

Jamie Cain editorial
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Annual Appreciation of Educators

Thank you to all who nominated someone of impact for the Advocator, Innovator and Educator of the Year campaign. This is the third year our district will present an award of achievement to three outstanding staff members at Port Huron Schools. The award is based on our mission actions to advocate, innovate and educate, which are truly taken to heart in our district. These awards give us a great chance to reflect on the amazing accomplishments, teamwork and strides being achieved every day in our district. However, I must admit, it is personally truly gratifying to have the opportunity to shine a bright spotlight on people who represent everything right in education.

Who are the people who come to our buildings every day to educate and care for the children in our community? They are passionate, skilled, enthusiastic, inventive and very praiseworthy individuals. They deserve our thanks and appreciation. Education is a unique profession because everyone in our community and even in our country has experienced the presence of a professional educator in action. Therefore everyone has a personal reaction to teachers and school support staff. Some may remember a coach who helped them set and accomplish goals that seemed way out of reach. Some may remember a shoulder to lean on for support when care and resources fell short in other aspects of a person's life. Some might remember a disciplinarian who set a rigid style of expectations. Some might remember a teacher as their own parent, who went to work everyday and taught their friends or other people's children. Some might remember a paraprofessional, custodian, or secretary who had a life changing impact. Regardless of our individual recollections and opinions, each of us has experienced a teacher and educators in our lives that left an impression.

Our state and national discussions regarding public schools are challenging and chaotic right now. Talk of defunding programs, ever changing mandates and even talk of "dismantling" our current system, which truly serves *all* students, is disheartening. Education is a noble profession that has been diminished in our society while other nations around the world hold the profession in the highest regard. Regardless of what happens outside of our control, we have the ability to influence and honor the educators within our community.

I ask you to use the Advocator, Innovator and Educator of the Year awards as a reminder to do just that. When I surprise three exceptional employees of Port Huron Schools in their buildings during National Teacher Appreciation Week (May 1 - 5), I will be beaming with pride and emotion. It affirms my commitment to a culture where educators are honored in our district. When I think of the service these people provide and the excellence with which they provide it, I feel more compelled than ever to fight for public education and our students. I hope this endeavor inspires you to do the same. Thank an educator for what you have achieved, and for perhaps what your children, grandchildren or the future generation in our community will achieve.

We appreciate our local partners like The DoubleTree by Hilton Port Huron who support our efforts each year by providing prizes to our winners and truly making this event special. Everyone likes to know that they are valued. In a time when our district has a lot of shining achievement, I hope the professionals within our schools celebrate their value to our community, organization and especially, our students. Thank you to the advocates, innovators and educators of Port Huron Schools.