
NEWS RELEASE

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Media contact: JoAnne Anton

info@herbkohlphilanthropies.org

414-271-6600

Wisconsin's 2026 outstanding educators recognized by Herb Kohl Educational Foundation

\$1.4 million in awards honor exceptional Wisconsin teachers and administrators

MILWAUKEE — **The Herb Kohl Educational Foundation proudly announces the 2026 Teacher Fellowship and Principal Leadership award recipients.** These distinguished educators from traditional public, charter and private schools across the state are recognized for their exceptional leadership, dedication to students, and commitment to educational excellence.

From more than 1,200 nominations and rigorous review and scoring at the regional and statewide levels, 100 teachers were selected to receive Teacher Fellowship awards of \$6,000 in honor of their ability to inspire a love of learning, motivate students, and lead both inside and outside the classroom. Additionally, 15 principals were selected to be honored with Principal Leadership awards of \$6,000 for their efforts in setting high standards for instruction, achievement, and character while fostering a positive and impactful school environment. Each recipient's school will also receive a matching grant of \$6,000 to further support student learning and school initiatives.

"Education is where every future begins. We know great educators are the ones who make those futures possible," said JoAnne Anton, president and CEO of Herb Kohl Philanthropies. "Celebrating their work is not just recognition – it's an investment in the strength of our communities and the promise of the next generation. When we honor educators, we affirm the profound impact they have every single day and inspire others to carry that calling forward."

The Herb Kohl Educational Foundation is also proud to support the Wisconsin Teachers of the Year program. Public educators honored among the 2026 award recipients are automatically advanced for consideration, with one exceptional teacher selected to represent Wisconsin as its nominee for the National Teacher of the Year program.

Award recipients are selected by a statewide committee composed of civic leaders and representatives of education-related associations and the program's co-sponsors: The Wisconsin Newspaper Association Foundation, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, regional Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESA), and the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators.

The Kohl Foundation award program was established by Herb Kohl, former U.S. senator, philanthropist, and businessman. Since 1990, the foundation has awarded over \$43.5 million to Wisconsin educators, principals, students, and schools.

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Note: Award recipients were notified of their awards on March 26, 2026. A list of award recipients by category and CESA follows this news release. For more information on the Herb Kohl Educational Foundation, visit [KohlEducation.org](https://www.kohleducation.org).

2026 Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Principal Leaders

CESA 1

Theresa Christensen, Saint Francis
Lowell International Elementary, Milwaukee

Catherine Loss, Milwaukee
Barbee Elementary, Milwaukee

Justin Nies, Milwaukee
Magee Elementary, Genesee Depot

CESA 2

Sally Pope, Janesville
Monroe Elementary, Janesville

Jamie Thomas, McFarland
Indian Mound Middle School, McFarland

Cale Vogel, Lake Mills
Lake Mills High School, Lake Mills

CESA 3

Brad Sturmer, Bloomington
Winskill Elementary, Lancaster

CESA 5

Toni Ross, Mauston
Saint Patrick's School, Mauston

Eric Scheunemann, Merrimac
Lodi Elementary, Lodi

CESA 7

Russ Gerke, De Pere
West De Pere High School, De Pere

Jeff Kondrakiewicz, Slinger
Cedar Grove-Belgium Elementary, Cedar Grove

Samantha Meyers, Chilton
Chilton Area Catholic School, Chilton

Lauren Ward, Fish Creek
Gibraltar Elementary, Fish Creek

CESA 09

Gretchen Smart-Hall, Watersmeet
Northland Pines Elementary, Eagle River

CESA 10

Jill Lybert, Medford
Medford High School, Medford

2026 Herb Kohl Educational Foundation Teacher Fellows

CESA 1

Kimberly Au, Oak Creek
Luther Elementary, South Milwaukee

Jody Bauer, Milwaukee
Vincent High School, Milwaukee

Jennifer Bertrand-LaDuke, Milwaukee
Milwaukee Parkside School, Milwaukee

Corriane Cain, Franklin
Hales Corners Lutheran Schools, Hales Corners

Jamie Cuzman, Greendale
Kettle Moraine Middle School, Dousman

Katie Dennert, Muskego
Hales Corners Lutheran Schools, Hales Corners

Ivana DiCastrì, Wauwatosa
Christ King School, Wauwatosa

Paula Duchow, Sullivan
Saint Bruno School, Dousman

Jonathan Etter, Wauwatosa
Wauwatosa East High School, Wauwatosa

Michael Hayden, Wauwatosa
Wauwatosa East High School, Wauwatosa

Lindsay Hendricks, New Berlin
Ronald Reagan Elementary, New Berlin

Jaclyn Jecha, Milwaukee
New Berlin West Middle/High School, New Berlin

Amy Kosmider, Muskego
Brookfield East High School, Brookfield

John Kozicke, Wauwatosa
Greendale High School, Greendale

David Landeros Cortes, Waukesha
South Division High School, Milwaukee

Alec Lenczner-Bagdasarian, Milwaukee
Saint Augustine Preparatory Academy, Milwaukee

Jimmy Litscher, Milwaukee
Saint Thomas More High School, Milwaukee

Matthew Marino, Wauwatosa
Whitnall High School, Greenfield

Cheryl Panka, Hartland
Pewaukee Lake Elementary, Pewaukee

Christine Perkins, Mukwonago
Park View Middle School, Mukwonago

Christine Peterson, Mukwonago
Mukwonago High School, Mukwonago

Mary Piwaron, Franklin
Franklin High School, Franklin

Lisa Plopper, Hartland
Divine Redeemer Lutheran School, Hartland

Sandra Rice, Delafield
Catholic Memorial High School, Waukesha

Leah Rogneby, Greendale
New Berlin West Middle/High School, New Berlin

Nicholas Schueller, Grafton
Homestead High School, Mequon

Jacqueline Shumaker, New Berlin
Poplar Creek Elementary, New Berlin

Tyler Stephens, Hales Corners
New Berlin West Middle/High School, New Berlin

PJ Uhazie, Milwaukee
Mukwonago High School, Mukwonago

Allison Umhoefer, Greenfield
Franklin High School, Franklin

Allison Urban, Wauwatosa
Pilgrim Park Middle School, Elm Grove

Rachel Weiss, Delafield
Magee Elementary, Genesee Depot

Shannon Wysocki, New Berlin
Poplar Creek Elementary, New Berlin

Enock Yeng, Milwaukee
Morse Middle School, Milwaukee

Robin Young, Milwaukee
John Long Middle School, Grafton

Nicole Zaeske, Milwaukee
New Berlin West Middle/High School, New Berlin

Suzanne Milewski, Caledonia
Reagan High School, Milwaukee

Jaime Mutz, Menomonee Falls
Ninety-Fifth Street Elementary, Milwaukee

Amy Zientek, Brookfield
Atlas Preparatory Academy, Milwaukee

Kim Zvara, Grafton
Saint Paul Lutheran School, Grafton

CESA 2

Sarah Bowman, Verona
Verona Area High School, Verona

Robert Calvert, Monroe
Harmony Elementary, Janesville

Madison Day, Verona
Savanna Oaks Middle School, Fitchburg

Sarah Hall, Madison
Badger Ridge Middle School, Verona

Eric Hartz, Monona
Madison Metropolitan District Office, Madison

Ben Jaeger, Middleton
Memorial High School, Madison

Erin Jensen, Janesville
Rock University High School, Janesville

Ashley Lowrey, Beloit
Turner High School, Beloit

Constance Nielsen, Madison
Saint Ambrose Academy, Madison

Christine Punzel, McFarland
McFarland Primary School, McFarland

Julie Rice, Wauaukee
Leopold Elementary, Madison

Brenda Rotunno, Waunakee
McFarland Primary School, McFarland

Tjark Sattler, Brodhead
Parkview High School, Orfordville

Matt Scharpf, DeForest
De Forest High School, De Forest

Kristen Scott, Fitchburg
Nuestro Mundo, Monona

Coleen Shaw, Janesville
Rock River Charter School, Janesville

Jamie Vezina, McFarland
Indian Mound Middle School, McFarland

Andrea Waski, Monroe
St. Victor School, Monroe

CESA 3

Steve Olenchek, Platteville
Platteville Middle School, Platteville

Melissa Sperle, Lancaster
Winskill Elementary, Lancaster

Shawn Zeeh, Wauzeka
Wauzeka Middle School, Wauzeka

CESA 4

Natalie Anderson, Arcadia
Arcadia High School, Arcadia

Mariah Bigelow, La Crosse
Coulee Montessori Charter School, La Crosse

Heather Stenslien, De Soto
Prairie View Elementary, De Soto

CESA 5

Nichole Buwalda, Randolph
Randolph Elementary, Randolph

Joni Feidt, Rudolph
Grant Elementary, Wisconsin Rapids

Justin Glodowski, Stratford
Marshfield High School, Marshfield

Leah Keller, Wild Rose
Adams-Friendship Elementary, Friendship

Tonya Lassanske, Merrimac
Sauk Prairie High School, Prairie du Sac

Jessica Mueller, Baraboo
Baraboo High School, Baraboo

Scot Neu, Tomahawk
Sauk Prairie High School, Prairie du Sac

Michelle Puls, Lodi
Lodi High School, Lodi

CESA 6

Angie Bemowski, Appleton
Janssen Elementary, Combined Locks

Taylor Grenlie, Appleton
Little Chute High School, Little Chute

Sandra Johnson, Appleton
Gerritts Middle School, Kimberly

Grace King, West Bend
Badger Middle School, West Bend

Jessica Martine, Appleton
Spring Road Elementary, Neenah

Farrell Preston, Lisbon
Hartford High School, Hartford

Daniel Robinson, Lomira
Lomira High School, Lomira

Michael Wadel, Kaukauna
Westside Elementary, Kimberly

CESA 7

Kelsey Allen, Green Bay
Hemlock Creek Elementary, De Pere

Sabrina Holden, Kiel
Chilton Area Catholic School, Chilton

Ryan Krippendorf, Random Lake
Plymouth High School, Plymouth

Susan Lutz, De Pere
West De Pere Intermediate School, De Pere

David Miller, Sheboygan
Sheboygan North High School, Sheboygan

Jamie Sheehy, Sturgeon Bay
Holy Cross Catholic School, Green Bay

Dawn Shimek, Mishicot
Mishicot High School, Mishicot

Kaitlin Skarban, Sobieski
Pulaski High School, Pulaski

Abbie Van Grinsven, De Pere
Hilbert District Office, Hilbert

Rachel Ziegler, Waupaca
Southwest High School, Green Bay

CESA 8

Shelby Harris, Argonne
Crandon Elementary, Crandon

Tanya Schallock, Crandon
Crandon Elementary, Crandon

CESA 9

Patricia Darr, Phelps
Northland Pines, Land O' Lakes

Kelly Hoppe, Hazelhurst
Minocqua Elementary, Minocqua

Michael Wojtusik, Rhinelander
Rhinelander High School, Rhinelander

CESA 10

Sarah Faude, Medford
Medford Elementary, Medford

Kayla Velasquez, Chippewa Falls
Osseo-Fairchild High School, Osseo

Kylie Weiler, Medford
Medford Elementary, Medford

CESA 11

Kimberly Bassett, Spooner
Spooner Elementary, Spooner

CESA 12

Kaite Bartyn, Bayfield
La Pointe Elementary, La Pointe