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Madison, IN: MCS announces the district's Teacher and Classified Employee of the Year for 2023.

As part of the annual Teacher Appreciation Week, Madison Consolidated Schools recognizes two special employees who are nominated by their peers and selected by a committee of former honorees. This year, both honorees came from Madison Junior High School.

Teacher of the Year

Mr. Eric Phagan - Art Teacher, Madison Junior High School

Each year, Madison Consolidated Schools will recognize outstanding classroom teachers across our district. All employees, families, and community members are invited to share in this program by honoring a teacher with a nomination.

The nomination form is shared, nominations are accepted from late March to mid-April, and each candidate must meet the following criteria in order to be considered:

- Be an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and skilled teacher in one of MCS's buildings, teaching pre-Kindergarten through grade twelve, who is planning to continue in an active teaching status through the following school year
- Inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn
- Have the respect and admiration of students, parents, and colleagues
- Play an active and useful role in the community as well as in the school
- Be poised, articulate, and possess the energy to withstand a taxing schedule
- Demonstrate innovative 21st Century skills and continuing professional growth
- Meet with classes of students, e.g., a classroom teacher, a special area teacher, an instructional coach, a counselor, or a library media specialist who also has an instructional role
- Be willing and able to participate in the Indiana Teacher of the Year program



Hired in July 2012, Eric Phagan has been a spark for not only creativity with students but ingraining community partnerships and the school to actively bring positive physical additions to the building, opportunities for students to learn outside of the classroom while serving their community, and gain an appreciation for many different types of art - often times hands-on with individuals who come to visit campus for the sole purpose of engaging his students.

Phagan, pictured left center, with Superintendent Dr. Teresa Brown and MJHS Principal, Mr. Dan Grill, enjoyed the surprise visit and announcement with his first-period class who joined in on the raucous

celebration in his honor. It took some last-minute planning to get him in the room as he was working with students in a nearby hallway on yet another beautification project, but the students were awesome and quickly understood and implemented the mission - #surprisePHAGAN!

Nominations submitted on his behalf by fellow staff, parents, and community partners included:

Not only is he a valued member of the community, but he has been an incredibly impactful teacher for my daughter. He helped to ignite a newfound passion for art, in all its forms, while helping her to see and appreciate her abilities and potential. From class projects, and art club murals, to outside art shows, he had given so many opportunities for growth and unique experiences.

Eric's approach to education is so refreshing and exactly what we should hope for all of our students to experience! He makes learning exciting, he works very hard to provide unique and engaging opportunities that not only include art but are also easily tied into other areas of the curriculum that students could work to meet other subject matter objectives based on their learning/project work. He is very creative with spaces and has created a number of areas to showcase student art, and is phenomenal at creating opportunities for our district to partner with our fine arts community. We have had several engaging projects with local, regional, and national artists who work with our students (both at the junior high and high school) to create lasting memories and artwork that are beautifying our community. Whether art, music, sculpture, or festival - we always have a seat at the table to see how the schools and students might be involved. He is incredibly gifted as an artist, but more so, is an exceptional human who has chosen to teach, who looks for the possibility in all students to see how they can contribute, and who brings out the best in everyone he works with!

Eric cares deeply about getting the students involved and excited about the projects they do. I love that he incorporates their talents everywhere in the school by decorating with their work. It gives the kids a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Mr. Phagan is MJHS. He is ALWAYS looking for ways to connect the students/school to the community. He is the leader of our Maker's Nights, getting everyone involved in those events. He is community driven. Anyway that he can connect art to Madison, he will do just that, ie, Dale Rogers, Madison Music Movement, etc.

Mr. Phagan was the leader in creating the outdoor classroom that is so relaxing to teach, learn, and share. Our hallways are brighter because of Mr. Phagan and his student's work with our ceiling tiles and the artwork they have created over the years.

MR. PHAGAN is MJHS!! He deserves Teacher of the Year!

I feel Eric Phagan is most deserving of being selected as Teacher of the Year for MCS. Eric is a very engaging teacher who gets the most from his students. Mr. Phagan's way of teaching incorporates more than just classroom art; i.e. painting ceiling tiles, outdoor classroom projects, sidewalk art, and assisting the City of Madison (students designing projects for the new shopping center located on the hilltop). He takes his students on field trips in downtown Madison for students to learn about the history of Madison. Mr. Phagan invites artists to visit his classrooms and speak to his students. MCS is very fortunate to have Mr. Phagan as a part of our staff.

Mr. Phagan will go on as a candidate for [Indiana Teacher of the Year](#) through the Indiana Department of Education.

Classified Employee of the Year
Montica Brawner - Administrative Clerk,
Madison Junior High School

Hired in July 2008, Montica Brawner has been a fixture at MJHS in the fifteen years she has worked in the district. In a very busy building, Montica sets the pace and keeps things running smoothly for everyone in the building. She is a reliable colleague who is ready to assist, she is a familiar and kind face to students in need, a trusted source of information for parents, and the hub of our last-minute substitute teacher process for the district.

Nominations submitted on her behalf by fellow staff members:



Montica is very experienced and loyal to Madison Schools. She is super calm and handles her duties plus many surprises with grace. I believe she is the glue that holds the JH principal offices together. I think her quiet dedication, skill, and patience should be rewarded.

The school would fall apart without her. She knows it inside and out and is always helping everyone out that needs it. Montica is our lifeline at the junior high. She knows what's going on at any given time. Always professional and efficient. She assists with the operations of our building. She is dedicated, punctual, and always helpful. I'm really not sure what we would do without her!

Some employees are just irreplaceable. She is one of them. I feel she deserves this award for her many dedicated years of service. She has transitioned with new principals, assistants, secretaries, and staff. Always gracious and kind. She is one of the many things that makes the junior high so special.

"We are very fortunate to have incredibly gifted and passionate teachers, staff, and administrators throughout our district," shared Superintendent, Dr. Teresa Brown. "This is always a fun week for educators. The appreciation shown to our faculty and staff by parents this week has been incredible to see. We are very thankful for the generosity of our PTO organizations and families who have made our buildings festive and fun for our adults this week. Our staff work very hard each day to make learning special for our students and for them to have the opportunity to enjoy some of the same types of things in return is amazing!"