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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Rodriguez

Office: (502) 564-2000, ext. 4610 | **Cell:** (502) 330-5063 | **E-mail:** nancy.rodriguez@education.ky.gov

KENTUCKIANS WIN PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR MATH, SCIENCE TEACHING

(Frankfort, KY) – Two Kentucky elementary school educators have won the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). Shannon Brickler, who works at Sherman Elementary School (Grant Co.), and Natasha Craft, a teacher at Pulaski Elementary School (Pulaski Co.), are among 104 educators nationwide to be recognized.

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is given annually to outstanding K-12 science and mathematics teachers from across the country. Each year the award alternates between educators who teach kindergarten through 6th grades and those teaching 7th through 12th grades. This year, on the award's 35th anniversary, kindergarten through 6th grade teachers are being honored.

Shannon Brickler has been an educator for 24 years and taught 5th grade mathematics for 13 years at Dry Ridge Elementary School (Grant Co.) before moving to a position as curriculum specialist at Sherman Elementary School. She has researched and implemented how modes of communication provide students an opportunity to increase their mathematical understanding and developed a classroom blog where students demonstrated leadership skills by directing videos to support mathematical learning.

“It is an honor to be a recipient of the Presidential Award as it signifies my commitment to continuous learning,” Brickler said. “It exhibits the effort and passion I have for teaching to empower others to understand mathematics. The Presidential Award is not an end in itself, but a catalyst for my professional journey for continuous improvement and refining of my craft.”

Brickler has been a participant and coach for the Kentucky Classroom Teachers Enacting Positive Solutions program, and guided educators to use design thinking and action research to implement positive changes for students. She has been an elite coach for the Kentucky Center for Mathematics/Kentucky Department of Education Master Coaching Program working with Kentucky mathematics coaches and teachers to impact student instruction. She is currently participating as a master coach to improve her coaching.

Brickler earned a B.A. in education from Northern Kentucky University, an M.A. in education from Georgetown College, and National Board Certification as a Middle Childhood Generalist. She is certified in elementary education in kindergarten through fifth grade and K-12 special education.

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Natasha Craft has been an educator for 21 years. She has taught a STEM lab for all kindergarten through 5th grade students at Pulaski Elementary School for the past four years. Previously, she taught fourth grade science at both Pulaski and Southern Elementary Schools.

Craft strives to instill a love for science in all her students. Her class is high energy and engaging. She organized the school's first Hour of Code, introducing more than 50 students and their parents to computer programming. She also led the school's VEX Robotics team to their first state championship.

“Joining a group of educators as passionate about their craft as I am is exhilarating as I envision the impact we can have together on our nation's youngest,” Craft said. “I owe many thanks to my family, my colleagues and the hundreds of students who have helped me to become the teacher I am today, but most of all I thank the Lord for this amazing opportunity.”

Craft's passion for teaching goes beyond the classroom. She has provided professional development at the local, state and national level. As a Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Launch Master Teacher, she traveled across the country training other educators in the curriculum she used so successfully with her students. Her awards include the Kentucky PLTW Teacher of the Year, the Valvoline Teacher Achievement Award, the Pulaski Recognizes Innovative Staff Members (PRISM) Award and the Pulaski County Model Classroom Award.

Craft earned a B.S. in elementary education from Centre College and an M.Ed. in instructional leadership from Eastern Kentucky University. She has certifications in elementary education, supervision and principalship.

Established in 1983, and administered by the National Science Foundation, PAEMST is the highest award kindergarten through 12th grade mathematics and science (including computer science) teachers can receive from the U.S. government.

Nominees complete a rigorous application process that requires them to demonstrate their excellence in content knowledge and ability to adapt to a broad range of learners and teaching environments.

A panel of distinguished mathematicians, scientists and educators at the state and national levels assess the applications before recommending nominees to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Teachers are selected based on their distinction in the classroom and dedication to improving STEM education.

Each awardee will receive a citation signed by the President and a \$10,000 award from NSF. Awardees also will travel to Washington, D.C., for an awards ceremony.

Awardees serve as models for their colleagues, inspiration to their communities and leaders in the improvement of mathematics and science education.

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The next PAEMST winners will represent 7th grade through high school. Kentucky finalists include:

Mathematics

- Jeani Gollihue, Russell High School (Russell Ind.)
- Erin Schneider, J.M. Atherton High School (Jefferson Co.)
- Deana Cummins, Williamstown Jr./Sr. High School (Williamstown Ind.)
- Daniel Kim, Male High School (Jefferson Co.)
- Kirstin Miller, ESL Newcomer Academy (Jefferson Co.)

Science

- Anne Lopez, Eastside Middle School (Bullitt Co.)
- Deborah Brock, Simon Kenton High School (Kenton Co.)
- Susan McLaughlin-Jones, Lafayette High School (Fayette Co.)

The winners will be named at a later date.

[More information about the PAEMST program](#) is available online.

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