



MEDIA RELEASE

**Santa Fe ISD & Region IV Recognize Outstanding Employees**

**August 2, 2018**

SANTA FE ISD (August 2, 2018) Since 1969, the Texas State Teacher of the Year (TOY) Program has honored excellence in classroom education and provided a forum to showcase many outstanding educators whose efforts and example have inspired their students, their colleagues, and the communities they serve.

Texas Teacher of the Year is the highest honor that the State of Texas can bestow upon a teacher. Facilitated by Texas Association of School Administrators, the Texas Teacher of the Year Program annually recognizes and rewards teachers who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and excellence in teaching.

On August 1, 2018, two teachers representing Santa Fe ISD were honored at the Region IV Annual Teacher of the Year Banquet. This year there were 44 districts and two charter schools who participated and over 90 teachers nominated. SFISD Teachers of the Year who were nominated and participated were Michelle Grassmuck and Amanda Wagner.

The District's Elementary Teacher of the Year, Michelle Grassmuck, began teaching at an early age. When she was in fifth grade, she began tutoring students in her mother's fourth grade classroom. She found that she loved working with students, and when she was in high school, she began teaching at a summer church camp, which she did for several summers through college. In 2006, she graduated from the University of Houston Clear Lake with a degree specializing in early childhood. Michelle was hired as a third grade teacher at Santa Fe Elementary North in the fall of 2006. She taught all subjects working with her mentor, which also happened to be her third grade teacher. Her first year of teaching, she received the "First Year Teacher of the Year" award. Michelle's specialties include reading, writing and social studies. According to Michelle, "With the help of many great mentors, colleagues, and administrators, I have become a confident and knowledgeable teacher leader in Santa Fe ISD." Next year, Michelle will be an Elementary Instructional Coach with the District and will continue to touch students' lives every day.

Our Secondary Teacher of the Year, Amanda Wagner, is a proud alumni of Santa Fe High School. Amanda graduated from Texas Woman's University in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in History. She has served the community of Santa Fe for her entire 9-year educational career. She adores her Pre-AP English I and English III students as well as her talented student athletes. Fostering a growth mindset within adults and students is a challenge that she finds deeply

satisfying. Over the last two and a half years as English Department Chair, Amanda has led her team to incorporate student led learning into their lessons with purpose and fidelity. As a mentor, she has coached young educators to find their personal teaching style and classroom management techniques through constant discussion, observation and modeling techniques. One of her proudest accomplishments in her 8 year coaching career was winning the 2011 Softball State Championship. Amanda believes education is a two-way street and must transcend the classroom. She cherishes the life lessons her students have taught her over the years and is humbled by their vulnerability and resilience on a daily basis. According to Amanda, "The future is bright at Santa Fe High." Amanda, will also join the Curriculum & Instruction Department as Secondary Instructional Coach with the District, and looks forward to making a larger impact on student learning and success.

SFISD continues its efforts to recognize excellence in the teaching profession by participating in the Texas Education Agency Teacher of the Year Program. Each of these individuals have been recognized by their campus peers as outstanding examples of excellence in teaching. All Teacher nominees are screened by a district committee who evaluate the candidate on their instructional skills, interaction with students and communication with faculty, staff, parents and the community. Upon completion of the evaluation the committee selects a District Elementary Teacher of the Year and a Secondary Teacher of the Year. Teachers nominated by their districts advance to a regional selection process facilitated by their education service center, which for Santa Fe ISD is Region IV. From these district nominees, judges in each of the 20 regions select an elementary and secondary Regional Teacher of the Year.

Santa Fe ISD is very proud of all of our staff as they continue to be committed to student success, and extend a special congratulation to Mrs. Michelle Grassmuck and Mrs. Amanda Wagner.