



## **PRESS RELEASE**

November 5, 2021

Media Contact: Shannon Criss, [Criss.S@HarneyESD.k12.or.us](mailto:Criss.S@HarneyESD.k12.or.us)

### **Carolyn Whitney Awarded as a 2022 Oregon Teacher of the Year Finalist**

*(Frenchglen, OR)* - The Oregon Department of Education, in partnership with the Oregon Lottery, is pleased to celebrate Frenchglen Elementary School teacher Carolyn Whitney as a 2022 Teacher of the Year Finalist, and award both Carolyn and her school with a \$2,000 cash prize!

Whitney was selected as one of four finalists for 2022 Oregon Teacher of the Year, which was [announced in September](#).

Whitney has been teaching at Frenchglen Elementary School for 21 of her 27 total years of teaching. In her application, she stated that she was originally hired to teach 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students but has been the only teacher serving grades K-8 for the last four years. In May, Whitney received recognition as Harney ESD's 2022 Regional Teacher of the Year, taking home a \$500 cash prize.

"Carolyn represents the best in teachers and I have seen hundreds in my 30+ year career," said Harney ESD Superintendent Shannon Criss. "Her tireless efforts to serve students in frontier rural school districts is amazing. Imagine teaching up to 10 different grade levels and all subjects each and every day of the school year. Students and staff make life-long connections with a teacher like Carolyn. She is like family and that is because her dedication and commitment to excellence is seen daily; and you can't hide good teaching like that!"

Serving a rural area of Oregon, Whitney stresses the importance of connecting students and their education with the community. "One of the first things I noticed about this community are the character traits of problem-solving abilities and helping your neighbors. I have been able to promote and encourage these traits in my classroom," she noted in her application. "They build each other up and are a part of the positive, learning classroom culture that they bring to their community."

"My students have learned many things beyond a traditional education as they have learned how to be a part of a community by working together, encouraging each other, understanding that there are things that happen behind the scenes that contribute to the success of each and every community, be it Frenchglen School Community, the Frenchglen Community, and the Rural Harney County Community," she explains further. "They understand that personal integrity and character are evident in everything."

The logo features the text "OREGON'S" in a green banner at the top, followed by "TEACHER of the YEAR" in a large, bold, black font, and "2022" in a green font at the bottom. The entire logo is framed by two horizontal green lines. The background of the page is a light green pattern of small stars.

OREGON'S  
TEACHER *of the* YEAR  
2022

The pivotal role of teachers – and Whitney’s approach – has become especially evident over the past 19 months as schools have navigated the challenges of 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 for Oregon Teacher of the Year! If you know an outstanding educator, nominate them today at [OregonTeacheroftheYear.org](https://OregonTeacheroftheYear.org).

###