

Career Tech Matters

by Dennis Franks • Dec. 6, 2019

Recently, I wrote about the great work by members of our SkillsUSA chapter. Our students' accomplishments are only a fraction of what gives me pride.

Last spring, English teacher Katie Hewitt was recognized by her peers when she received the Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts 2019 Outstanding Language Arts Educator Award.

That honor created the foundation for Katie to be nominated for – and win – the 2019 High School Teacher of Excellence Award from the National Council of Teachers of English, presented to her at the group's annual conference held late last month in Baltimore, Maryland.



Katie was one of 17 high school teachers to receive this award, which recognizes teachers who demonstrate excellent practices and contributions in the classroom.

Katie has said that attending the conference itself was an invigorating

experience and winning the award was icing on the cupcake.

"I'm still oscillating between joy and disbelief, but I'm also feeling proud and inspired. This unbelievable recognition was born from a passion that is rooted in respect, gratitude and admiration for each and every incredible educator who made me feel seen and safe as a lost young person. I'm walking away from this conference feeling resolved to keep trying my best to emulate their work while reaching ever higher for my students and our community," Katie wrote in a Facebook post during the conference.

Also last month, teachers Andrea Pettit-Bee and Kim Taylor gave a presentation – Breaking Down the Barriers of Diversity in the Inclusive Classroom – at the OCALI conference in Columbus.



Andrea said she and Kim saw the need for diversity inclusion increasing and with that, the level of understanding must also grow.

"As educators we have a responsibility to make all students feel safe and welcome in the school environment. I have personal experiences as a minority in an education system, both as a student and as a professional," Andrea said. "While we have made significant positive changes, we always have room for improvement."

Both women were pleased by the response they received from colleagues who attended their session and said that many attendees told them the topic was important and necessary.

"They also said that they liked that we gave them additional resources to use, such as www.tolerance.org and the Implicit Associations Test available at Harvard.edu," Kim said.

And I couldn't end without mentioning the hard work that Dana Anderson and Susan Schwalbauch put into applying for a grant from the state that will help our students with disabilities.

Thanks to them, Pickaway-Ross is receiving \$104,000 that will help fund the Read 180 program and purchase a driving simulator.

These are just a few examples of the great work that staff members do and I couldn't be more proud.

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