



Arkansas Department of Education

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Johnny Key, Secretary

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Fort Smith Teacher Named 2021 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

LITTLE ROCK — When Susanna Post, a math and business technology teacher at Belle Point Alternative Center in Fort Smith, arrived at school this morning, she had no idea that a huge surprise awaited her. During an 11 a.m. routine, socially-distant, assembly, Arkansas Department of Education Secretary Johnny Key recognized Post as the 2021 Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

Post, a five-year teacher, utilizes her previous business world experience to build relationships with her students, connect them with the outside community, and give them real-world, relatable problems to solve. She strongly believes that positive relationships result in improved student learning and a strong school culture. Because of her multi-dimensional approach to reach each and every student, Post was named the Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

“Susanna Post’s real-life experience in the business world enriches the lessons that she teaches in the classroom,” Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. “The list of programs she leads at Belle Point is evidence that she goes the extra mile. Her students are fortunate that Ms. Post decided to leave the oil and gas industry and return to Arkansas to resume her teaching career. Above and beyond her education and experience, however, she has a heart for her students.”

“Each year I get the privilege of announcing the Arkansas Teacher of the Year,” Key said. “This is an extremely tough decision, considering all the amazing teachers here in Arkansas. This year, however, one teacher, Ms. Susanna Post, stood out as the best of the best. Her exceptional ability to identify and meet the needs of every student exemplifies teaching excellence and empowers students to rise above all barriers to achieve success. I am extremely excited about Ms. Post’s platform to close the “empathy gap,” which is essential for student engagement and academic achievement. I know Ms. Post will make her students, her co-workers, Fort Smith, and Arkansas proud. Congratulations!”

Post began her teaching career at Wake County Public Schools in Raleigh, North Carolina, in July 2002. Because of a family move, Post temporarily left the classroom and entered the business world. She worked as a petroleum analyst and senior engineering technician at multiple oil and gas companies in Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, and in Fort Smith, prior to returning to the classroom in 2016. She has taught at Belle Point Alternative Center since August 2016, previously supplemented

homeschool curriculum for Grace Academy in Fort Smith, and continues to serve as an expert facilitator for the New Tech Network.

At Belle Point, Post has co-taught with a senior high school Special Education teacher, initiated the school's first Coding Club, coordinated with district curriculum leaders to create an ACT prep program, facilitated a Lindamood-Bell literacy intervention group, served on the district's secondary math curriculum development team, and incorporates community relationships into problem and project-based lessons. She leads the school's Culture Project Week, which includes project-based activities that improve school culture by strengthening relationships between students, teachers, and the community.

Post was selected for the Class of 2020 Aspiring Leaders Institute and was named the 2020 Fort Smith Teacher of the Year. She has a Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics, with a minor in Computer Science, from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, a Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of Central Arkansas at Conway, and a Master of Education in Rural and Urban School Leadership from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

In addition to being eligible to become the National Teacher of the Year, Post received an additional \$14,000 award today sponsored by the Walton Family Foundation. She previously received \$1,000 when named a Regional Finalist and an additional \$1,000 when selected as a State Semi-Finalist.

Her one-year tenure as Teacher of the Year will begin July 1, 2021. During this time, Post will travel the state as a representative for teachers and will serve as a non-voting member on the State Board of Education.

To learn more about the Arkansas Teacher of the Year program, visit <https://bit.ly/2P7mQXR>.

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Pictured (L-R): George McGill, Mayor of Fort Smith; Susanna Post, 2021 ATOY; Johnny Key, Secretary of Education; Joel Lookadoo, 2020 ATOY

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