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Bartlett High School Teacher Named Finalist for 2019 Golden Apple Excellence in Teaching

Teacher is one of 32 finalists among a pool of 550 teachers

BARTLETT – Scott Wetendorf says when he meets new people, and they find out he teaches at Bartlett High School, he often gets a reaction to his subject – mathematics – that’s not universally positive. But Wetendorf says he isn’t willing to accept that some people are just bad at math.

“Math is like anything else. If you feel good about your ability in math and you like it, you’ll want to keep learning and doing it,” Wetendorf said. Wetendorf considers it part of his mission that his students develop not just computational skills, but confidence in math, and, he hopes, an interest in applying the skills learned in class.

It’s that positive approach that led to the School District U-46 educator being one of 32 finalists - out of a pool of 550 nominated Illinois teachers - for the 2019 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. The finalists will be recognized Saturday, Feb. 23 at the Tinley Park Convention Center.

See this brief video on Wetendorf [here](#).

Golden Apple is an Illinois nonprofit committed to recognizing exemplary educators and developing future educators. The Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching honors outstanding teachers for their roles in producing lasting, positive effects on students’ lives and building stronger communities. Teacher finalists demonstrate, in their teaching and results, significant, positive impact on their students’ growth and learning. Fellow educators, students, parents, and community members nominate teachers for the awards. Teachers may not self-nominate. Ten teachers will be



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selected from the 32 finalists and named as the 2019 award winners during surprise visits to their schools.

Bartlett High School Principal Mike Demovsky and fellow teachers nominated Wetendorf, who is in his fifth year of teaching in U-46, at BHS.

"I'm incredibly honored," Wetendorf said. "I was probably more excited to find out my colleagues and principal had just nominated me, because they are people for whom I have a ton of respect."

Wetendorf teaches Honors Academy Integrated Math 1 at the STEM Academy at BHS, an advanced program for students interested in science, technology, engineering and math, as well as AP Calculus.

One of his students provided a testimonial about Wetendorf's ability in the classroom for the Golden Apple nomination.

"He encourages me and my classmates to work collaboratively and independently just like the real world. We know that we need to work together to move ahead and be successful," the student wrote. "He does the work with us and shows us how exciting learning is."

Wetendorf, a Carpentersville native, did not plan on becoming a teacher. His facility with numbers led him to study engineering for two years in college, but he became disinterested in the field. He eventually earned a degree in cinematography at Columbia College.

As a college senior, he was doing miscellaneous volunteer work with a Chicago program when he was asked if he could try to help some middle school students with their math. After one session with the students, Wetendorf found his calling as a teacher.

"I remember telling a friend that day was more satisfying than anything I had done working on a film set or an engineering project," he said.

After graduation, Wetendorf settled in Los Angeles, where he received his math credential through the Los Angeles Unified School District Intern Program and taught math for eight years. He completed his Master of Arts in



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Curriculum and Instruction, with a focus in secondary math education, at California State University in Long Beach.

A desire to be closer to family brought Wetendorf and his wife back to the Chicago area and to Bartlett High School.

“I love what I’m doing every day,” he said. “Interacting with students and helping them become good problem solvers gives me so much joy.”

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School District U-46 serves families in 11 communities: Bartlett, Elgin, Hanover Park, South Elgin, Streamwood and Wayne, as well as portions of Carol Stream, Hoffman Estates, St. Charles, Schaumburg, and West Chicago. In total, the District encompasses 90 square miles within the Fox River Valley and includes communities within Cook, DuPage and Kane counties. Nearly 39,000 pre-K through twelfth graders attend the 57 District schools and programs. To learn more, visit the U-46 [website](#), or like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).