, incorporating some new instruction, students use those ideas to build deeper Geometric observations and understandings
- Project Based Learning: Last year I started incorporating project based learning into my curriculum through a Conic Sections project. Because it went so well, this year I will have completed three project based units.
- Personalized Learning - One of my favorite tasks, is to provide personalized learning/review experiences through the use of menus. Students are given a list of options ranging from reviewing the basics through enrichment tasks along with some partial requirement guidelines. Students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning needs to guide choices.
- Stations: Students will rotate through several learning stations. These stations typically incorporate a mix of technology-based stations such as lesson videos or online formative quizzes as well as hands-on stations. I also like to include a teacher-led station, particularly in co-taught classes.
- Blended environment: In addition to the blend of technology, hands-on, and traditional instruction mentioned above, I also incorporate technology into my classes using Desmos Activity Builder and Polygraph, GeoGebra explorations, and lesson videos.

My students also completed a group project focused on implementing the GAISE Model to answer a question using probability.

Accolades: Patricia (Patti) is an excellent mathematics teacher, a mentor to many other teachers, and a leader in technology integration. She is also an active member and director of GCCTM, plans and creates professional development opportunities for Northeast Ohio mathematics teachers, and has presented at many local mathematics educator conferences. Patti collaborates with local leaders to constantly improve her own teaching practices. She is truly a change agent for mathematics education in our community.

Northwest District--Elementary

Colleen Aiken

Meadowvale Elementary, Washington Local Schools

Experience: 2008-2010, Washington Local Schools, 6th Grade and 3-6 LEAP; 2010-2012, Maritime Academy of Toledo, 5th-9th Grade Mathematics; 2012-2017, Washington Local Schools, K-6 Math Coach

In the Awardee's Own Words: When I teach a math lesson there is a lot of movement. Whether it is the students or myself there is always action. When there is action, students are more likely to pay attention. Depending on the grade level that I am working with for each lesson we still follow the normal I do, we do, you do format. However, I always try to spice it up in some way. Many times I bring in games or activities to teach students a concept. Playing games to learn math may be one of the most overlooked concepts among teachers. Games allow students to play and learn from others. We play music while we work and try to make math fun! I have high standards in all grades. I expect students to do their best, show their strategies for solving problems, and be able to fix mistakes. I believe that making mistakes and letting students struggle is super important to teaching math. In order to have success with this I need to always make sure the students feel safe in my classroom and know that I will be there to guide them back to the correct answer.
I do a weekly math workshop for grades K-6 and in math workshop we do PROJECTS. Recently we have completed recipe projects in 4th grade where they had to double and triple recipes. Also, in 4th grade they did a real estate project where they needed to buy houses and write checks for them while staying within their budget. 5th graders are working on a volume project building a 3D figure. 3rd graders made an array city. The buildings had windows in an array and they wrote the multiplication fact for the buildings. 6th grade is working on a "life" project where they have a job and a monthly budget. It is important for students to make real world connections to mathematics and that is what I try to accomplish in these projects. I have been focusing on building number sense in grades K-2. We have been working with manipulatives and games and activities to build students understanding with numbers.

Accolades: Mrs. Aiken is a very motivating and engaging teacher for every grade in this school. She plans lessons, runs workshops and does after school activities to teach math. She clearly loves math and really gets students excited about doing math and learning.

South District--Secondary

Jeffrey Strawser

Jackson High School, Jackson City Schools

Experience: August 1993 to present, Jackson City Schools, Mathematics

In the Awardee's Own Words: Ohio's Learning Standards provide a great foundation for our students to build upon. So my lessons have these standards deeply imbedded in them. With the traditional options, constantly emerging technologies, and new career fields our students need a strong, broad-based education. I believe students learn in multiple ways. I also believe that each student has a specific learning style that is the best for them. As an educator, I feel that I should provide as many learning pathways for my students as possible. I use lecture, reading assignments, hands-on activities, video presentations, group work and the flipped classroom approach. I feel that students need to learn how to become proficient learners in multiple learning styles. By using multiple approaches to delivering the content my students need to learn, they can also display their mastery of the material in several ways. My students create an impressive semester and final exam study guide. They use the TI-Nspire app for iPads along with the Google Classroom to be able to share this document. Students not only showcase their mastery of the material but also their ability as digital natives to use new technology. I learn more about who my students are, how they learn, and the depth of their understanding, by not just using multiple methods of instruction but also multiple methods of evaluation. A student cannot just have one approach to learning that will work for every discipline and situation. I feel that we should help our learners increase their strongest method but also become better at using other methods as well. If I can teach my students how to become better learners, then I have accomplished something special. I try to instill in my students that they shouldn't be limited by what one person can teach them. They should take the best that each person can give from everyone they can and continue growing into the most complete person they can become. My philosophy of education is to help my students become more than they thought they could be.

Accolades: Mr. Strawser is and has been a leader at Jackson High School as part of our math department, through example and as a mentor. He is hard working, goal driven, and passionate about math education. As a leader in the building and department, he strives to meet the students at their ability level and interest and grow those students using a variety of high-yield strategies and technology. There is no individual in math education more deserving of any and all recognition for his commitment to his students and passion for his content.

South District –Middle

Erin Scott

Lynchburg-Clay Middle School, Lynchburg Clay Schools

Experience: 2002-2005, Lynchburg-Clay Elementary, 4th & 5th grade; 2005-present, Lynchburg-Clay Middle School, 8th grade math/Algebra

In the Awardee's Own Words: A day in my classroom is open, hands-on and engaging. A typical day may start with a brain teaser or basic review question. This a warm up just as if students are playing a sport. Then we get into the nitty-gritty of the lesson. Problems are given and we work them out together. Then they go on their own to persevere through the problem. There are whispers throughout the room as students discuss their answers and help each other. A classroom has many different learning styles. One day students may go on a scavenger hunt which benefits the students who need to get up and move around. This is a favorite review tool as students are self-checking as they go on their hunt. This also allows students to interact with each other. When we talk about math and hear ourselves say it, we remember it. Another day involves seated group work for those who like to work with others.. Typically students work alone first. This reaches the student who thrives working quietly by themselves. Then students get into small groups to discuss their answer and help each other. Toward the end of class we come together to discuss the answers. For the students who like art, there are plenty of art/math related activities. Students use technology daily to review concepts, investigate linear, quadratic or absolute value functions and also reflect on their learning and share with others by posting a video. Each day is an adventure in my math classroom. Students learn more than the value of n, they take away skills to make them lifelong learners.

Accolades: Mrs. Scott has made Pi Day a day students will never forget. She has organized the celebration so students come to the gym and participate at different stations. Of course there is the famous Pi Baking contest where students bring baked goods. Another event includes athletic talent where students try to hula hoop for three minutes and 14 seconds, or create a team and attempt to shoot as many three point baskets as they can in thirty seconds. For the artistic students there is an art contest which they have to use circles or incorporate Pi or create a Pi Poem. Not all students create an item, but everyone can vote for their favorite. The competitive students can memorize as many digits as they can for the Pi Bee or list as many items that are circles in the gym in 3 minutes and fourteen seconds. Students also practice calculations with Pi by finding the volume and surface area of cylinders. There is the opportunity to draw the perfect circle. This year circle mazes were added, students try to complete three mazes in three minutes and 14 seconds. Mrs. Scott is always anxious to share more in detail "A Celebration of Pi" and how any math teacher can make it a celebration students will remember.

Northwest District--Middle

Pamela Scott

Edison Middle School, Edison Local Schools

Experience: I have taught 26 years at Edison Middle School, teaching 6th grade, 7th grade, and currently 8th grade.

In the Awardee's Own Words: Math can be a frustrating subject for many. My philosophy is to help the students not only be able to understand the concepts in math, but also to be able to understand why the math works. If students understand why a certain math concept works or how it works, they are more likely to remember it, as well as more likely to be able to apply the concept to the Real World. I start the year off asking students to raise their hands if they like math. This usually does not get many hands in most of my classes. I then tell them that I like that challenge and that it is all just a puzzle that we will be solving together throughout the year. Another part of my philosophy is to try and relieve the anxiety that accompanies math with many students. One way I try to do that is to have students sit in groups. This allows them to work together to help each other and ask each other questions, instead of in front of the entire class. Being comfortable in the classroom helps with respect of the classroom, the teacher, and the class itself. With this type of atmosphere, I feel that the students are more likely to take risks with their learning and push themselves with the more difficult material. Even though I am one of the more seasoned teachers in the math department, I have really embraced the new digital era. Starting many years ago with the smart board technologies, to now using Google Classroom, and many other new digital sources, I have jumped on the digital train. By embracing the new world, the students will learn how to use it to help them to succeed with their mathematics. Students actually share with me many of the new apps and so forth because they know that I'm okay with them using them, if they can still show me how much they have learned. We live in a new world now and our philosophies need to change along with it.

Accolades: Pam's ability to create high levels of mathematical understanding with her students is greater than any other math teacher I have been associated with in my seventeen years of education. Her state test results speak for themselves, reflected by her 100% proficiency and 8.47 value added rating for her Algebra I students. Beyond her ability as a teacher of math, Pam is a wonderful person. Students respect her, enjoy her class, and look forward to their interactions with Mrs. Scott on a daily basis. She creates a learning environment that cultivates success and confidence that allows her students to exceed even their own expectations.

Northwest District--Secondary

John Rader

Van Buren High School, Van Buren Local Schools

Experience: 1980 to present: Van Buren School: Pre-Calculus, Trigonometry, Statistics, Algebra, Geometry, Computer Programming, 7th Grade Mathematics, Guidance Counselor

In the Awardees Own Words: I believe all students can learn mathematics, but not all students learn mathematics at the same rate or by the same teaching methods. I use various teaching styles in my classroom. Sometimes I use a version of the "flipped classroom," sometimes I use a more traditional style, and I am experimenting with Standards-Based grading. In all cases, I think it is important that each student feels that my classroom is a safe environment in which to ask questions and learn. I strive to involve all students in the daily discussion. This may be accomplished by allowing the students to lead the discussion and questioning while allowing other students to give input on how problems might be viewed and solved. In my advanced classes, I use a more traditional lecture style, so that my students are prepared to learn in a typical college mathematics classroom. Even in these classes I use discussion to get students to participate in the teaching process. I introduce technology whenever possible using the TI calculator. One of the things that I have grown to appreciate over my 37 years of teaching is being able to know most of my students on a personal level. By doing this, I am able to understand how each student learns best. I have seen students who would not communicate verbally learn how to interact in a classroom environment, seen students who were intimidated by all forms of math grow to love it, and have had the luxury of teaching children of many of my former students.

Accolades: John is that rare combination of enthusiasm, patience, grit, and positive spirit. His enthusiasm for students and mathematics is on constant display. His classroom is always alive with posters and articles about math and school events. His demeanor with students and staff alike let us know that he was in his element every day, every period, whether in a basic math section or advanced. Many students are convinced in middle school or before that they aren't good at math. John takes it as a personal challenge to change those attitudes. His patience and willingness to review an equation "One more time" gave hope to even the most fearful student. His grit let his students know that he was NOT going to give up on them, and he was not about to let them give up on themselves. John exemplifies the attitude every successful student needs--not just in the mathematics classroom, but in daily life: *do not quit.* Dozens of Van Buren alumni have gone on to challenging, mathematics-based careers because of the potent teaching of John Rader.

South District—Elementary

Brittany Oxley

Hillsboro Elementary, Hillsboro

Experience: Dec 17, 2007-May 2017 Hillsboro Elementary in 3rd grade (self-contained and departmentalized)

In the Awardee's Own Words: My philosophy of how students learn mathematics is deeply rooted in the mathematical process standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). In order to create mathematical thinkers, students need to build a conceptual framework for all mathematical skills and use this to grapple with new ideas to support theories and conjectures in their own learning. My goal is to equip students with many strategies (i.e., hands-on manipulatives, pictures, number lines, expanded form, adding/subtracting in parts, decomposition, compensations, transformations) to use when engaging in problem solving. Students are always encouraged to share what they know. By allowing students to investigate they develop confidence in their abilities as mathematical thinkers and have a sense of ownership for their ideas. Students are not asked to follow any one specific procedure given by the teacher because all individuals learn in a unique and different way. As students learn to develop their mathematical thinking throughout the process of engaging in mathematics, they will strengthen their understanding of reasonableness and apply this when determining the product. Students are expected to create, evaluate, analyze, and apply what they are learning. These are higher level skills and lead to deeper understanding and learning than merely recalling and memorizing information. Lessons are purposely planned to incorporate four instructional phases that represent the gradual release model; focused instruction, guided instruction, collaborative learning, and independent learning. "To gradually release responsibility is to equip students with what they need to be engaged and self-directed learners" (Fisher & Frey). As a mathematical educator, my passion is ensuring that all students receive the highest quality math education possible through rigorous, differentiated, structured, purposeful learning that embodies the heart of mathematics.

Accolades: Mrs. Oxley is worthy of this recognition because she is an outstanding math teacher. Students are not allowed to fail in her classroom. She will spend lunch, planning, and time after school to make sure her students reach the goals she has set for them. Mrs. Oxley is constantly working on improving her craft and staying current with best practices in math instruction. Students in her classroom learn to think and talk about math. Students are not allowed to have the excuse, "I'm not good at math!" Math is essential just like reading. Mrs. Oxley has also embraced a position on our district leadership team and building leadership team. I look to her to help guide the district in improving math instruction across the board.