



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, May 6, 2021
www.sde.idaho.gov

Media Contact:
Kristin Rodine
Public Information Officer
208-332-6807
krodine@sde.idaho.gov

Superintendent Ybarra announces Idaho finalists for highest STEM teaching honor

(BOISE) – Six outstanding Idaho math and science teachers have been named as the 2021 state finalists for the national Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST), Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra announced.

These secondary-school teachers were selected by a panel of mathematics and science education experts. Their applications will now be sent to the National Science Foundation, competing to become Idaho’s national awardees -- one in math and one in science.

“These inspired, skilled teachers are great choices for PAEMST, the nation’s highest honor for teachers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “They have a gift for sharing their passion and insight with their students, equipping them for success in higher education and beyond. Strong STEM skills are essential for many rewarding jobs in Idaho’s workforce.”

PAEMST awards alternate annually between secondary teachers and elementary teachers.

Mathematics finalists:

- Naomi Finnegan, Grangeville High School Grades 9 through 12 in Grangeville, Grangeville School District.
- Tanya Johnson, Sugar-Salem High School Grades 10 and 11 in Sugar City, Sugar-Salem School District.
- Ashlee Scherer, Highland High School Grade 10 in Pocatello, Pocatello-Chubbuck School District 25.

Science finalists:

- Tanya Elmer, Eagle High School Grades 9 through 12 in Eagle, West Ada School District
- Meg Fleischmann, Century High School Grades 9 through 12 in Pocatello, Pocatello-Chubbuck School District
- Maygan Sampson, Pocatello High School Grades 10 through 12 in Pocatello, Pocatello-Chubbuck School District

According to the [PAEMST national website](http://www.paemst.org), this award recognizes educators who have “deep content knowledge of the subjects they teach and the ability to motivate and enable students to be successful in those areas.”

National awardees receive a certificate signed by the president, recognition events and professional development opportunities, and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation.

Winners are expected to be announced this spring or summer.

The nomination process for the next PAEMST cycle will open in November of 2021 and will honor elementary school teachers. Anyone -- principals, teachers, parents, students, or members of the general public – [may nominate](#) exceptional STEM teachers who are currently teaching in grades Kindergarten through Sixth for the 2021-2022 award year. The nomination deadline will be March 1, 2022. Teachers may apply directly by visiting the PAEMST website.

###