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For immediate release

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Maplewood Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence

Susanne Collins, a teacher from Edgerton Elementary in the Roseville Area School District, was surprised March 23 with the news that she is a recipient of a 2018 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Teacher Achievement, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

Collins is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. She is one of two recipients of the Teacher Achievement Award, which recognizes exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement.

Collins has been teaching for 19 years and currently teaches sixth grade at Edgerton Elementary. Collins is a goal oriented educator. One of her major goals is to eliminate the achievement gap. She feels in order to do this, there must first be a change in the opportunity gap. She has spent endless hours writing grants as a way to obtain more technology for students. She uses technology to not only enhance curriculum but to expose students to computer science and coding. She wants to develop skills in her students that can grow and benefit them in the future.

“Every year Susanne’s students come in with a broad range of abilities and life experiences,” shares a colleague. “No matter how expansive the range is she differentiates her instruction to fit the needs of everyone in her room. She not only supports the students academically but also personally. She is constantly striving to make our school better and to give our students opportunities they otherwise would never have the chance to experience.”

Another initiative in Collins’ classroom is a weekly allowance of Collins Cash. Students have opportunities to go above and beyond expectations and earn more Collins Cash by reading, blogging, and completing extra credit assignments. Students have to decide how they are going to spend the Collins Cash. They may use it to buy a snack or save their money for the Winter Break Auction to purchase presents for family members. They may also use the money to purchase free assignments or extra privileges in the classroom. Through opportunities presented to them through Collins Cash, they learn how to go above expectations and budget their money.

“Mrs. Collins is known for building positive relationships with our students who struggle behaviorally,” said Principal Melissa Sonnek. “They say that some students ask for love in the most unlovable ways yet she responds to students consistently with love. She works hard to connect with them, finding out their interests, and nurtures their hopes and dreams. She creates rapport and strong relationships.”

In addition to the *Teacher Achievement Award*, other educators are being honored with the *Academic Challenge Coach Award* (teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges), *Ethics in Education Award* (exemplary educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum) and *Athletic Coach Award* (teachers who are exemplary coaches of athletic teams).

Educators are first nominated for the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program by students, parents, colleagues or community members. Those who accept the nomination provide additional information for consideration by Synergy & Leadership Exchange and a blue ribbon selection panel, which reviews and ranks the nominees. In addition to the six statewide honorees, additional educators have been selected as regional honorees for 2018. These honorees will be announced in May.

Synergy & Leadership Exchange (Synergy) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities. For more information on the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program and Synergy & Leadership Exchange, visit: www.synergyexchange.org.