

The NEA Foundation Names Weber Educator to Receive National Award

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 27, 2021) – The NEA Foundation announced today that Alexandra Castellano Smith, a Spanish teacher at Sand Ridge Jr. High School in Roy, Utah, is one of 45 public school educators who will receive the prestigious California Casualty Award for Teaching Excellence at the NEA Foundation’s Salute to Excellence in Education Gala next February.

The California Casualty Awards for Teaching Excellence awardees are nominated for their dedication to the profession, community engagement, professional development, attention to diversity, and advocacy for fellow educators. This year’s awardees represent 45 states.

"At a time when our country has faced tremendous challenges, we all are more aware than ever of public-school educators' dedication, excellence, and creativity. Never has it been more important to honor and celebrate them," says Sara A. Sneed, President and CEO of The NEA Foundation. "Each California Casualty awardee exemplifies a passion for their students' learning, leadership among their peers, and the best in the teaching profession. We are grateful to California Casualty for its recognition and support and look forward to honoring the 2022 awardees at the Salute to Excellence in Education."

"To say recent times have been tough on educators is an understatement. We are humbled by the sacrifice, compassion and perseverance of the California Casualty awardees," says Joe Volponi, President and CEO, California Casualty. "Without a doubt, their students, colleagues and communities will continue to benefit from their efforts, and it is a privilege to honor such excellence."

Of the 45 state awardees nominated by their National Education Association state affiliate, five will be chosen as finalists for the top national award and will receive \$10,000. The educator selected for the top award will be revealed at the NEA Foundation Salute to Excellence in Education Gala and receive \$25,000. The Salute to Excellence in Education will also be livestreamed.

Find here more [information about the awards](#) and [a gallery of this year's awardees](#).

Editor's Note: Please use our correct name, The NEA Foundation. The "NEA" is never spelled out in our name. It is not the National Education Association Foundation. Many thanks!

About the NEA Foundation

The NEA Foundation is a national philanthropic organization that invests in educators' leadership, shared learning, and collaboration; supports partnerships and initiatives that strengthen public education and promotes improvements in public education policy and practice. Find us at neafoundation.org, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).