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Regional Teachers of the Year announced

PIERRE, S.D. – May 8-12 is Teacher Appreciation Week. As part of the observance, the Department of Education is recognizing five outstanding educators as South Dakota’s Regional Teachers of the Year. One of these individuals will be selected as the state Teacher of the Year later this fall.

“Teachers do meaningful work. They make a genuine difference in children’s lives,” said Secretary of Education Joseph Graves. “This week gives us an opportunity to celebrate that work. Congratulations to this year’s state Teacher of the Year candidates, and thank you to the dedicated, caring professionals across the state who they represent.”

The Regional Teachers of the Year are:

Region 1 – Caitlyn Graf, Math, Milbank High School

Region 2 – George Hawkins, Social Studies, Jefferson High School, Sioux Falls

Region 3 – Valerie Nelson, Kindergarten, Chamberlain Elementary

Region 4 – Lindsey Bachman, 3rd Grade, Mobridge-Pollock Upper Elementary

Region 5 – Alyssa Walters, English Language Arts, Spearfish High School

A panel will select one of these regional finalists to represent the state as the 2024 South Dakota Teacher of the Year. That individual will be South Dakota’s candidate for the National Teacher of the Year Award.

The National Teacher of the Year Program began in 1952 and continues as the oldest, most prestigious national honors program that focuses public attention on excellence in teaching. The 2023 National Teacher of the Year will be announced during a ceremony in Washington, D.C., in spring 2024.