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## **DPISD School Board honors teachers, support professional of the year**

DEER PARK – The Deer Park Independent School District recognized the district teachers of the year and education support professional of the year during a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees. Trustees and Superintendent Arnold Adair welcomed Secondary Teacher of the Year Joyce Allen, Elementary Teacher of the Year Phyllis Myers, and Education Support Professional of the Year Michelle Olson as special guests of the Board.

Allen, Myers, and Olson were each selected by peers at their respective campuses as campus/department representatives in the district-wide selection process. A committee of district and community representatives chose them to represent the district's employees.

Allen, a 31-year language arts teacher at Bonnette Junior High School, said she was surprised when Adair announced that she had been selected to represent the district.

"It was really a special honor for me because, years ago, I taught with both Arnold and (Assistant Superintendent for Instruction) Mike Switzer at Bonnette," she said.

"Hearing my name called by Arnold was one of the biggest moments of my life. It felt so good to be chosen by my peers to represent Bonnette as campus teacher of the year. Being selected district teacher of the year is exciting and still hard for me to believe, because we have many outstanding teachers in our district."

(More)

Bonnette Principal Judy Connors described Allen as someone who teaches children to love to read and write. "There is no doubt that students who have spent a year in Joyce's classroom leave with a greater understanding of literature, better reading and writing skills, and an appreciation for the world of reading that has been offered to them through Joyce's love of reading," Connors said.

Reading is the primary focus of elementary teacher of the year Phyllis Myers, a 28-year teaching veteran who works at Dabbs Elementary. As a Dyslexia teacher, Myers has received specialized training in reaching children who face special challenges as they learn to read.



Board President Rhonda Lowe, Elementary Teacher of the Year Phyllis Myers, Education Support Professional of the Year Michelle Olson, Secondary Teacher of the Year Joyce Allen, and Superintendent Arnold Adair.

According to Dabbs Principal Donna Collom, the keys to Myers'

success are her cheerful, enthusiastic attitude and the way she communicates high expectations with encouragement. "Children come to her lacking confidence and believing that they cannot read or be successful in the classroom," Collom said. "In record time, she has them reading with confidence and performing grade level tasks with their peers. The ability to make that kind of difference in a child is nothing short of miraculous."

When she learned she had been selected to represent the district's elementary teachers, Myers said she was speechless. "It is such an honor to represent such an exceptional group of teachers from Dabbs and then to be recognized from the district is an overwhelming honor and responsibility," she said.

When Superintendent Adair announced Myers' name at a staff meeting earlier this year, she had a revelation. "As I looked out over the crowd, I realized we are rarely able to see all the lives we have touched as professional educators," she said. "Teachers change the world we live in every day. Everything we do affects our students and has a real world effect on all of our futures, and the knowledge and love that we give to our students makes a permanent and lasting impact on the world we live in. We must remain committed to keeping ourselves motivated, inspired, innovative, and positive for the students we educate."

Allen and Myers each represented DPISD in the regional teacher of the year competition, in which Allen was chosen as a finalist.

For the third year, the district also recognized a member of its support staff as Education Support Professional of the Year. Michelle Olson, counselor's clerk at Dabbs Elementary, was selected to represent the district's many support employees. Olson said she was humbled by the experience of being selected by her peers at Dabbs and never considered that she might be selected the district winner.

"It is a very huge honor to be selected," she said. "There are so many wonderful, deserving people in the school district, and I still can't believe that I was chosen. More importantly, I realize that even though I was selected, I am just one member of Team Dabbs, and I share the honor with all the staff and, especially, Principal Donna Collom, who supports me in everything I do."

Collom, however, turned the compliment back on Olson, saying that she earned the honor through her own hard work and dedication. "If you ask Michele how far she wants to go in life, she'll tell you that she has no lofty ambitions," Collom said. "She just wants to make as many children happy and successful as she possibly can, and she'll do whatever it takes to do it."

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