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**EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AWARDS  
RECIPIENT BIOGRAPHIES**

**Teaching Excellence Award: Kelly Hiebert, Westwood Collegiate, St. James-Assiniboia School Division**

Kelly Hiebert, a high school history teacher at Westwood Collegiate, has had a profound impact on his students and their sense of citizenship. Students make meaningful connections between past and present and develop not only a love of history, but also a desire to contribute to the betterment of society. Through the use of a wide range of multimedia content and experiential learning opportunities, Hiebert deepens students' critical thinking skills and facilitates lively and respectful classroom discussions and debates. Highlights of every class are the student-led historical investigations for which he provides the necessary support to ensure all students succeed. Hiebert arranges field trips, such as to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada, and encourages students to participate in other enrichment activities like the Mina Rosner Essay Contest. He established the Westwood Historical Society, a student group that raises awareness of relevant historical, current issues and events such as Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation and Remembrance Day. The society also produced and presented a moving documentary to the student body about the importance of Holocaust education. Hiebert's compassionate nature combined with his great passion for history produces a positive learning environment that effects real, lasting change in the classroom, on school culture and in the community.

**Teaching Excellence Award: Shannon Siemens, Brooklands School, St. James-Assiniboia School Division**

Shannon Siemens's grades 1 and 2 students are fully engaged in their learning because of their master teacher's vast repertoire of innovative strategies. She develops creative lessons to stimulate inquiry, discovery, play and experiential learning, while meeting curriculum outcomes. Siemens is well-known around the school division for her expertise in literacy and visiting teachers are always impressed by the variety and scope of her learning centres, her effective use of diverse seating arrangements and her excellent classroom library. They can overhear her students giving feedback on each other's written work, such as "It has juicy words" and "It has all W5 things." As the school's literacy support teacher, Siemens has planned and implemented literacy initiatives such as See Spot Read, Grandparent Reading Volunteers, Grow Your Library and staff book clubs. She has also been instrumental in establishing the annual six-week outdoor school at Brooklands in May and June, where all classes and all subjects are taught outside, rain or shine. As a valuable mentor, collaborator and resource, she leads the grades 1 and 2 teacher cohorts, has presented at several teacher conferences and has contributed as part of the divisional education committee and Metro Literacy Partnership. Siemens is an innovator, advocate and learning champion whose far-reaching impact is a testament to teaching excellence.

**Teaching Excellence Award: Amanda Tetrault, École River Heights School, Winnipeg School Division**

Amanda Tetrault is the International Baccalaureate Coordinator and one of the Inclusive Education Resource Teachers in grades 7 and 8 at École River Heights School. She excels in providing resources to staff and supporting students using a person-centred approach. Her vast knowledge of teaching strategies, coupled with her out-of-the-box thinking and passionate determination, has had an impact on students and staff. Tetrault connects with her students every day to learn their needs, strengths and interests, and then actively implements strategies with staff, such as the self-regulating sensory path in the school hallway and lunch-hour American Sign Language sessions. She makes extra effort to ensure newcomer and Indigenous students can fully participate in all aspects of school life. Her work with struggling students with low attendance has seen many make great improvements. To help educational assistants support students during the pandemic, Tetrault designed a three-phase training program that included trauma and technology components. She was chosen to lead the only IB Middle Years Programme in Manitoba for both the English and French Immersion programs, supporting the development of many bilingual resources and offering professional learning sessions, modelling and coaching to teachers. Tetrault is also heavily involved in the school community, coaching sports teams and running school clubs such as a student group for sustainable development. Through her team approach that includes staff and parents, Tetrault works diligently to ensure the greatest possible success of every student.

**Outstanding New Teacher Award: Jenny Horel, Whyte Ridge School, Pembina Trails School Division**

Jenny Horel is a Grade 1 teacher at Whyte Ridge School. In this role and as a Grade 5 teacher the previous year at Beaverlodge School, she has proven to be exceptionally caring and resilient. As a new teacher during the COVID-19 pandemic, she demonstrated great adaptability to provide high-quality instruction online and in person while maintaining a positive and safe learning environment. Horel collaborates effectively with her colleagues, including the student services team and the divisional numeracy consultant, to develop and implement targeted intervention plans and differentiated instruction that capitalize on available teaching resources. She demonstrates flexibility in creating student groupings to better meet their learning needs and provides tools and coping strategies to address their social and emotional needs. Horel also helped implement a lunch program for students requiring more structured playtime. To help transition the Grade 5 class to junior high, she took particular care to discuss proper supports with the feeder school and also planned and organized various initiatives to mark their last year, such as the school's first yearbook and a formal day with a photo booth. Horel's conscientious efforts to do all she can for her students make her an exceptional new teacher.

**Outstanding Team Collaboration Award: Brett Geisel, James Kostuchuk and Shannon Mulvey, Portage Collegiate Institute, Portage la Prairie School Division**

Brett Geisel, James Kostuchuk and Shannon Mulvey are Grade 12 teachers at Portage Collegiate Institute. They collaborated to develop and implement the highly innovative and successful Roving Campus (RC). The program is designed to help students overcome barriers to attendance such as transport, food security and technology access so that students can succeed in and after high school. Each RC student benefits from individual programming that can include certifications based on their interests, such as health care, security guard work and education. The RC team uses game-based learning and cross-curricular lessons to educate students for democratic citizenship. Each team member brings different skills to the campus, with backgrounds in resource, youth mental health services and community activism. Together, Geisel, Kostuchuk and Mulvey strive to always act in the best interest of all students and work many hours outside their teaching day to stay in touch with and support their students. The collective efficacy of this team of educators is what fuels the success of the students they serve. Over the past two years, student attendance improved nearly 40 per cent and all RC students were on track to graduate. Geisel, Kostuchuk and Mulvey not only help shape future-ready students, but have also influenced systemic changes within the school division, such as revising processes related to student registration and non-attending students and establishing closer relationships between students and community service providers.

**Premier's Award for Excellence in Education: Marie Klassen, Donwood School, River East Transcona School Division**

Marie Klassen, a school counsellor, has been affectionately called the Angel of Donwood School by colleagues for her dedication to supporting kindergarten to Grade 5 students, their families and school staff. She works tirelessly to foster a whole-school approach to creating a more caring and supportive environment. In addition to regular check-ins with individual students and following up with parents, Klassen leads the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Committee and spearheads many initiatives such as the school-wide Be the 'I' in Kind, Caught You Caring and the "dot activity" in which every student is connected to a significant adult in the building. She set up a Tier 2 recess support to promote pro-social behaviour and has met with classes to help students reflect on and recognize their 'superpowers' or strengths and positive attributes. Klassen also established various groups of students to build social capital and leadership, and co-chairs a group for girls to help them learn about and celebrate their Indigenous culture. She organizes the breakfast program, the Christmas hamper and Socktober, where socks are donated to Siloam Mission and the school's community closet. Always attentive to the needs of her colleagues, she organizes relevant professional learning sessions, co-teaches and provides mentorship to teachers, interns and student teachers. Klassen is the epitome of an outstanding school counsellor.