



# Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

For Immediate Release

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May 10, 2021

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## **LITTLETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS TEACHER CHOSEN AS COLORADO FINALIST FOR PRESIDENTIAL TEACHING AWARD**

Michelle Dillard, a fifth-grade teacher at Twain Elementary School in Centennial, has been selected as a Colorado Finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

Dillard, a 14-year veteran teaching in Littleton Public Schools, is Colorado's sole teacher of elementary mathematics eligible to receive a PAEMST award for the 2019-2020 school year, the nation's highest honor for U.S. K-12 science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and/or computer science teachers. The awards program is administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF) on behalf of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. The state selection process for 2019-2020 finalists was delayed until 2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

State Finalists represent the most outstanding teachers Colorado has to offer and serve as both a model and an inspiration to students and fellow teachers.

"I am thrilled to be a Colorado finalist in mathematics as a representative of the great work our educators are doing in providing empowering and meaningful STEM education to our students," says Dillard. Dillard's application materials showed a strong commitment to engaging her entire classroom in rigorous mathematical activity. "I want my students to find a safe place to explore all the possibilities within them as learners and people. I want them to connect to the bigger world, big ideas, and others who can help them along the way," added Dillard. "All kids are math kids and everyone has the capacity to learn and perform at high levels."

Each year, a national committee of prominent mathematicians, scientists, mathematics/science education researchers, district level personnel, and classroom teachers recommends up to 108 teachers to receive PAEMST awards. Up to two teachers—mathematics or science—from each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories as a group (comprising American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and schools operated in the United States and overseas by the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) receive the award. Teachers who are selected as PAEMST awardees receive a trip to Washington, D.C., where they attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities. They also receive a \$10,000 award from NSF, a Presidential certificate, and join an elite cohort of award-winning teachers who can influence state/jurisdiction and national STEM teaching.