



# TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

AISWCD | [www.aiswcd.org](http://www.aiswcd.org)

## **SPONSOR(S):**

This award is sponsored by the Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Illinois Audubon Society.

## **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this award is to recognize the outstanding conservation education efforts of Illinois' teachers in two age categories (Grades: K-8 & 9-12).

## **ELIGIBILITY:**

Open to K-12 educators, the nominee:

- Must be teaching in the classroom at public, parochial or private schools located in Illinois.
- Should incorporate Illinois-specific conservation education, environmental education and/or agricultural literacy lessons into his/her teaching.
- May be part of a team of teachers but should the team win, only one award will be made to the team leader. An applicant cannot be a Director on a soil and water conservation district board.
- A teacher who is serving as an Associate Director of a soil and water conservation district is eligible and may apply for the award.

## **ENTRY:**

Entries should be submitted electronically or by mail to AISWCD. The following should be submitted:

- Entry form
- Responses to three narratives questions
- Two letters of recommendation

## **AWARD PACKAGE:**

In the past the award has included; Two (2) complimentary meal tickets to the AISWCD Summer Conference in Springfield, where the award will be presented, a recognition plaque, \$250 Illinois Biodiversity Field Trip Grant opportunity from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, a one year membership to the Illinois Audubon Society, two (2) complimentary admission passes and one (1) complimentary parking pass to the Illinois State Fair in August for the recognition ceremony. These awards are subject to change, and not guaranteed

## **DEADLINE:**

All entries must be submitted to AISWCD by May 15th.

Mail: AISWCD | 4285 N. Walnut Street Road | Springfield, IL | 62707

Email (preferred): [info@aiswcd.org](mailto:info@aiswcd.org) with subject line "Teacher of the Year"



# TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

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## OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

### NOMINEE INFORMATION:

Name: Bill Hammes

Home Address: P.O.Box 1041, 210 East 2nd St.

City | State | Zip: Wilton, IA. 52778

Phone: 563-212-2690

E-mail: hammesb@sherrard.us

Name of School: Sherrard High School

Address: 4701. 176th St.

City | State | Zip: Sherrard, IL. 61281

Grade level(s): 9-12

County Name: Rock Island

List Subject(s) Taught: Nat. Resources, Ag Science, Vet Science, Horticulture, Ag Business, Intro to Ag

### LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:

Please include two (2) letters of recommendation, and corresponding contact information for each reference including a name(s), telephone, and email address.

### NARRATIVE:

Please provide responses to the below questions. Responses to each narrative question should not exceed one standard type-written page.

- Identify any continuing education or professional development (workshops, courses, seminars, etc.) that you have attended within the past two years. Explain how you incorporated the information into your teaching. How did these learning experiences advance State and National Educational Standards?





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- Describe the innovative approaches you use to advance conservation environmental education/agricultural literacy in your classroom. How do you involve your students for the betterment of natural resources?
- Explain how students in your classes have spread the conservation message to others within the school or community.

\*Program background information- 50 acres of row crop land, a greenhouse and a 1/2 acre of garden space are part of the outdoor experiential learning opportunities of the Agricultural Education Program at Sherrard High School. Mill Creek, a local stream, is also utilized as part of the program's instruction.

\*Standards listed below are from the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) Cluster Content Standards. After each standard listed, I have explained how that standard was implemented.

## Cover Crops & Landuse

\*I attended a Cover Crop meeting at Busch Farms in Andalusia, IL in Rock Island County. Speakers at the meeting shared information and answered questions about the use of cover crops.

\*I was a part of a team of interested stakeholders who coordinated a "Cover Crop Tour" through a 3 county area in Western Illinois in August of 2017. I hosted the meeting location for the group, coordinated a bus for the group, served as one of the pit sites on the FFA crop ground and coordinated the use of our school for the wrap-up meeting and meal.

\*I am one of the 2 advisors of the Sherrard FFA Chapter. The Sherrard FFA have conducted a cover crop demonstration plot on a portion of our cropping acres. We also worked with the Rock Island Soil and Water Commission District to take Haney soil tests on our plot ground.

ESS.03.02.01.a. Differentiate and distinguish land uses, capability factors and land capability classes.

ESS.05.01.01.c. Demonstrate surveying and cartographic skills to make site measurements in order to address concerns and needs within an environmental service systems situation.

ESS.05.01.01.b. Apply surveying and mapping principles to a situation involving environmental service systems and identify and explain the use of equipment for surveying and mapping.

\* As part of the Natural Resources class, students used surveying rods and levels to determine the slope of a given area. Combining the slope and information relating to soil type, the students were able to roughly determine the land capability class of the selected sites. We have also integrated the use of GPS and GIS technologies to assist in the decision making processes for the FFA chapter's crop ground.

ESS.03.02.01.c. Design a master land-use management plan for a given area that utilizes land capability classes in order to minimize erosion and flooding, maximize development and preservation of topsoil, et cetera.

NRS.01.05.04.b. Analyze a plot of land in order to determine which soil management techniques would be most applicable.

NRS.01.05.04.c. Devise a soil management plan to minimize erosion and maximize biodiversity, plant productivity, and the formation of topsoil.

\*Students in the Ag Science class viewed our chapter crop ground on Google Maps where they identified areas of potential erosion and discussed potential solutions to the situations. The class then went to the fields to analyze the situations including a small but expanding gully at the edge of the field. After walking through the fields, the students determined that the soil loss had been minimal on the steepest area so we should continue the existing no-till approach to the row crop ground. They also wanted to give the cover crop test plot another year before expanding it to the remainder of the fields. We did meet with Joe Gates of the R.I. SWCD to start the planning for the mitigation of the gully erosion problem. +



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## ADDITIONAL SPACE

### Watershed and Pollution

ESS.04.01.01.a. Identify and distinguish types of pollution and distinguish between point source and nonpoint source pollution.

\*Students in the Natural Resources class utilize Google Maps in the classroom to identify sources of point and non-point pollution in and around the Sherrard school district. This was important because of the understanding of how this affects them locally. The students then discussed what they knew about those locations and how the problems could be mitigated.

NRS.01.04.01.a. Summarize the roles and properties of watersheds.

\*Natural Resource students used Soil surveys and Google Maps to identify the divides between watersheds. As a class they started with the Mississippi River watershed. They narrowed it down to the Rock River and then Mill Creek. They traced the Mill Creek watershed back to Sherrard High School. This activity showed the students how interconnected we are with many other areas of the mid-west.

### Stream Water Quality Assessment

I attended a stream water quality assessment workshop in Iowa. I learned how to collect and identify macroinvertebrates and how to utilize that information to assess the health of a stream. I also learned how to take water samples to test for pollutants in streams.

ESS.03.05.04.a. Examine and describe how ecological interactions can be used to assess environmental service systems (i.e., macroinvertebrates and/or amphibians as bioindicators).

ESS.03.05.04.b. Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of using bioindicator species in environmental service systems.

ESS.03.05.04.c. Utilize evidence from bioindicator species to detect pollutants in a given area.

NRS.01.02.04.b. Apply identification techniques to determine the species of an aquatic organism.

NRS.01.02.04.c. Evaluate the aquatic species present to assess the health of an ecosystem.

\*The Natural Resources class collected benthic macro-invertebrates from Mill Creek. The students then utilized a macro-invertebrate identification sheet to determine the species which they had collected. The students then utilized a pollution tolerance I.D. sheet to check the overall health of the stream. They were pleased to find that the stream was in excellent shape. This demonstrated to them that the landowners along the Mill Creek watershed were doing a good job at protecting the watershed.

\*The students also learned how to measure the flow rate of the stream, collect water samples to test for dissolved oxygen and levels of nitrates in the water. The students conducted a turbidity test each time we went to the stream to check for suspended particulates in the stream. These tests also showed that the landowners in the watershed were doing a very good protecting the stream





# TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

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## ADDITIONAL SPACE

Students were involved in helping set up the Cover Crop Tour which included 40 farmers and other stakeholders. They assisted in the preparation of our pit site as well as helping serve the meal for those in attendance.

Students from the Sherrard FFA Chapter have given presentations to several area organizations including a Farm Bureau group and the school board. We are planning an in-depth presentation when we get more data gathered from our efforts with both the stream water quality assessments and our work with our erosion control practices.



## Sherrard High School

4701 176<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Sherrard, IL 61281

Tel 309/593-2175 Fax 309/593-2775

[www.sherrard.us](http://www.sherrard.us)

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Matt Hutchins, Assistant Principal

AISWCD Awards Committee

Re: Bill Hammes – Conservation Teacher of the Year recommendation

It is truly an honor and privilege to write this recommendation for Bill Hammes for the conservation teacher of the year award. Mr. Hammes is the most knowledgeable and hard-working agriculture teachers I have ever had the pleasure of working with in my career. Over the last three years I have watched Bill transform the programs at Sherrard High School as well as the minds of SHS students.

Bill has made tremendous efforts over the last few years to not only teach conservation to students, but to also illustrate it's importance through many projects. Mr. Hammes was integral in developing several learning opportunities on campus that include 50 acres of cropland, a large garden, and a green house. Bill is also working on a watershed management project utilizing nearby waterways to allow students to learn the importance of conservation methods. Mr. Hammes consistently provides more ideas and is always willing to take the students' learning to the next level. Through his classes and organizations he has been able to donate a significant amount of food to food banks. Mr. Hammes is also working on ideas for composting leftover food from the school cafeteria.

I will admit that this is not my area of expertise but Bill's passion for conservation has taught me a lot over the past three years. He not only provides hands-on learning experiences for conservation but provides a depth of knowledge for students that is unmatched. I highly recommend Bill Hammes as the 2019 Conservation Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

Matt Hutchins  
Assistant Principal  
Sherrard High School





**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

3020 East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Milan, Illinois 61264

Phone: (309)764-1486 ext. 3

[www.rockislandswcd.org](http://www.rockislandswcd.org)

May 16, 2019

AISWCD Awards committee

Re: Bill Hammes – Conservation teacher of Year recommendation

I am happy to recommend Sherrard High School teacher, Bill Hammes, as the Conservation teacher of the Year for the AISWCD.

Through Bill's efforts, Sherrard High School has developed an outdoor learning campus that includes a ½ acre garden and green house and 50 acres of cropland for corn and soybean variety plot trails. Cereal Rye has been recently been used on the corn – bean plot so students and area farmers can view how cover crops work on an average farm.

In 2017, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Mercer, Rock Island, and Henry promoted a Cover Crop tour with Sherrard HS as the starting and ending point of the Tour. At the Sherrard plot, a soil pit was dug for participants to view root development in the soil and discuss how cover crops improve the health of the living soil.

Bill has been working with students on watershed management utilizing nearby Rock River and Mill Creek. Students learn conservation methods and practices that benefit the water quality of these streams and the Mississippi River.

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Bill Hammes as the 2019 Conservation Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rich Stewart".

**Rich Stewart**

Resource Conservationist

[Richard.stewart@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:Richard.stewart@il.nacdnet.net)



# TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

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## OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

### NOMINEE INFORMATION:

Name: BRENT MILLER

Home Address: 31897 DEXTER RD.

City | State | Zip: ULLIN IL 62992

Phone: 618-697-4179

E-mail: brentmiller@centuryschool100.com

Name of School: CENTURY HIGH SCHOOL

Address: 4721 SHAWNEE COLLEGE RD.

City | State | Zip: ULLIN IL 62992

Grade level(s): 8-12

County Name: PULASKI

List Subject(s) Taught: Consumer Economics, Plant Science, Animal Science, Physical Science in Ag,

### LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:

Please include two (2) letters of recommendation, and corresponding contact information for each reference including a name(s), telephone, and email address.

### NARRATIVE:

Please provide responses to the below questions. Responses to each narrative question should not exceed one standard type-written page.

- Identify any continuing education or professional development (workshops, courses, seminars, etc.) that you have attended within the past two years. Explain how you incorporated the information into your teaching. How did these learning experiences advance State and National Educational Standards?





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- Describe the innovative approaches you use to advance conservation environmental education/agricultural literacy in your classroom. How do you involve your students for the betterment of natural resources?
- Explain how students in your classes have spread the conservation message to others within the school or community.

1. Within the past 2 years I have attended a weekly professional development session offered at school to increase teaching skills. Also within this time I have worked on curriculum development within the science standards and then can incorporate environmental science.

I attended a plant and animal science workshop in Belleville that was presented by University of Illinois professors. In this workshop we worked with the affects of light on plant absorption nutrients and contaminants in water. We also studied ingredients in cattle feed that could better lead to manure management.

Twice in the last 2 years I have visited the University of Illinois campus to attend workshops sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension. These workshops included food science, meat science, marketing, beef science, vet science, horticulture science and technology, including drones. Each one of these courses offered something to bring back to the classroom and enrich student learning. Each one of these allows more information to be used in class that enforces or reinforces the students' understanding of food production and how producers take their job seriously to preserve the resources necessary for the industry.

I also have attended the beef field day at Dixon Springs Research Facility. Topics discussed were animal genetics, forage production, animal medication and conservation practices. This has allowed me a continual understanding of these topics, to reinforce learning and stress, once again to students how agriculture takes safety and conservation seriously. This allows my students to be better informed consumers and future voters.

It is my opinion that workshops and seminars have their place and purpose but the best continued education is by working with those in the industry. I try to have communication with NRCS and the SWCD to understand current topics. Also I visit with farmers and ranchers. As I am also a cattle producer this not only helps me in the classroom but also helps me be a better steward in my own operation.



# TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

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## ADDITIONAL SPACE

2. No matter the topic there seems to be an environmental aspect that can be brought to the forefront. A few of the things that has been incorporated in class will be explained briefly. As we were studying soil quality and amendments, we approached the school to ask that we be allowed to rework the softball field that would not dry out very quickly after a rain. The students studied the soil and realized the clay content was too high to allow drainage. Fourteen tons of sand was then incorporated to increase through flow. This gave the students a hands on approach in understanding soil quality.

Also students built soil erosion models from 2 liter bottles to understand cover crops. One had no cover, one had minimal cover and one had a cover crop. Water was then examined for contaminants. The water was filtered through filters made with plastic bottles, rock, sand, coffee filters and charcoal all made by the students. This task incorporated not only soil erosion but also water quality.

As students study water contamination we use maps that show contaminates by county and how waterways are affected. Also we examine pond water for microbe activity to see if eutrophication has occurred. We also look at ways to help clean waste water areas such as lagoons. Students build floating gardens from Styrofoam sheets and pool noodles. Plants are placed in holes cut from the Styrofoam. Plants live off nutrients in the lagoon and aids in faster decomposition and beautifies the environment.

Duck hunting is big in our area so students built duck boxes to increase the habitat for ducks. Students researched the plans and proper placement. Once built the boxes were used by students and donated to local conservationists to help with population.

To help with the understanding of pollination the students built ecobots from toothbrush heads, pager motors and small batteries. Students were given a map of various fields and materials to build boundaries to maneuver their bee ecobot from field to field to simulate pollination. Bird seed was put on grids and if the seed was removed then that grid was pollinated. This same concept was used on water contamination to simulate cleaning oil spills.

Each year students in all Ag Science classes are given an environmental topic for a research paper. Topics have included solar energy, farming, dicamba, chemical drift and fracking just to name a few. Class discussion and independent research is critical to development of a well informed decision because with each topic the students have to state whether they agree or disagree with the topic. Hopefully this will help them be better stewards and voters in the future. Students need to be informed and develop into critical thinkers.



# TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

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## ADDITIONAL SPACE

3. This past year two of my students attended a cover crop meeting sponsored by the Pulaski-Alexander Soil and Water Conservation District. They were able to relate items discussed in this meeting in our class discussion. They both live on small farms and will be able to use some of these practices on their own farms.

The ecobots that were used for pollination and water clean up were demonstrated in the grade school. Students gave a lesson on each topic and showed other students how the ecobots simulated real life experiences.

Students developed a STEM night for Pre-K through 8th grade. Students and parents were invited for a hands on experience and were taught about germination through corn and soybeans. Participants made seed bombs with wildflowers and small flower gardens in a cup. They did activities with water contamination and remediation.

As previously mentioned students donated wood duck boxes to area conservationists to increase habitat for the ducks. This project and others let the community see that conservation is important and it can be the small things that make a big difference.





# TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

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## ADDITIONAL SPACE

Continuation of Subjects Taught: Exploring Ag Science, Ag Mech & Tech, Ag Communications  
Ag Science

References: Landon Sommer 618-845-3518  
[lsommer@centuryschool100.com](mailto:lsommer@centuryschool100.com)

Dena Wood 573-270-5154  
[denawood@illinois.edu](mailto:denawood@illinois.edu)



## *Century Unit School District #100*

4721 Shawnee College Road

Ullin, IL 62992

**High School Phone:** 618.845.3518 **High School Fax:** 618.845.3476

**Elementary Phone:** 618.845.3572 **Elementary Fax:** 618.845.3586

**URL:** [www.centuryschooldistrict100.com](http://www.centuryschooldistrict100.com)

April 4, 2019

### Board of Education

**Wesley Anderson,**  
President

**Marlan Hight,**  
Vice-President

**Lisa Miller,**  
Secretary

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**Mark Sauerbrunn**

Dear Award Committee,

It is with no reservations that I write this letter of recommendation on behalf of Brent Miller for the Teacher of the Year award sponsored by the Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and the Illinois Audubon Society. I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Miller for the last two school years at Century, where he is the Agriculture Education teacher. During this time, I have been able to observe Mr. Miller demonstrating numerous qualities and characteristics that any administrator would be grateful to have in a staff member.

### Administration

**Vanesa Sickling,**  
Finance Manager

**Connie Duty,**  
Transportation Director  
& Administrative Assistant

**Jerri Clark,**  
Middle and HS Secretary

**Tracy Lance,**  
Elementary Secretary

**Ashley Dexter,**  
Guidance Counselor

**Andrea Pender,**  
Dean of Students

**David Hill,**  
Head Custodian

**Melinda Duke,**  
Elementary Principal

**Landon Sommer,**  
Superintendent

As it relates to conservation and ag. education, Mr. Miller does a great job working with the students to provide hands-on opportunities and examples to help them truly grasp the concept. Throughout the course of any given day, Mr. Miller works with a wide age range of students to teach the importance of agriculture conservation. However, where he is truly effective is getting the students involved and accountable so that they can take more pride and responsibility in the conservation efforts undertaken by Mr. Miller.

Mr. Miller is a hard worker and a great member to have on our team. He works well with others and, more importantly, he works well with and motivates the students. Both as a teacher and as a person, Mr. Miller is a tremendous asset to our district and our community, especially in terms of agriculture education and conservation.

If I can answer any other questions about Mr. Miller, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at (618) 845-3518 or via email at [landonsommer@centuryschool100.com](mailto:landonsommer@centuryschool100.com).

Sincerely,

Landon Sommer  
Superintendent  
Century CUSD #100



May 6, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter offers my **complete support** of Brent Miller, as he is recommended for the Teacher of Year via AISWCD. I have known Brent for several years now, personally and professionally, he is an outstanding teacher. Throughout his years at Century School and as a University of Illinois Extension volunteer he comes highly recommended. To date, Brent is an active volunteer for the community and a teacher that promotes life-long learning and hands on teaching. Based on these interactions I am **delighted** to recommend him for the award, your organization and public will adore Mr. Miller's classroom creations.

Over the last several years I have come to see Brent as an **energetic** person with a concrete, ongoing, well-rooted interest in positive youth development. He is definitely an asset at Century School in all his roles and is an amazing University of Illinois volunteer that we love working with on various projects.

I see Brent as one that wants to acquire knowledge to be the best teacher he can be, putting his students first and utilizing the teaching frameworks to enhance his skills. In short, it is clear to me that Brent Miller is and will continue to be devoted to becoming the **best teacher** he can be to represent the Teacher of the Year for AISWCD. University of Illinois Extension is lucky to have his continued **dedication** as an educator. Thus, I recommend him highly.

Please feel free to contact me directly at 573-270-5154, I would be happy to answer any of your questions and supply feedback.

Sincerely,

Dena Wood  
University of Illinois Extension  
Extension Program Coordinator  
Alexander & Union Counties

Pulaski & Alexander  
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502 Oakley Lane  
Mounds, IL 62964  
Phone: 618-745-5200  
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EXTENSION





# TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

AISWCD | [www.aiswcd.org](http://www.aiswcd.org)

## OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

### NOMINEE INFORMATION:

Name: Julie DeSutter

Home Address: 100 S. Park Ave

City | State | Zip: Manito, IL 61546

Phone: 309-208-3434

E-mail: jdesutter@midwestcentral.org

Name of School: Midwest Central High School

Address: 910 S. Washington

City | State | Zip: Manito, IL 61546

Grade level(s): 9 - 12

County Name: Mason

List Subject(s) Taught: Biology, Anatomy & Physiology, Physics and Environmental Science

### LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:

Please include two (2) letters of recommendation, and corresponding contact information for each reference including a name(s), telephone, and email address.

### NARRATIVE:

Please provide responses to the below questions. Responses to each narrative question should not exceed one standard type-written page.

- Identify any continuing education or professional development (workshops, courses, seminars, etc.) that you have attended within the past two years. Explain how you incorporated the information into your teaching. How did these learning experiences advance State and National Educational Standards?



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- Describe the innovative approaches you use to advance conservation environmental education/agricultural literacy in your classroom. How do you involve your students for the betterment of natural resources?
- Explain how students in your classes have spread the conservation message to others within the school or community.

1. Identify and continuing education or professional development (workshops, courses, seminars, etc) that you have attended in the past two years. Explain how you incorporated the information into your teaching. How did these learning experiences advance state and national standards?

I have completed 18 semester hours towards a biological science master's degree, through Clemson University, for continuing education/professional development. The program is designed for science educators who want to improve their science-content knowledge in biological sciences. Every class I have taken, has added to my current content knowledge and allows me to expand the curriculum that I develop for my students. Being a great educator means you not only development lessons that involve hands-on activities and inquiry-based learning for students, but the teacher also needs the knowledge to talk about the content and answer questions that students have, in order to fully educate them. The master's program I am in, is allowing me to achieve these higher levels of teaching.





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## ADDITIONAL SPACE

2. Describe the innovative approaches you use to advance conservation environmental education / agricultural literacy in your classroom? How do you involve your students for the betterment of natural resources?

Many teachers utilize one class to help students understand environmental education. I feel that you must teach and demonstrate environmental education in every aspect possible with students. In all six classes I teach, I incorporate environmental education in a chapter when possible. Whether it be a small aspect of how to better improve an environmental situation or a whole chapter to understand the depth of the problem and how to help or fix environmental problem.

I have found that hands-on learning is the best method for teaching students about environmental education. In my Environmental Science class, we go out to local watersheds and test the water for oxygen, phosphate and pH levels. We learn about the local plant and animal life and what can impact their environment. They we also discuss various concerns in our area to the local watersheds and our aquifer to help stop pollution and prevent harming these important water sources. But, in my Biology class and Anatomy and Physiology class we also discuss concepts that would impact of environmental issues of the organisms we study, and the impact humans have on the environment and the human body. I often incorporate kindergarten through fifth grades students into the education of topics by having the high school students teach lessons to the younger students about various environmental aspects each year.



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## ADDITIONAL SPACE

3. Explain how your students have spread the conservation message to others within the school and or community?

My Environmental Science class demonstrates good environmental practices throughout the high school by recycling paper for the whole school every week. Getting students to do things at a young level establishes habits that will continue throughout their life time. It also sends a message to other students that recycling is good for everyone and that they should do it as well. As a teacher, I have changed my vocabulary and tell students to recycle their papers in the bins not the trash. I am trying to establish habits that they will do in every classroom and not just mine. Plastic and aluminum bins are set up in the school for students to use with their waste besides paper.



# MIDWEST CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

910 S. Washington Street, Manito, IL 61546

phone 309.968.6766

fax 309.968.6340

Dr. Todd A. Hellrigel, Superintendent

Jay Blair, Principal

Don Lazarz, Assistant Principal/Athletic Director

April 24, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Julie DeSutter has been a teacher at Midwest Central High School for the past 19 years. During her time here she has applied for and won a number of educational grants that go hand in hand with both her Environmental Science and Biology classes and have helped to improve the overall quality of all our science programs.

Some of the projects that Julie has spearheaded include a learning garden, a prairie grass plot incorporating several acres of ground, and a bee keeping program. Julie then incorporates these projects into the curriculum for our classes.


Julie is also dedicated to working with our FFA students. She is diligent in preparing our students for the annual Envirothon Competition. She studies and explains the material with the students so that they truly understand the concepts they are learning for this competition. Because of her efforts, we have achieved either a 1st or 2nd place ranking consistently over a number of years.

Julie DeSutter is a very important and integral part of our Science Department and our school.

As principal of Midwest Central High School, I wholeheartedly nominate Julie DeSutter for this award.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Jay C. Blair  
Principal



*Achieving Success Through Education*

[www.MidwestCentral.org](http://www.MidwestCentral.org)

BOARD MEMBERS

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# MIDWEST CENTRAL CUSD #191

1010 S. Washington Street, Manito, IL 61546-8903

phone 309.968.6868

fax 309.968.7916

Dr. Todd A. Hellrigel, Superintendent

May 2, 2019

To Whom it May Concern:

I appreciate the opportunity to write a letter of recommendation for Mrs. Julie DeSutter to be considered for the Teacher of the Year award. I've known Mrs. DeSutter and had the opportunity to work with her on several projects over the past seven years. Mrs. DeSutter is the kind of teacher that every superintendent wishes he had more of. She shows up early, does a great job with kids, and always looks for extra opportunities that will benefit the District and her students.

Mrs. DeSutter has written and received many grants for Midwest Central recently. She's also been a mentor to other personnel in the District who have had the desire to write grants. Some of her most recent grant projects include working with our shop class to make raised bed planters so her students could plant fresh vegetables. The vegetables were then harvested and used by our foods class to make garden fresh salsa. Midwest Central has quite a large amount of green space. She wrote a grant to clear a drainage ditch of scrub trees and plant Illinois prairie grass in the ditch and a large portion of our green space. This is now a sustainable area of prairie grass that we no longer have to spend resources mowing. Not only that, but we were able to mow a path through the area and it's used by our cross country team as part of their running course. Her efforts have created a nice addition to our property. Mrs. DeSutter was funded to plant native Illinois trees on our property and she also plants a large garden every year. The amazing part of these grants is that they take a tremendous amount of physical labor to implement. She is able to convince her students of the value of these projects, in turn accomplishing most of the work with student labor. Her projects have been valuable educational experiences for our students.

Mrs. DeSutter has served as a mentor teacher for some of our new faculty and also students. We've had some teachers that have struggled with lesson planning, student management, or other teaching issues. She's been very willing to go to their classrooms and spend extra time helping them become successful additions to Midwest Central.



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## MIDWEST CENTRAL CUSD #191

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We've had 4 students the past two years accepted into a local cadaver program. This was a program created by another District and two doctors. They opened the program up to other local schools, and on Saturdays the students drive to another town to work with the doctors to learn "hands on" about human anatomy. The program requested that a teacher from each District participate. Mrs. DeSutter helped screen the students that were interested in participating and also volunteered to attend the Saturday labs with the students.

Mrs. DeSutter is very deserving of the teacher of the year award for many more reasons than can be expressed in one letter. She's always looking for ways to make learning more interesting for her students, she finds outside funding to make her projects happen, and she volunteers her time to see the projects completed. If you have any questions or need further explanation on her many talents, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Todd Hellrigel, Ed.D.