



MDE / MDE OPERATIONS

'Model Teacher' Selected as 2018-19 Michigan Teacher of the Year

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VICKSBURG, Mich. – Vicksburg's Sunset Elementary second grade teacher Laura Chang is described as "a model teacher who serves from the heart." Today, Chang was announced as the 2018-19 Michigan Teacher of the Year (MTOY).

Chang learned of her selection as the 2018-19 Michigan Teacher of the Year during a surprise visit from Interim State Superintendent Sheila Alles during a school visit to highlight the school's academic success. Chang is the first MTOY from Kalamazoo County in program history.

"Educators like Ms. Chang are key in moving Michigan to become a Top 10 education state in 10 years," Alles said. "She is knowledgeable and provides relevant and meaningful teaching and learning experiences to her students. She is a compassionate, positive, and inspirational role model."

"Preparing our young people to succeed in a healthy 21st Century economy is becoming increasingly more important to their future achievement, and teachers like Ms. Chang – who are able to engage students at a young age – are exactly what our state and the students who call it home need," Governor Rick Snyder said. "I appreciate the incredible work that Ms. Chang has done, and will continue to do, to prepare Michigan students to be successful later in life."

Vicksburg Community Schools Superintendent Charles Glaes described Chang as, "that rare classroom teacher who principals rely upon, parents lobby for, colleagues admire and enjoy working with, and students love."

Chang's dedication to teaching truly is special, according to Sunset Lake Principal Amie McCaw.

"Laura has dedicated her life to education and helping others reach their goals," McCaw said. "Although Laura serves in many different roles, she never lets the pressure get to her – she always serves with a smile. Laura's infectious laughter can be heard almost every morning and helps every one of us start our day on a positive note."

Chang has taught in Vicksburg Community Schools for her entire 18-year teaching career since receiving her Bachelor's Degree from Western Michigan University (WMU). Chang also earned her Master of Arts in Education and Professional Development from WMU.

Chang was selected by a panel of statewide education stakeholders following interviews with the 10 Regional Teachers of the Year. Each Regional Teacher of the Year presented a short professional development module before answering questions from panelists on topics including what motivates them as teachers; their approach to collaborating with peers; and what they have done to ensure each student receives an equitable education in Michigan.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) uses the MTOY program to recognize outstanding educators across the state and create an avenue for them to share their voice with MDE and other education stakeholders as we work together to make Michigan a Top 10 education state in 10 years.

As MTOY, Chang will chair the Michigan Teacher Leadership Advisory Committee (MTLAC), which is comprised of each year's cohort of Regional Teachers of the Year. During their year of service, the MTLAC will work with MDE and other Michigan educational stakeholders to find solutions facing Michigan's education system issues, while ensuring that the voice of teachers is present in these discussions.

In addition, the State Board of Education honors the MTOY with a non-voting seat at the Board table during its regular monthly meetings, allowing the MTOY to engage with Board members in discussions on how best to move Michigan's education system forward.

Financial support for the program is provided by the Meemic Foundation, which is celebrating its 12th year as the proud sponsor of the MTOY program.

"Meemic Insurance Company is honored to recognize Laura Chang for her passion and the endless contributions she has made in supporting not only student excellence, but also her role as a teacher-leader," said Pamela R. Harlin, Director of the Meemic Foundation. "Michigan is fortunate to have nine Regional Teachers of the Year that will support Laura in representing educators throughout the state. Their collective efforts provide the unique opportunity for all Michigan educators to enrich their professional development while engaging more in issues vital to Michigan's education success."

Sunset Elementary in Vicksburg Community Schools will receive a monetary award from Meemic in honor of Chang's recognition as MTOY, to be used for the advancement of education. The school of each Regional Teacher of the Year will receive a plaque commemorating the accomplishment of their teacher.

Chang and the nine other Regional Teachers of the Year will be recognized by the State Board of Education during its August 14 meeting. To learn more about the MTOY program, visit www.michigan.gov/mtoy.

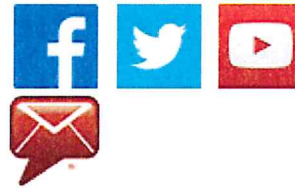
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