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Fwd: Congratulations to the 2022 Illinois Teacher of the Year!

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>
To: Bridgett Heinrich <bheinrich@panaschools.com>

Fri, Mar 25, 2022 at 12:08 PM

April board meeting

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools** <execdir@airssedu.org>
Date: Fri, Mar 25, 2022 at 10:32 AM
Subject: Congratulations to the 2022 Illinois Teacher of the Year!
To: <jbauer@panaschools.com>



**The Association
of Illinois Rural
and Small Schools**

**Congratulations to the 2022 Illinois
Teacher of the Year!**



Dr. Ayala presenting Kimberly Radostits with her new title

ISBE announced that Kimberly Radostits from Oregon High School in Oregon in Oregon Community Unit School District 220 is the 2022 Illinois Teacher of the Year! Join us in congratulating Ms. Radostits for being an outstanding rural and small school educator, and read the statement from ISBE below.

Thank you,

Dave Ardrey

David M. Ardrey

Executive Director - Association of Illinois Rural and Small Schools

Dear Colleagues,

Today, I had the incredible honor of [dropping in](#) at Oregon High School to surprise Kimberly Radostits with her new title of 2022 Illinois Teacher of the Year. On Saturday, I met with all our Teacher of the Year finalists -- and choosing just one to represent Illinois on the national stage was so challenging. Each finalist has gone above and beyond for their students and represents the abundance of talent and brilliance in Illinois schools. But let me tell you about

Kim or, as her students call her, “Ms. Rad.”

Her academic credentials include National Board Certification to teach Spanish 1-4. She teaches not only the language but also information about the cultures and customs of countries where Spanish is spoken. She moderates a Facebook page called “Spanish Teachers in the US” that has more than 13,000 subscribers nationwide. But honestly, teaching Spanish is only one small part of what Ms. Rad does.

More than a decade ago, Ms. Rad decided to tackle the task of getting freshmen to graduate on time. She helped create Hawks Take Flight, an after-school mentoring program designed to help ninth graders acquire study skills and address social-emotional concerns. Every week, she sends home personalized notes, always sharing positive comments and offering each student’s family a way to contact her about any concern. She has effectively become a case manager for all 15 students in HTF, not only during their ninth-grade year but beyond.

She also teamed up with the district data guru to develop an early warning system to flag 8th graders at risk. With both programs still operating, and Ms. Rad still guiding them, the number of Fs made in 9th grade courses at Oregon High School has dropped from an average of 227 in 2008 to only seven for the 2018-19 school year.

Five years ago, Ms. Rad’s mentoring expanded to encompass new teachers. To welcome and acclimate educators new to Oregon High School, Ms. Rad co-founded a New Teacher Academy with a year-long schedule of 13 free PD sessions, held over dinner at a local retreat center. The Academy includes a school-bus tour of the district and culminates in the spring with Sharefest, where the new teachers share their favorite strategies with the veterans.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and OHS went remote, Ms. Rad explored all available digital platforms and hosted PD sessions to share the best ones with her colleagues, becoming the resident expert on Screencastify, Google Suite, Kahoot, and Peardeck. In her “spare time,” she coordinates a “Faculty Fanatics” group that attends at least one event for each high school activity per year, especially the ones with smaller fan bases like bowling and academic bowl.

The through-line tying all these activities together is her desire for every student to feel seen, heard, supported, and confident in their ability to succeed. Her

nomination packet included a heartfelt letter from a ninth-grade student who described how Ms. Rad shows she genuinely cares: “School has never been a safe place,” he wrote, “until she became my teacher.”

Please join me in congratulating this inspiring educator! Follow along with her 2022 Illinois Teacher of the Year journey on Twitter at @SrtaRad.

Sincerely,
Carmen

Reminder: 2022 Memberships Due

The work of AIRSS can only continue with your involvement. Membership support is the baseline funding that keeps the organization continually viable. AIRSS must continue to be the voice of rural and small schools, and your support is greatly appreciated. **We also now have a form available for individual memberships, as well as school districts.**

[Join Now](#)



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