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## Kimberly educator named Wisconsin Special Services Teacher of the Year

*Amy Reed to receive \$3,000 from Herb Kohl Educational Foundation*

MADISON — In a surprise ceremony at her school, Amy Reed, a special education teacher at Kimberly High School, was named Wisconsin's Special Services Teacher of the Year for the 2015-16 school year.

State Superintendent Tony Evers made the announcement during an all-school assembly. As part of the Teacher of the Year honor, Reed will receive \$3,000 from the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation.

"A Teacher of the Year demonstrates an unwavering commitment to students," Evers said. "It's my honor to recognize Amy for the work she does and for being such an exceptional representative of educators in Wisconsin's public schools."

"Highlighting excellent work and leadership in our schools and bringing these individuals forward for recognition reminds educators of the important work they do and the reason they chose this career," said Herb Kohl, philanthropist, businessman, and former U.S. Senator, who co-sponsors the program through his educational foundation. "Educators contribute to our communities in so many ways. Also, we want to encourage talented students to enter the field of education in Wisconsin."

Reed describes her personal philosophy as educating "every student with maximum independence and soft skills in mind." She stresses a focus on teaching not only core curricula but also understanding what each student would like to do after high school. This allows her to help them develop a plan to get there, teaching students not just what to learn, but how to learn. "I work to guide the student toward the desired career while also teaching skills necessary for more comprehensive growth and learning, including evaluation and reflection," she said.

Reed believes her work with the students is just one part of the equation and takes steps to engage the parents from the beginning. "When working with teams to set up Individualized Education Programs, I begin with parents ahead of time. I send parent questionnaires and conduct parent and student interviews. This process enables me to uncover additional student strengths and interests, unrealized dreams, frustrations and concerns ... to get students on track to meeting their goals."

(more)

Described as “a tireless advocate for students with disabilities” and someone whose “unwavering dedication and continual service to her students sets her apart from her colleagues,” Reed has been instrumental in the development and implementation of many initiatives to improve inclusion and acceptance within the school and in the greater community. Reed has helped start a week-long community event to increase awareness, culminating in a basketball game between high school students and Special Olympians. She seeks to increase the social benefits those with disabilities can experience through events such as an annual dance, inviting all families from neighboring schools who have a student with a disability to attend. Through her program to serve those with unmet needs, she has collected formal attire for dances for students from low-income families to wear so they can comfortably attend these events.

Reed has achieved high levels of professional achievement in her career as a special education teacher. Striving to meet rigorous standards, she is one of only a handful of teachers in her district to earn the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification. She has set additional goals for herself including earning a master’s degree in Thanatology: the science of death, grief, and bereavement. “One area of need that I have been unable to help families fill is the need for specialized grief support. I have found few resources that apply grief and bereavement strategies to people with significant disabilities without using techniques designed for a much younger population in an effort to meet the person’s intellectual age,” she said.

Reed attended the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh where she earned a bachelor’s degree in special education and elementary education and earned her master’s degree in educational leadership. She began her career at the Boys & Girls Club of Oshkosh before accepting a position as a special education teacher working with individuals with intellectual disabilities at Kimberly High School in 2002. Evers will recognize Reed as the Wisconsin Special Services Teacher of the Year during his State of Education address Sept. 17 in Madison.

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