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For immediate release

For additional information:
Leah Garry, Synergy & Leadership Exchange
Phone: 507-389-5115

St. Paul Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence

Tim Quealy, a teacher at Avalon School, a project-based public charter school for students in grades 6–12 in St. Paul, was surprised March 25 with the news that he is a recipient of a 2019 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Ethics in Education, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

Quealy is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. He is one of two recipients of the WEM Foundation's statewide Ethics in Education Award, which recognizes educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum.

Quealy has been teaching for nine years and currently serves as a program coordinator and language arts teacher at Avalon School. Quealy helped to create an experience that is truly student-centered with the school's student-led conferences. He works with students to help them identify what they value as a person and to show how or where their work has supported those values. The students turn those feelings into a narrative reflection paper to help lead and guide their student-led conference experience. Quealy believes the process gives students a framework through which they can view all of their decisions in their life. At the end of each conference, together with their family, students set meaningful short and long-term goals based around the values the student has identified as most important.

"With his leadership, Tim inspires colleagues to fully participate in our democratic governance model, integrate tech into their curriculum, and use authentic assessment," said a colleague. "He also consistently finds new opportunities to engage students in real-world tech learning opportunities."

In addition, Quealy also provides teachers with extensive technology and authentic assessment professional development as technology coordinator and district assessment coordinator. Part of his work as the technology coordinator includes creating a technology help desk that is managed and fully operated by students. Annually, he teaches a seminar that trains students in basic and more advanced tech support, so that they can successfully run the Avalon Tech Help Desk. This program has improved Avalon's overall tech support while giving students real world training and important job skills.

"Mr. Quealy set our child on a path toward success," shared a parent. "He was a trustworthy guide for her development, providing a strong model for academic and emotional risk-taking while never pushing her further than she was ready to go."

In addition to the *Ethics in Education Award*, honorees are recognized with the *Academic Challenge Coach Award* (teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges approved by the Minnesota Academic League Council), *Teacher Achievement Award* (exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement) 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 2019. These honorees will be announced in May.

Synergy & Leadership Exchange 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.