



Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

For Immediate Release

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DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS TEACHER CHOSEN AS COLORADO FINALIST FOR PRESIDENTIAL TEACHING AWARD

Natalie Sprigg, an eighth-grade mathematics teacher at Mountain Ridge Middle School in Highlands Ranch, has been selected as a Colorado Finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

Sprigg, a 16-year veteran teaching in the Douglas County School District, is now one of three Colorado mathematics teachers eligible to receive a PAEMST award for the 2020-2021 awards cycle, the nation's highest honor for U.S. K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teachers. The awards program is administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

State Finalists represent the most outstanding teachers Colorado has to offer and serve as both a model and an inspiration to students and fellow teachers. This is Sprigg's second time being named a State Finalist.

"It is truly an honor to be recognized among one of many talented, dedicated, and intelligent Colorado educators. Especially after the last year and a half of teaching, when I know every educator has gone out of his/her way to engage in teaching like never before," says Sprigg. "I am humbled by the strengths of those in my school, community, and across the state and am looking forward to continuing to grow as an educator." Sprigg's PAEMST application highlighted her skills in orchestrating productive discussions in her classroom. "Use of structured discourse combined with standards-based and student-centered tasks offers opportunities for all students," says Sprigg. Sprigg supports other staff members in addition to supporting students. "Natalie has successfully hosted student teachers and has worked diligently as a mentor to many of our newer staff members," says Brian Singleton, Sprigg's principal at Mountain Ridge Middle School. "She's been an integral member of our teacher leader team."

Each year, a national committee of prominent mathematicians, scientists, mathematics/science education researchers, district-level personnel, and classroom teachers recommends up to 108 teachers to receive PAEMST awards. Up to two teachers—mathematics or science—from each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories as a group (comprising American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and schools operated in the United States and overseas by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) receive the award. Teachers who are selected as PAEMST awardees receive a trip to Washington, D.C., where they attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities. They also receive a \$10,000 award from NSF, a Presidential certificate, and join an elite cohort of award-winning teachers who can influence state/jurisdiction and national STEM teaching.