

2018



**Educators**  
*of* **Excellence**



## **Educators of Excellence Awards Banquet**

*NJPA Education Solutions recognizes the profound impact of educators and wants to celebrate this work. We are honored to support this year's Educators of Excellence Awards Program.*

**How the program works:** Region 5 area schools were asked to select a teacher from their school who has shown leadership and innovation in an area of expertise that has led to student learning. These teachers will receive a Teacher of Excellence Award. In addition, nominations were accepted for four additional awards: Team of Educational Excellence, Paraprofessional of Educational Excellence, Leader of Educational Excellence and Coach of Excellence. A selection team reviewed these nominations and identified one team, one paraprofessional, one leader and one coach for these regional awards. We celebrate and honor these award recipients tonight.

## **National Joint Powers Alliance®**

Our mission is to build valued relationships, deliver innovative solutions with integrity, and exceed the expectations of our members.

**Here to serve *highly effective* schools!**

**Here to provide *quality programs*!**



**Horace Mann**

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# Educators of Excellence

## 2018 EDUCATORS OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS BANQUET MAY 9, 2018

5:30 p.m.	Registration
6 p.m.	Welcome Paul Drange, NJPA Director of Regional Programs
6:10 p.m.	Dinner
6:45 p.m.	Keynote Speaker: Joe Beckman
7:30 p.m.	Awards Kassidy Rice, NJPA Leader of Education Solutions Paul Drange, NJPA Director of Regional Programs Horace Mann Insurance
8:15 p.m.	Closing remarks Kassidy Rice, NJPA Leader of Education Solutions Dr. Chad Coauette, PhD, NJPA Executive Director

### Keynote Speaker: Joe Beckman



Human Connection Matters.

Students crave it and great schools/families thrive because of it.

As an International Speaker, Joe Beckman's mission has been to RECLAIM HUMAN CONNECTION in school communities through:

- Student Keynotes
- Leadership Workshops
- Staff Trainings
- Video-based Advisory Curriculum that reignites connection and unleashes student potential

Joe has shared his infectious energy, humor, and passion in over 1,000 schools; positively impacting over 1 million people worldwide.

Joe resides in Minneapolis, MN with his three children, and exceptionally beautiful, patient, strong, and kind-hearted wife, Jess.

# LEADER *of* EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



**Josh Smith**



## **Josh Smith**

Pillager School District  
Nominated by Mike Malmberg

Mr. Smith has played an important role for our district in his first two years of service. His willingness to be a lifelong learner has changed the tone of the high school and also the elementary as he has served as a principal in each building. He has brought great communication as a principal combined with effective leadership in many different forms that have helped move our staff development. His leadership as an ENVoY coach has enabled our school to become an ENVoY demonstration site for the entire region. His work with our Alternative Career Pathways committee, data team, testing coordinator, Title 1 administrator, and standards-based reporting are a few initiatives that have helped shape our culture to improve our student achievement.

# PARAPROFESSIONAL *of* EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



**Barb Waldock**



## **Barb Waldock**

Mid-State Education District  
Nominated by Jennie Stumpf

Barb has been a paraprofessional in our setting IV behavior program for a number of years. Barb always comes to work with a smile, willing to do whatever is needed to support student success. She brings things from home for the students, buys things for students, and will give the coat off her back (literally!) for the students. She is a team player and a cheerleader for staff and students. When it has been a rough day at work, Barb is the person who will make you smile or give you a hug. She is a support system for staff on a tough day, a mentor, and she builds relationships with students that helps her get them to do their work. Students know that Barb is going to hold them accountable but will also be their cheerleader when they are succeeding.

# COACH *of* EXCELLENCE



**Bruce Fuhrman**



## **Bruce Fuhrman**

Staples-Motley School District

Nominated by Travis VanOverbeke

Bruce Fuhrman is a veteran coach within the ranks of the Staples-Motley Athletic Department, moving into his 25th year of coaching. He appropriately models what all of our student athletes should consider, as he is a three-sport coach. His duties as head cross country, assistant boys basketball, and head girls track coach keep Bruce extremely busy throughout our school year. Our student athletes are blessed, and we are very lucky to have a coach like Bruce who is so dedicated to education-based athletics and mentoring our student athletes in sport and life. His purpose statement for his programs showcases the man he is: “When working with others, I understand the greatest tools of coaching are words, concepts, and practices that are not only followed, but mentored; I communicate love and respect by the tone of my voice and by the way I speak. I must possess the heart of a servant and take to heart: The need for quality is an ever-present requirement of my position, today and every day, in all that I do. How I do things becomes an expectation.”

# TEAM *of* EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



## **The 7-12 English Language Arts (ELA) teachers**

Crosby-Ironton High School

Nominated by Jim Christenson

The 7-12 English Language Arts (ELA) teachers at Crosby-Ironton High School could really be called the high school “Dream Team.” This group of teachers epitomizes the word, “collaboration”! They are leaders in the school when it comes to PLC work, Curriculum Mapping and K-12 Curriculum Content Team work. These four teachers have taken students who are not proficient in reading when they come into the seventh grade and they get a majority of them to be proficient by the time they take their last MCA test in reading in the 10th grade. The C-I School District’s vision is, “Career and/or College Readiness for all students.” Career and/or College Readiness isn’t just a “vision” or a “buzz word” with these teachers. They work each day to make sure all students are ready to enter the workforce and/or to make sure they are ready for additional training after high school!

**Shown left to right: Katherine Thoennes, Jackie Larson, Andrea Gaffney, Brian Gaffney**



# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Angie Hurtig**



**Angie Hurtig**  
Bertha-Hewitt School District

At Bertha-Hewitt, students and staff who go 'Above and Beyond' are recognized daily. Angie Hurtig exemplifies this theme. She's a true professional who provides rigor, relevance, and relationships with her students. Angie is a teacher who always challenges her students. Her kiddos are adept at technology well above what would be considered appropriate for second grade. Videos, QR Codes, and other various technologies are part of the daily routine in her classroom. With a firm belief in positive growth mindsets for students, she has each and every child believing they can succeed. Angie's students love her! She develops strong and lasting relationships with all her students.



**Keith Peterson**



**Keith Peterson**  
Brainerd High School

Keith Peterson expects excellence from his students, no matter their academic ability, background, or past educational performance. He holds his students to high expectations, instructs with rigor and relevance, and demonstrates professional commitment to all of his students for their success. He is a teacher who is always TEACHING. Outside of school, he is often coaching and also makes a point to attend many students' music and theater performances to show his support for all activities.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Clayton Lang**



**Clayton Lang**  
Cuyuna Range Elementary

Clayton is in his first year teaching Physical Education at Cuyuna Range Elementary School, and he has already taken the program to a whole new level. Clayton's class is not a traditional 'gym class' where students come in and throw a ball at each other day after day. Instead, Clayton provides his students a quality education in a variety of motor skills, fitness education, and opportunities to improve social and cooperative skills; all while promoting physical activity. One of his colleagues says it best: "Clayton Lang has brought a fresh perspective to a typically traditional course of Physical Education. Clayton is continually trying to integrate different curriculums like mathematics, art, music, into his physical education course. Students are placed in a positive movement learning environment that focuses on student effort and growth rather than the typical athleticism."



**Patty Durham**



**Patty Durham**  
Crosslake Community School

Patty Durham is a first and second grade teacher at Crosslake Community School. Recently, a grandparent had this to say about Patty: "Unbeknownst to you, Patty took time out of her summer to work with my four grandchildren who have difficulty in reading. Patty had three of the children in class previously and has the fourth this year. Patty was aware of their reading challenges and approached the mom to offer help. Patty worked with the children twice a week for two hours from mid-June to mid-August for no charge. Her dedication, awareness, self-giving commitment, and passion go far beyond most."

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Matthew Parker**



**Matthew Parker**

Freshwater Education District

Matthew is a speech pathologist who is an innovator committed to providing quality services to students. He is a leader in the development of a service model, which involves teaming with a speech language pathology assistant. This model has effectively and efficiently shown positive results in the areas of social communication, concepts, and articulation skills, while also integrating academic learning. Matthew is also working to develop a system to supervise speech assistants through technology. He is very willing to share his experience with others by mentoring new speech pathologists, doing numerous requests for presentations on the team speech model, and most recently taking on a lead role in the district's High Reliability Schools process. Matthew is a positive, forward-thinking, educator committed to excellence.



**Laurie Schoeck**



**Laurie Schoeck**

Little Falls Community Middle School

Laurie Schoeck serves as an eighth grade math teacher for Little Falls Community Middle School and is a critical member of the middle school team. Laurie leads by example, helping those around her become the best versions of themselves. She does this in part by modeling lifelong learning. Over the past couple of years, Laurie has actively encouraged and helped her students develop a growth mindset, embedding the concepts into her curriculum. Currently, she is actively learning about personalized learning, implementing strategies into her classroom, sharing her insights with her colleagues. Laurie is always ready to step up to the plate when 'extra' is required or needed, whether that means devoting countless hours mentoring a new teacher, or simply helping with supervision.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Angie Bellig**



**Angie Bellig**  
Lindbergh Elementary

Angie was born with the gift to teach. A parent of a former student summed it up best: “My daughter was in Angie’s first grade classroom and I was beyond impressed with her as a teacher. My daughter is very shy and quiet, so I naturally worry about her interaction with other kids. Angie went out of her way to make my daughter feel comfortable. Angie has a sincere interest in getting to know all of her students. Academically, my daughter’s reading improved leaps and bounds in first grade. She was challenged daily and was constantly told that ‘she can do it’. My daughter’s confidence blossomed, both socially and academically, due to Angie’s kind and caring heart. To this day, my daughter tells me, ‘Mrs. Bellig is always laughing and smiling. I don’t think she has bad days.’ It’s very obvious Angie loves to teach and loves all kids. She definitely made a lasting impression on my daughter.”



**Elaine Sperl**



**Elaine Sperl**  
Little Falls School District - Early Childhood Programs

For 33 years, Elaine has advocated and supported the Early Childhood Family Education Program. Her dedication and passion for the families she serves are obvious in all she does. She strives to connect families in the community with each other and community resources. She enjoys supporting parents as they journey through parenthood and provides the tools to help ensure success.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Randy Tabatt**



**Randy Tabatt**

Little Falls Community High School

Randy Tabatt has skillfully taught high school social studies for the past 34 years. He teaches students to look at history and issues facing society through a different set of lenses each day. Students have flocked to his classes to experience his wisdom, humor, and the blue-collar psychology used to make sense of an ever-changing world. A senior recently summed it up best when asked how his day was: "Every day is a great day when you have Mr. Tabatt for a teacher."



**Wendy DeCann**



**Wendy DeCann**

Lincoln Elementary

Wendy DeCann is a second grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary and is a leader in her building when it comes to instructional practices. She is setting an example for others to follow in teaching Balanced Literacy and Guided Math. Her most recent endeavor is developing a personalized learning classroom. Wendy's influence on students goes beyond the classroom. She makes connections with students that leave a lasting impression. Students enjoy their time and interaction with her even after they move on through the grade levels.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Brianna Sonoski**



**Brianna Sonoski**

Dr. S.G. Knight Elementary

Brianna Sanoski's classroom should be considered a model for other teachers to observe and replicate. Her implementation and use of Guided Reading and Guided Math get the most out of her students. She has created an inviting classroom that meets individual student needs. She is even working on taking her instruction to the next level by implementing Personalized Learning. Brianna makes positive connections with her students. The students work hard to meet her expectations and are having fun while learning. Students are excited to be in Ms. Sanoski's room.



**Ryan Bothun**



**Ryan Bothun**

Long Prairie-Grey Eagle Secondary School

Ryan Bothun is an outstanding example of what schools, parents, and students expect teachers to be. As an Industrial Technology instructor, Ryan teaches some of the most challenging students in his building. Day in and day out, he gets results with them. Seldom, if ever, are there issues with discipline in an environment where safety must be a daily practice. He takes on everyday instruction without complaint. The quality of the furniture and other projects his students produce is excellent. On more than one occasion, students in need of adult mentoring have found a mentor, comfortable classroom and success with Ryan.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Brad Schultz**



**Brad Schultz**  
Menahga Middle School

Brad is an integral part of Menahga Middle School's Special Education team. He mentors new special education teachers, teaches Targeted Services, and provides homebound education to students. Brad has exceptional patience and students know he will be a powerful advocate for them and their education. He works closely with his team to ensure special education students' needs are met. He works with the Special Olympics program, as well as plans special education field trips. Brad is an amazing educator and his leadership has been invaluable as Menahga Middle School continues grow.



**Jennifer Berg**



**Jennifer Berg**  
Menahga High School

As a 7-12 interventionist, Jennifer Berg has the natural ability to build and maintain quality, positive, lasting relationships. The emotion, care, and love she displays to students and colleagues is a remarkable example of her character. When it comes to the needs of the students, Jennifer is quick to provide assistance. In addition, she manifests positive feedback to all students alike. She is a student-centered educator who is compassionate about the well-being and growth of each individual.

As a senior member of the Menahga staff, Jennifer is relied upon by administration to bounce ideas off of and is always willing to help those around her. She is instrumental in Menahga High School's success, along with furthering the positive image of Menahga Public Schools.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Kerry White**



**Kerry White**  
Menahga Elementary School

Kerry has been an educator in the Menahga School District for the past 32 years. She transitioned to a new position this year, as the K-4 Title I and K-12 Instructional Coach. She took the initiative to ensure that building relationships and rapport was her number one priority. She has spent countless hours with new staff, supporting them in every capacity possible. Earlier this year, Kerry's role turned to full time Elementary Special Education teacher on a variance. Students and staff are fortunate to have Kerry at Menahga Elementary School!



**Nancy Przybilla**



**Nancy Przybilla**  
Mid-State Education District

Nancy is an invaluable member of the Mid-State Education District team. She is extremely knowledgeable about strategies that are effective for students on the Autism Spectrum. She supports five member districts, as well as Mid-State's Setting IV Programs. She is personable, reliable, and always student focused. Over the years, she has helped teams immensely with ideas and programming for some of the most challenging students. In some instances, IEP teams thought their only option was to send a student to a Setting IV program. Nancy helped them to implement programming changes allowing those students to remain in their least restrictive environments. Nancy is the kind of educator that all teams dream of having.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**DesiRae Cary**



**DesiRae Cary**

Mid-State Education District – STEPS Program

Desi has been the teacher of the Mid-State STEPS 18- to 21-year-old transition program for the past four years. She has taken the STEPS program and made it into one of the most student-centered, successful transition programs in the area. Her dedication to student independence and her goal to get every student a paid job show her passion for teaching. Everything Desi does – from picking out lessons, to bringing in speakers, to finding jobs for students – is focused on what the students need most so when they graduate, they can be independent and successful contributors to society. Desi builds relationships with her students that help her have real, honest conversations about their needs.



**Renae Barnaby**



**Renae Barnaby**

Pequot Lakes Eagle View Elementary

As the lead Title I Interventionist at Eagle View Elementary, Renae Barnaby exemplifies the qualities of an exceptional educator. She develops personalized learning experiences for her students prioritizing the specific skills they need to strengthen. Her dedication to students and staff is demonstrated as the school's data 'guru' through her mastery of the standards and assessments. Renae has also developed data protocols and led professional development with teams on how to utilize data to support instruction. Additionally, she is the internal coach for Reading Corps. This involves meeting with tutors regularly for coaching and monitoring of programming. Renae also demonstrates leadership by being a member of the building leadership team and as a mentor for other teachers. Her professionalism and dedication are an asset to her school and its students.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Angie Klein**



**Angie Klein**

Pequot Lakes High School

Angie Klein is a passionate educator who believes in the success of all students. She works hard to engage students in their own learning, encouraging them to pursue their interests and challenging them to grow. Her passion for mentoring young men and women has led her speech team to grow at an amazing pace, and its success is a testament to the rich experience she provides students. Angie is a true innovator in education, creating a classroom environment using alternative seating and student discussion to create a student-centered learning experience. She is a compassionate colleague who works to ensure a safe and collaborative experience for other professionals. Her students report a teacher who “makes everyone feel welcome” and is always cheerful and smiling.



**Jana Lueck**



**Jana Lueck**

Pequot Lakes Middle School

Jana’s performance in the classroom is impactful. As a master of the ‘Art’ of teaching, she blends the social-emotional side of her students’ development with a strong background in fifth grade science. Her proficiency as a teacher can be measured with everything from the vibrant smiles coming out of her lab space, all the way to the highest-ranking fifth grade MCA Science scores in the region. She is a strong-willed advocate, who challenges her students to be kind, compassionate and driven. She holds her students accountable to being the best version of themselves every day. In addition to her advocacy for her fifth grade students, Jana is also a valued resource for the EMPL Teacher’s Union in taking on the role of Members Rights Representative for her fellow Middle School colleagues.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Patsy Athman**



**Patsy Athman**  
Pierz-Healy High School

Patsy has over 30 years experience in teaching Family and Consumer Science with 13 of those years in Pierz. She exemplifies the qualities of an exceptional educator. Patsy's professionalism, dedication, and attention to detail in her instruction are something one wishes could be replicated throughout education. Her passion to bring the best instruction possible to her students, whether she is teaching Child Development, Foods, or Quilting, is hard to even describe in words. You will find Patsy in her room prepping early in the morning and still working with students late into the evening, and there is never a time one walks by or enters her room that all students are not engaged in learning. Patsy believes strongly in 'service and giving back' and has demonstrated that by teaming with Pierz-Healy's art instructor for many years to raise money for the local food shelf. She and her students prepare the variety of soups served at an annual Soup Bowl Supper. She is a student-centered educator who cares deeply about their well-being and growth as young adults. Her professionalism and dedication are instrumental.



**MaryJo Schaefer**



**MaryJo Schaefer**  
Pierz School District – Pioneer Elementary

MaryJo Schaefer is an Educator of Excellence because she is a truly gifted human being. She is a special education teacher who works with children in a level 3 behavioral setting. Her gifts are many, but she has the special ability to listen to a problem-solving team discuss behaviors and know exactly what interventions the child needs and how to prioritize the steps to success. Her job is her passion and her students are treated as her children. MaryJo always sees the ever-important big picture of success no matter how far beyond the behaviors of today's success may be. With a sense of humor, some uncommon vision, and a mountain of compassion, MaryJo is able to coax academic success from even the most resistant learners.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Roxanne Norlin**



**Roxanne Norlin**

Pillager Elementary

Excellent teachers wear many hats and Roxy Norlin is no exception. In addition to being an outstanding educator, she is a mentor to her colleagues, an advocate for her students and the field of education, and a lifelong learner. She maintains high expectations for her students while remaining compassionate and understanding of their needs. Roxy's excellence in education extends beyond Pillager as she impacts students, staff, and educators across the state of Minnesota with her honest, straightforward approach to getting the most from those around her.



**Mike Parrish**



**Mike Parrish**

Pillager Middle School

Mike is a leader at Pillager Middle School. He heads up the PBIS Program and epitomizes those traits in his classroom. Mike leads by example and is always looking for ways to serve his students through innovation and student engagement. He models professionalism at all times and incorporates music and other student-centered activities in his classroom. Being an ENVoY-certified teacher also enables Mike to have a very efficient and effective classroom. He challenges his students academically while pouring into them emotionally. The Metier Program is also taught by Mike and is a successful part of his teaching day.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Ann Hutchison**



**Ann Hutchison**  
Pillager High School

Ann Hutchison is the proverbial glue that holds Pillager High School together. Ann is, and has always been, a popular and innovative instructor creating or spearheading a number of programs and activities at Pillager High School. 'Ms. Hutch' seamlessly integrates the latest technology into her classes, giving students the technology experiences necessary to compete in today's workplaces. Ann is a high school administrator's dream: a top-notch person who is always too willing to say "yes."



**Nancy Meier**



**Nancy Meier**  
Pine River-Backus Elementary School

Nancy Meier has been a pillar of educational excellence in the Pine River-Backus School District for over 30 years. Nancy has gone about her career efficiently, effectively, resiliently, and most importantly, with the best interests of students at heart. She has epitomized what is expected out of anyone working in educational settings by 'walking the walk' in all facets of her teaching. Whether analyzing student data, planning differentiated lessons, building relationships with various stakeholders, or connecting with colleagues, Nancy does a top shelf job. Students in the Pine River-Backus community have been blessed with her hard work and dedication. Her efforts have had a tremendous impact on the learning community.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Melanie Lindquist**



**Melanie Lindquist**

Pine River-Backus High School

Known as Madame to her French class students, Melanie is a highly skilled teacher who has high expectations for all of her students. She holds this standard while finding a way to build and maintain meaningful relationships. She is a teacher leader who leads quietly by example through her authentic love of learning and growth mindset. From playing in the school pit orchestra to planning and facilitating trips to other countries, Madame finds many ways to contribute to her school and provide unique opportunities for her students. She cares deeply about the present and the future of Pine River-Backus High School and provides honest and timely feedback to help assure success in both areas.



**Chad Shelstad**



**Chad Shelstad**

Royalton Elementary School

Chad Shelstad has demonstrated excellence in producing high student academic achievement. For many years, his students have consistently scored well above state averages in reading and math MCA assessments. He is especially passionate about teaching math, and his enthusiastic competence has motivated students to achieve at high levels. When visiting Chad's math classroom, you will see 100 percent of the students engaged sharpening their math problem-solving skills. He has been the team leader in planning and organizing the fifth grade Deep Portage Environmental three-day field trip. From this experience, the students bond to establish positive and supportive relationships. Chad has also embraced Project Lead the Way and his robotic unit with skills competition is highly popular. Chad is a member of the district's Technology Committee; and, for many years, was the assistant baseball coach.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Lindsey Gruber**



**Lindsey Gruber**

Royalton Middle School/High School

Lindsey has been a tremendous asset to her district over the past four years. When hired, she was tasked with developing a K-12 Spanish program. She successfully started Royalton's elementary Spanish program before transferring to the high school full-time, where she has successfully built a strong Spanish program. She has added CIS Spanish and a Spanish IV class, and has led two Spanish excursions to Costa Rica and Ecuador. Her classes often fill very fast because of the strong and positive student relationships she is able to build. Watching Lindsey work with students is like watching a master at work.



**Janet Mattson**



**Janet Mattson**

Sebeka School District

Janet Mattson is passionate, driven, dedicated, and unbelievably knowledgeable in her field. She is Sebeka's registered school nurse and is a health teacher as well. But those are only the official titles she has within her district. Janet takes on much more. From her 'Health Tip Tuesdays,' communication with parents, grant-writing and leadership within the Child Study Team, along with her ability to counsel, provide therapy, and calm any and all crisis situations, Janet does it all. She is highly respected within her school as she is well read, well spoken, and magnetic with her personality and smile.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Catherine Cyr**



**Catherine Cyr**  
Staples-Motley High School

As an educator, Catherine Cyr strives to deliver the needed content to her students, all the while considering their individual needs and tendencies. As a mentor, Catherine is genuine in her conversations, accountabilities, and 'You Can Do It' approach with her students. As a leader, she advocates for the students' educational needs, independence, and future successes. Catherine has masterfully cared for and educated her students to the highest of expectations, never wavering in her belief of them. She's made impacts in their lives, far beyond their academics.



**Allison Vangsness**



**Allison Vangsness**  
Motley-Staples Middle School

Allison goes above and beyond to provide an excellent education for Motley-Staples Middle School's seventh grade social studies students. She is constantly finding new ways to enhance the educational experience in her classroom. This includes applying for and obtaining grants that not only help her classroom, but the whole district. In obtaining technology and hands-on artifacts, she enhances the students' educational experience by bringing social studies to them. This drive for improvement and excitement for learning is contagious not only with students, but also with fellow staff members.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Jolene Elfstrum**



**Jolene Elfstrum**

Staples-Motley Elementary School

Jolene is Staples-Motley Elementary's Technology-STEAM instructor, bringing new opportunities in a fun, creative manner. She shares experiences in technology, Tech Mobile, and Project Lead the Way with all students at Staples-Motley Elementary. She is flexible, helpful, kind, caring, and extremely patient. Whenever a new opportunity comes up, Jolene is there to say, "How can I help make this happen for our kids?"



**Tracy Hannah**



**Tracy Hannah**

Swanville Elementary School

Tracy is an excellent teacher. She recently completed her Master's Degree and is the chair of Swanville Elementary's staff development committee. She has had extensive training in Love and Logic and uses it in her classroom. She is one of the teachers who run the Swanville Families program, an evening program held in cooperation with a county collaborative. Families come to school, have a meal, participate in activities together, and receive training in Love and Logic. Tracy has taught second grade for several years and, for the last couple of years, has done team teaching with another teacher. This year, she is also doing reading tutoring as part of the Alternative Delivery of Specialized Instruction program.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Liza Hasse**



**Liza Hasse**  
Swanville High School

Liza is innovative, caring, and knows her subject area extremely well. She strives to not only make her courses better each year, but also the school as a whole. Liza offers solutions and is constantly searching for ideas to improve Swanville High School. She was instrumental in helping revamp the high school schedule to allow more student choice and to improve student work ethic. She notices when something is troubling to students, whether it's academics or personal, and is always there to try to help the situation.



**Mary Jo Peterson**



**Mary Jo Peterson**  
Upsala Elementary School

Mary Jo Peterson is a teacher of excellence at Upsala Elementary School. She is a kindergarten teacher where her students benefit from her creativity. From Star Wars Day to the Pirate Treasure Hunt, her students learn through play and love doing it. She keeps them engaged with numerous activities throughout the day and allows them to be creative with the many projects they work on. Upsala's kindergarten students prosper from her play-to-learn philosophy. Along with her duties as a kindergarten teacher, Mary Jo serves on the school's leadership committee.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Haylee Vershure**



**Haylee Vershure**

Upsala High School

Ms. Vershure, or Ms. V as the students call her, is truly an educator of excellence. She strives to build positive relationships with all her students, no matter their abilities or interests. Her leadership skills are second to none. She has been, and continues to be, instrumental in helping plan the new Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program for the Upsala School District for the 2018-19 school year and serves on the High Reliability Schools Committee. This year, she has been a pioneer for the WIN program, offering great science enrichment activities for students.



**Lisa Paulson**



**Lisa Paulson**

Verndale Elementary School

Every school has a 'go to' teacher who offers advice on differentiating instruction, implementing new strategies, or resolving a difficult situation. In Verndale Elementary, that teacher is Lisa Paulson. She is intuitive, innovative, and a great example of what educating students, supporting parents, and communicating with colleagues is all about. Lisa spends countless hours planning her lessons to ensure they are effective and meet each standard; and, more importantly, each student. She has been teaching for 32 years and continues to change her lessons to adjust to the learning needs of her students. Her students repeatedly make huge gains by the end of the school year.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Michael Ortmann**



**Michael Ortmann**

Wadena-Deer Creek School District – Grades 5-12

Michael Ortmann exemplifies what a true educator should be. He does an excellent job in his classroom of teaching music, but his work doesn't stop there. Mike makes it his mission to form a personal connection with all students in the building. You will not find a teacher who is more visible at student activities or helping in the community than Mr. Ortmann. Mike has a passion for teaching his students the importance of being good people. In his many years as student council advisor, Mike always taught students the importance of volunteering. He understands it is the job of educators to teach kids about life and helping others. WDC students are better people because of Mike Ortmann.



**Mary Ellenson**



**Mary Ellenson**

Wadena-Deer Creek Elementary School

Mary Ellenson works tirelessly for her students and school community. Her positive energy and ready smile are contagious, and she makes music fun for all students. Her dedication to the teaching profession is evident in her desire to get better every day. She also helps others get better in her role as an ENVoY demonstration teacher and one of her building's ENVoY coaches, and has been instrumental in finding solutions to the schoolwide behavior plan.

# TEACHERS *of* EXCELLENCE



**Paul Raddatz**



**Paul Raddatz**

Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Middle/High School

Paul does an outstanding job connecting with his students. Because he is able to create such powerful relationships, he can get the most potential from all of his students. He genuinely cares about the education of his students on an obvious level that is consistent. His realistic approach to not just success in school, but life in general, is apparent and well accepted among his students and fellow employees. It's a guaranteed factor that he will continue to strive for education, success, and positive perspectives in school.



**Shannon Rivard**



**Shannon Rivard**

Walker-Hackensack-Akeley Elementary School

Excellence is defined as the quality of being outstanding. That is Shannon Rivard. She constantly strives to be her best for her first-graders and colleagues. Each fall, she works with her students to document their hopes and dreams for the school year and makes it her mission to fulfill each student's hope and dream. She is a lifelong learner, becoming a High Reliability Teacher. She finds innovative ways to engage her students. Students seek comfort in her, trust her to talk to, wipe a tear, or pat them on the back. She is the teacher whom you want to clone.

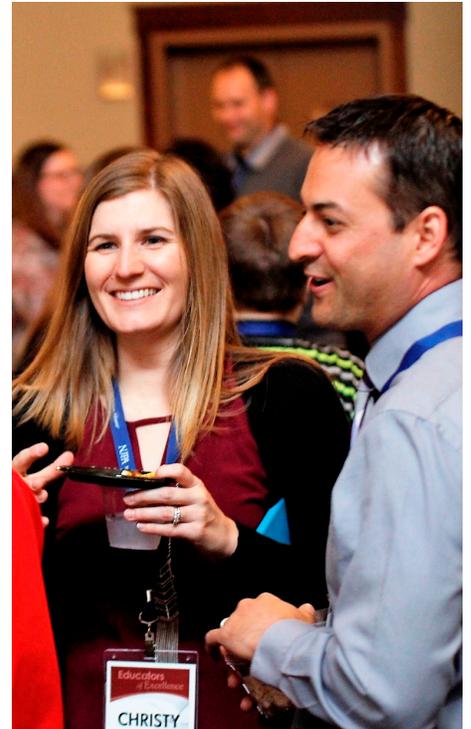
## **WHO IS NJPA?**

At its core, National Joint Powers Alliance® (NJPA) is a member-driven service cooperative with a membership now exceeding 50,000. NJPA offers a multitude of programs, contracted products, equipment, and service opportunities to educational, governmental, and other nonprofit entities. Locally in Minnesota, NJPA offers regional programs for counties, cities, and schools that comprise an area known as Region 5. We successfully aid in the planning, development, and provision of services in a vast array of fields, including student academic programs, technology services, curriculum solutions, staffing, health and safety, risk management, and more. At NJPA, our mission is to build valued relationships, deliver innovative solutions with integrity, and exceed the expectations of our members.

## **WHAT IS NJPA EDUCATION SOLUTIONS?**

Education Solutions delivers high-quality services and professional development for regional schools. The dedicated staff work towards developing characteristics of effective schools, including supporting schools with developing collaborative professional cultures, effective data, assessment, and curriculum practices, highly effective instruction, and family engagement/community partnerships. In addition, Education Solutions seeks to equip systems with strong vision, leadership, and organization. NJPA is committed to building the capacity of leaders and learners through the implementation of professional learning to increase principal and teacher effectiveness, grounded in research-based practices of the profession and applied to daily teaching for results in student learning.

# CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE



# New name reflects our mission.

In June 2018 we are boldly changing our name to better reflect our relationship with you and all members. The name National Joint Powers Alliance worked hard for us for many years. As we continue to grow services regionally, we recognize the opportunity to rebrand under a name that better suits who we are for our members.

We aim to be a trusted partner and a valuable Source for information, planning, and training. We are not satisfied just providing responsive solutions; we want to deliver them Well. Starting June 6, we are Sourcewell.

Our rich history was created by visionary leaders refusing to settle for what works today. NJPA got its start from the idea that schools, counties, and cities could be more successful working cooperatively.

A name change is part of a branding evolution started in 2016 to focus our organization on being purpose driven, attentive, and relationship oriented. We are building a new website and member relationship management system so we can get to know you better and deliver our services more efficiently.

What is NOT changing is our commitment to you. We will continue to offer and expand the solutions and partnerships you need and want. As we grow, you will meet new faces in our organization to help support the people you already know and trust.

Thank you for continuing to drive the good work in our region to boost community and student success. The heart of a successful service cooperative rhythmically forges into the future because of dedicated members and cooperation. WE are Sourcewell.

## Our new brand

- The visual representation for Sourcewell is made up of a mosaic. The pieces represent the city streets, the parks, the schools, and integral roads connecting them all. The yellow arrow signals energy and forward progress for the communities we serve.
- The word Sourcewell has emphasis on well. We want to be a valued source for members and for members to feel good about using our services.
- The colors give a sense of energy and trustworthiness.

Sourcewell <sup>s</sup>  
Formerly NJPA

[NJPAcoop.org](http://NJPAcoop.org)



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