



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Johnny Key, Commissioner*

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## **Conway Teacher Named 2018 Arkansas Teacher of the Year**

**LITTLE ROCK** — Excellence in teaching was the focus of today's surprise announcement when Randi House, a kindergarten teacher at Theodore Jones Elementary School in the Conway School District, was named the 2018 Arkansas Teacher of the Year.

"Randi House embodies everything we want in a teacher," Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. "In her classes at Theodore Jones Elementary School, she incorporates reading, math, cooking, gardening and computer coding in her classroom. She teaches life skills while she teaches math skills. She goes above and beyond to ensure every student feels valued and appreciated. In all she does as a teacher, she sets an example of excellence. I trust her reign as the Arkansas Teacher of the Year will enrich her life as much as she enriches the lives of her students."

"From the recognition event at the Capitol to the surprise ceremony today, each year it is my privilege to recognize some of Arkansas' best teachers," said Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Johnny Key. "Today we honor Ms. Randi House, the 2018 Arkansas Teacher of the Year. From her innovative classroom practices to her personal commitment to every student, Ms. House serves as a model of excellence for all teachers. She not only strives to help her students reach their potential, she nurtures every child, helping each develop the personal confidence that is essential to living a happy, productive life. Ms. House is an inspiration to her students, their parents and her co-workers, and I look forward to watching her share her inspirational story this next year."

House began her career in 2004 as a preschool teacher at Tyronza Elementary School in the East Poinsett County School District. Two years later she became a first-grade teacher at Fox Meadow Elementary School in the Nettleton School District, where she worked for five years. In 2011 House moved to Conway, where she has been a kindergarten teacher at Theodore Jones Elementary School for six years.

A graduate of Arkansas State University at Jonesboro, House has a Bachelor of Science in Education and Early Childhood Education, as well as a Master of Science in Education and Reading. She has served in numerous leadership roles on the school and district levels. In addition to providing professional development for other educators, House recently attended the Arkansas Leadership

Academy and has completed her submission to become a National Board Certified Teacher. She is awaiting confirmation.

Providing opportunities for students to network and experience life beyond her classroom is a priority for House. In addition to taking her students on virtual field trips around the world, House welcomes community volunteers into her classroom to share real-life experiences. Through video conferencing, she invites authors from around the country into her classroom.

House's desire to help others is passed along to her students. She helps her students write cards for local nursing home residents and assists other schools with growing their own gardens and incorporating cooking lessons in their learning activities. Her innovative classroom practices, including her kindergarten cooking show, which is a hands-on cooking lesson with her students, have been featured by local media outlets.

House was named one of four State Semi-Finalists Aug. 30 at a ceremony at the Capitol. The Arkansas Teacher of the Year selection panel then conducted site visits that included interviews and classroom observations.

As the 2018 Arkansas Teacher of the Year, House received an additional \$14,000 award on behalf of the Walton Family Foundation. She is eligible for the National Teacher of the Year honor, which will be announced in the spring of 2018.

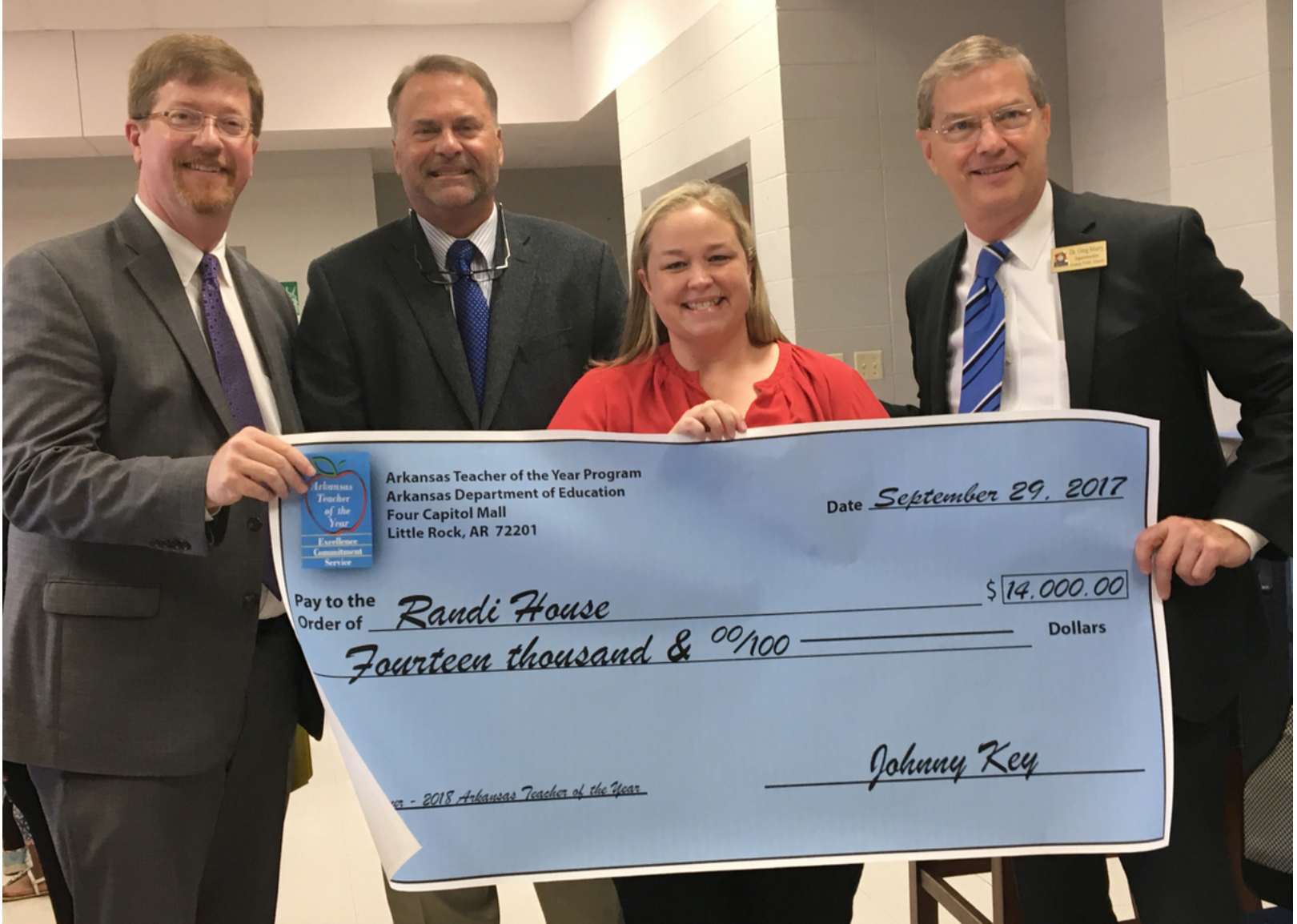
House will begin her one-year tenure as the 2018 Arkansas Teacher of the Year on July 1, 2018. Arkansas law provides the ATOY a year of paid administrative leave for professional development purposes. During her tenure, House also will serve as a non-voting member of the Arkansas State Board of Education.

The selection process for the 2019 Arkansas Teacher of the Year will begin in the spring. For more information about the program, visit the ADE website at <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/communications/teacher-of-the-year>.

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