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Region 7 Education Service Center

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Region 7 2011 Teachers' of the Year Announced

KILGORE –Maureen Bogowitz from Athens ISD and Barbara Puckett from Tatum ISD have been named Elementary and Secondary Teachers' of the Year by Region 7 Education Service Center. Both of these educators will represent Region 7 as its nominees for the 2011 Texas Education Agency (TEA) Teacher of the Year.

Bogowitz and Puckett were nominated by their local school district for their concern for students and the capability to inspire them, ability and willingness to work cooperatively with colleagues, drive to initiate activities that improve instruction for students, ability to work effectively with different groups in the community, desire to stay informed about current educational theories and practices, and their ability and willingness to make meaningful contributions to education.

Elementary Teacher of the Year, Maureen Bogowitz, earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English San Diego State University in 1995. Bogowitz has seven years of teaching experience, all of which are at Athens ISD. Maureen is a 4th grade dual language math teacher at Athens Intermediate School. Maureen began her second career of teaching at age 35 after substitute teaching at AISD and “feeling like she was really making a difference.”

Bogowitz notes that during the years of substituting at AISD, the faculty and staff taught her that it doesn't matter how much money you make as a teacher, because hugs and notes that say, “U R the BEST teacher in the world” are priceless. Being smart isn't enough to make a good teacher; a teacher must have the gift of empathy to feel what their students are feeling; frustration, fear, elation, shame, or hunger. You must be able to see the future, but most importantly have the power of perseverance, because you can never give up on a child.

“Earning my degree and becoming a teacher was a great accomplishment, but the thing I am most proud of is being a part of the Recognized rating Athens Intermediate School received last year. Athens Intermediate School is the first campus that teaches multiple grade levels and gives multiple tests to achieve this rating in Athens,” says Maureen.

Ms. Bogowitz currently serves as a mentor teacher, district math curriculum team member, textbook committee member, site-base committee member, and fourth grade math chair. She designed and taught *Corozones en Mente* (Hearts in Mind), a 4 week summer enrichment program for LEP and ECD students and was a TAP Conference Panel member. In addition to being named the Region 7 Teacher of the Year, Bogowitz was nominated in 2008 for the Presidential Award of Excellence in Math and Science Teaching.

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Secondary Teacher of the Year, Barbara Puckett, has 25 years of teaching experience with the last eight years being in Tatum ISD. Puckett is currently employed at Tatum High School teaching Algebra, Geometry, TAKS Math, and ACT/SAT Preparation courses. In addition, Puckett is the THS cheerleading sponsor. Ms. Puckett began her teaching career at Pine Tree ISD, teaching Honors Algebra and Geometry at Pine Tree Junior High.

Puckett earned her Bachelor's degree from University of Texas at Tyler and is certified in Math and English. Puckett has been selected as Campus Teacher of the Year, "Star Polisher" Teacher of the Year, has received the Gold Performance Acknowledgement Award from TEA, and the Campus WOW Award. She has presented at the Conference for the Advancement of Mathematics Teaching, is a Site Based Management Lead Mathematics Teacher, and is a statewide trainer for Bergin-Grimes Enterprises.

Ms. Puckett believes that her most significant contributions in education have everything to do with her students achieving. She notes that education in today's world is quite different from when she began teaching 25 years ago. To create an effective learning environment a teacher must adapt to the rapidly changing world.

Barbara's second prong of her teaching philosophy is about creating relationships. "Education must inspire students to want to learn and to continue to learn. The question is how we do that. The answer, I believe, is two-fold: relevancy of content and supportive student-teacher relationships," says Puckett. According to Puckett, strong teacher-student relationships are the cornerstone of her classroom. Relationships are what I believe truly makes an exceptional teacher. "I make it a point to know my students. I make it a point to let them know me. I make myself accessible," says Puckett.

On August 16st, Bogowitz and Puckett will compete against the thirty-eight other Regional Teachers of the Year, which are reviewed by a panel of judges where six finalists are selected. The six finalists are invited to Austin for personal interviews, before the Elementary Teacher of the Year and the Secondary Teacher of the Year is chosen. These educators become spokespeople for all teachers in the state of Texas. They also serve as traveling ambassadors for public education with a demanding schedule of speeches, workshops and presentations while continuing to teach in the classroom.

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