



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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October 5, 2021

Pennsbury Teachers Receive Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award

(FALLSINGTON, PA –) Two Pennsbury School District teachers have earned the 2021-22 Project Leads the Way (PLTW) Outstanding Teacher of the Year award. The award recognizes educators who demonstrate a strong record of delivering an inspiring and empowering student experience, expanding access to PLTW programs, and transforming teaching.

Kristin Slota, a SPARK teacher at Afton Elementary, and John Goodz, an Applied Engineering & Technology teacher at Pennsbury High School West, are two of only 79 teachers nationwide to earn the award.

Mrs. Slota has been with the Pennsbury School District for 23 years. She taught 7th & 8th-grade science at William Penn Middle School before helping to launch Pennsbury's STEM program, SPARK at Afton in 2019.

SPARK (STEM through Perseverance, Application, Resilience, and Kinetic Knowledge) was researched and developed during the 2018-19 school year. The mission was to create a STEM opportunity for all elementary students across the Pennsbury School District.

"Mrs. Slota exemplifies what it means to promote and advocate for STEM," said Michele Spack, Pennsbury School District's Director of Elementary Education. "She is developing the minds of our students to be 21st-century learners. Most importantly, students are not afraid to take risks, persevere, and become resilient learners. Mrs. Slota is truly an extraordinary PLTW teacher and most deserving of becoming the PLTW Teacher of the Year.

Spack added that Mrs. Slota made adjustments and modifications to the SPARK program to adapt to hybrid and virtual learning platforms during the pandemic keeping students actively engaged and excited to learn.

"I am honored to receive this recognition," said Slota. "My students continue to inspire me every day with their amazing ideas and keep me motivated to work harder to create learning opportunities that students will not only learn from but also enjoy."

John Goodz has taught at Pennsbury High School for the past six years and is humbled by PLTW's recognition for his work in the engineering pathway.

"I try to focus on being the best teacher I can," said Goodz. "I enjoy teaching students how to problem solve and how rewarding it is seeing students develop the skill for themselves. Also, having worked in the field of engineering, teaching gives me an opportunity to guide students towards a STEM career."

Pennsbury High School Senior Andrew Santella said Mr. Goodz is an excellent teacher, role model, and supporter and that his dedication to teaching was never more evident than during the pandemic.

"Engineering in itself is extremely hands-on and difficult to teach in a normal setting, but it is even more of a feat to be able to teach it virtually," said Santella. "Mr. Goodz did an excellent job transitioning to a virtual environment, keeping students engaged to the best of his ability. Whether it was online simulations, at-home projects, or other supplemental materials, he provided a varied style for all types of learners."

Goodz holds an engineering degree which brings a unique set of skills to his position as a teacher, according to Dr. Theresa Ricci, Pennsbury School District's Director of Secondary Education.

"Mr. Goodz is able to maintain high standards and a rigorous approach. His instructional practices are so impressive and appreciated by students that we have realized a higher enrollment from those historically underrepresented in courses at the higher levels, such as Honors and Advanced Placement."

PLTW provides transformative learning experiences for students at all fifteen Pennsbury School District schools. The non-profit organization empowers students to develop in-demand, transportable knowledge and skills through pathways in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. For more information on Project Lead The Way, visit pltw.org.

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