**PRESS RELEASE**

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**James Jeffrey-West Awarded as a 2021 Oregon Teacher of the Year Runner-up**

The Oregon Department of Education, in partnership with the Oregon Lottery, is pleased to celebrate Madison High School teacher James Jeffrey-West as a 2021 Teacher of the Year Runner-up, and award both James and his school with a $2,000 cash prize!

“We are extremely fortunate to have you,” said Adam Skyles, principal of Madison High School to Jeffrey-West in the runner-up celebration. “Your impact on our school has gone well beyond just your classroom… You are extremely deserving of this honor.”

Jeffrey-West has been teaching advanced placement psychology, ethnic studies, U.S. history, modern world history, sheltered modern world history and speech and debate at Madison High School for 7 of his 22 total years of teaching. In May, Jeffrey-West received recognition as Multnomah’s 2021 Regional Teacher of the Year, taking home a $500 cash prize.

One student shared, “I really enjoy how he teaches. I feel so connected. Sometimes you don’t have that bond with your teacher. When I need to ask him something, he can give me advice. He has this joyful spirit that makes you, you know, want to listen to him.”

In his application, Jeffrey-West noted he strives to provide students a safe place to discuss world events, see themselves in the curriculum and have the support of adults.

“The heart of our [class] journey involves developing strong relationships that I can then leverage towards rigor, while tracking student learning closely and providing a huge array of scaffolds and supports,” Jeffrey-West wrote. “They also know that I am a good listener and can be a part of their journey towards accessing resources.”

The pivotal role of teachers – and Jeffrey-West’s approach -- has become especially evident in these last several months as schools have transitioned to distance learning in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers have stepped up in countless, innovative ways to ensure students are safe, healthy and engaged to reach their full potential, making this a fitting opportunity to recognize the excellence of teachers throughout the state.

Anyone can nominate a teacher! If you know an outstanding educator nominate them today at [OregonTeacheroftheYear.org](https://oregonteacheroftheyear.org/).