



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *Friday, August 27, 2010*

Contact: Madeleine Saxler, Communications Intern
School District 197 – West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan
651.403.7022 - office
Maddie.Saxler@isd197.org

Garlough Elementary teacher selected a state-level finalist for PAEMST award

(Mendota Heights, Minn.) --- District 197 would like to congratulate Garlough Environmental Magnet School kindergarten teacher **Polly Saatzer**, who has been selected as one of three state-level finalist for K-6 grade teachers of science by the Minnesota state selection committee for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST) program.



“This acknowledgment is really a validation of everything I have done over the course of my teaching career,” says Saatzer. “It truly shows how I can make a difference in the lives of my students, as well as makes my fellow teachers more excited about science.”

The PAEMST awards are the Nation’s highest honors for teachers of math and science. This program recognizes outstanding K-12 teachers for their contributions both in the classroom and to their profession. To be considered, applicants must submit extensive documentation and a video of a lesson to demonstrate their outstanding teaching abilities in several areas.

In order to qualify for the PAEMST program, candidates must demonstrate: Mastery of science content, use of instructional methods and strategies appropriate for student learning, effective use of assessment strategies, reflective practice and lifelong learning, and leadership in education outside the classroom.

To meet these requirements, Saatzer submitted a nearly 15-page document explaining her accompanying video of a lesson plan, a reflection on her teaching, and demonstration of her professional leadership. Her video was of the scientific inquiry process her kindergarteners went through regarding buds forming on a tree, and how a branch would grow differently in the sunlight in their classroom versus in a cupboard.

“As a kindergarten teacher, I am really setting the foundation for my student’s science knowledge,” says Saatzer. “Provided the opportunity, it is amazing to see what they can accomplish by really taking the science inquiry process and making it their own. In this particular lesson, each student was very engaged and active in discovering what would happen and what science was behind it.”

Since she has qualified as one of three state-level finalists, Saatzer’s application will now be sent to a national selection committee. This committee is comprised of science educators, teachers, and past awardees who then meet in Washington, DC, to choose one of these state finalists to go on as a PAEMST candidate at the national level. The teachers chosen to be PAEMST awardees will be notified by The White House later in the school year, and will receive \$10,000 and be honored at various ceremonies.

####