



USD 497 NEWS

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Lawrence Public Schools Honor 2010-11 Teachers of the Year

Lawrence Superintendent of Schools Rick Doll announced the 2010-11 Lawrence Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year at surprise presentations on Tuesday, February 15, during a 3:10 p.m. staff meeting at Deerfield Elementary, and on Wednesday, February 16, during a 1:45 p.m. staff meeting at Southwest Junior High. As part of its Lawrence Education Achievement Partnership to support staff recognition, KU Credit Union will present \$1,000 to each teacher.

Anne Tormohlen, Deerfield Elementary library media specialist, is the 2010-11 Lawrence Elementary Teacher of the Year. Anne earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas. This is her 23rd year in the district. She taught fifth and sixth grades at the former Riverside Elementary in Lawrence for three years. At Deerfield, she taught fifth and sixth grades for 11 years, and for the past nine years, has served as the school's library media specialist.

A nomination letter submitted by Deerfield teachers and staff reads, "Anne is such a wonderful resource for our staff and students. Each lesson she teaches our classes is a standards-based lesson that is perfect for us to use in our classrooms as a springboard for future lessons. She has been able to cover numerous standards for us, and in turn, has lightened our load in the classroom.

"She is not only the backbone of support for our children and their literacy needs, but shows true compassion for each individual child... We pride ourselves on reading achievement at Deerfield, and we would not be able to excel and reach our goals without Anne in our library."

MORE

Page 2 - Teachers of the Year

Christine Drinkhouse is the 2010-11 Lawrence Secondary Teacher of the Year. She earned her bachelor's degree at KU. This is her 16th year at Southwest Junior High. In 1995, Chris worked as a paraeducator for a year before completing certification and serving as a special education teacher. For the past six years, she has taught learning strategies, a general education program that supports students who don't qualify for special education services but who need academic, and often emotional, support to succeed in school.

“She approaches each student as an individual, pushing kids who need a push, hugging kids who need a hug, feeding kids who aren’t getting fed at home and driving kids who might not otherwise make it to school that day. She knows a myriad of different ways to motivate a student and won’t give up until she’s found one that works,” said Carolyn Welch, Southwest music teacher.

“I had a hard time getting organized last semester... I never really finished my homework, and now (Mrs. Drinkhouse) makes sure that I do... I’m not so good at science, so she helps me understand photosynthesis, and other things,” said Shana, a Southwest Junior High student.

“She is a very discerning person, and when she notices that some students are sad, she offers advice and guidance. When she does this, it makes me glad that someone actually cares,” said Sam, a Southwest student.

“It is not uncommon to hear her referred to as a miracle worker... For students, she is able to blend teacher, mentor, mother, good friend and drill sergeant. Chris seems to have a sixth sense for what students need to be successful,” said Melissa Stucky, Southwest librarian.

“She has faith in kids, even when others don’t. Kids get this. Kids succeed in spite of circumstances as a result of Chris’s support,” said Southwest Junior High principal Trish Bransky. “As an organization, and as individuals, we are better because of Chris.”

Lawrence Public Schools annually select an Elementary and a Secondary Teacher of the Year for local recognition and nominate them to the Kansas State Department of Education’s Kansas Teacher of the Year program. Photos of the honorees also will be displayed at the district office.