

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Waunakee educator named Middle/Junior High School Teacher of the Year

*Rachel Rydzewski to receive \$3,000 from Herb Kohl Educational Foundation*

MADISON — State Superintendent Tony Evers announced that Rachel Rydzewski of Waunakee Community Middle School has been named the Wisconsin Middle/Junior High School Teacher of the Year.

Rydzewski teaches communication arts to seventh-graders and serves as the department coordinator. Parents and colleagues praise her ability to engage and motivate a wide variety of students as well as her leadership and innovation. She lives in Madison.

“I’m pleased to extend my congratulations to Rachel Rydzewski,” Evers said. “By not only facts but also how to learn, Rydzewski shows she is considering the entire lifetime of the students in her classroom. That sums up why teachers are so powerful and why having good ones is so important: they influence whole lives and whole generations of the community.”

Rydzewski received the news from Evers during a surprise ceremony at her school today. As part of the honor, she will receive a \$3,000 award from U.S. Senator Herb Kohl, through his educational foundation. The Herb Kohl Educational Foundation has awarded millions of dollars to Wisconsin educators, students, and schools. Wisconsin Teachers of the Year are selected from the year’s honored pool of Kohl Teacher Fellows.

“Our students are our future — that’s why teachers are so important,” Kohl said. “I support our Teacher of the Year awards in order to recognize Rydzewski and other outstanding educators and to help ensure we have caring and competent teachers in the classroom to grow the leaders of tomorrow.”

Rydzewski sees an educator’s role as helping students to discover and develop their own learning processes, so they may draw on that knowledge to continue learning effectively for the entirety of their lives. She familiarizes herself with each student’s particular needs and finds ways to reach each one, using one-on-one attention when necessary. She energetically seeks out opportunities to study current academic standards and the latest research on best practices. She reflects on how her instruction does and does not live up to these guideposts for optimizing student achievement and growth. Rydzewski has developed many techniques to engage students and

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improve her own service to them. In her role as communication arts coordinator, she has ensured that other teachers in her department benefit from her advances. Rydzewski infuses her instruction with the belief that every student has the ability and responsibility to contribute to the world. She shares with students her own extensive community service experiences in order to model social consciousness, and she has motivated her homeroom to lead the school in charitable drive collections for each of her three years in the building.

Rydzewski holds a degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Evers will honor her during his State of Education Address Sept. 24 at the State Capitol.

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