

For Immediate Release

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Two CCSD teachers honored with Presidential Award

Math and biology teachers highlight quality instruction in CCSD's STEM programs

LAS VEGAS – In honor of National STEM Day, the Clark County School District (CCSD) is recognizing two teachers recently awarded the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) in Washington, D.C.

Arbor View High School biology teacher Heather Witt and Advanced Technologies Academy math teacher Kristen Taylor were among four winners in Nevada. Recipients of the award earned a trip to Washington, D.C., to attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation.

“Our tremendous teachers are an example of the wonderful educators we have in classrooms throughout the District,” CCSD Superintendent Dr. Jesus F. Jara said. “Ms. Witt and Ms. Taylor help improve the performance of their students as well as their colleagues, and they will continue to do so for years to come thanks to the recognition and professional development that come with the award.”

[Heather Witt](#) has been a science educator for eight years and has spent the last two years teaching 9-12th grade biology at Arbor View High School. She previously taught at K.O. Knudson Middle School, Clifford J. Lawrence Junior High School and Duane D. Keller Middle School.

“Ms. Witt made an immediate impact on our school when she came to Arbor View. It is always a pleasure to be able to spend time in her classes with her engaged students,” Arbor View High School Principal Kevin McPartlin said. “Ms. Witt's knowledge of her curriculum and passion for her students allowed her to quickly rise to a leadership position within her well-established department. Ms. Witt dedicates numerous hours outside of the school day to support school-wide initiatives to help our students.”

“The Presidential Award is not only an honor, but a testament to the mentors, colleagues, family members, and students who have all made me strive to be the best teacher I can be,” Witt said. “This award motivates me to provide my students with the best science instruction and my colleagues with the best instructional support. I am grateful for the additional opportunities provided by the Presidential Award, which will serve as inspiration for continuing my passion.”

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[Kristen Taylor](#) has been a mathematics educator for 22 years and has spent the last six years teaching Honors Geometry and Advanced Placement Calculus AB at Advanced Technologies Academy. She previously taught at Sierra Vista High School in Las Vegas and Kecoughtan High School in Hampton, VA.

“Ms. Taylor is thoroughly invested in the academic success of every student and this award is a testament to her passion for math education,” Advanced Technologies Academy Principal Jonathan Synold said. “Ms. Taylor has built an incredibly popular and successful AP Calculus AB program at A-TECH with pass rates nearly a point higher than the global average. She is able to weave together complex concepts by using creative grouping strategies, innovative technology and real-world context.”

“It is a great honor to be recognized as a Presidential Awardee and to be included in such an elite group of educators. Teachers are so much more than a source of knowledge for their students -- they nurture, support and encourage their students to help them to reach their full potential,” Taylor said. “I chose to be a teacher not for the glory or the accolades, but for the love of the profession and to be a guide and mentor for my students. I am proud to be a member of this profession.”

Established in 1983, PAEMST is the highest award given by the U.S. government to kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers of mathematics and science, including computer science.

A panel of distinguished mathematicians, scientists and educators at the state and national levels assess the applications before recommending nominees to the Office of Science and Technology Policy. Teachers are selected based on their distinction in the classroom and dedication to improving science, technology, engineering and math education.

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