



Arkansas Department of Education

Johnny Key, Commissioner

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

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Springdale Teacher Named 2020 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

LITTLE ROCK — Joel Lookadoo received the surprise of a lifetime today when he was named the 2020 Arkansas Teacher of the Year at an assembly at Lakeside Junior High School in Springdale.

Arkansas Department of Education Secretary Johnny Key was joined by several State Board of Education members and legislators to honor Lookadoo, an Algebra 1 teacher at the school.

“When describing excellent educators, the words ‘dedicated,’ ‘committed,’ and ‘passionate’ come to mind,” Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. “These words definitely describe Mr. Joel Lookadoo, the 2020 Arkansas Teacher of the Year. Not only does Mr. Lookadoo set high academic expectations for his students, he also values the importance of empowering them to take ownership of their learning. I congratulate him on achieving this special recognition. He joins many others before him who serve as role models of excellence for all educators in the state.”

“Each year I am excited to be a part of recognizing the best of the best here in Arkansas,” Key said. “To become the Arkansas Teacher of the Year, educators must go through an extensive process that requires them to demonstrate why they should receive this extremely high honor. Joel definitely met the criteria. From his Beyond program, in which he volunteers his time to help students prepare for the ACT, to the development of a character education program to help students deal with anxiety and depression, Joel serves as a model of exemplary teaching. I look forward to working with him during his tenure as Teacher of the Year.”

Lookadoo has been a teacher at Lakeside Junior High School since August 2013, having taught numerous algebra classes. In addition to teaching, he has implemented standards-based grading and led numerous professional development sessions at the district.

Lookadoo also served as a basketball coach for multiple grades and as a Student Recognition Program Committee member and Joint Council member. He participated in multiple professional development sessions, including facilitation of adult learning by the Arkansas Leadership Academy and as a mentor teacher for the University of Arkansas Teach program.

He created the Beyond activity group, a college preparation group for future first-generation college students, and serves as the math content leader for Ensuring Academic Success for English Learners at the Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative.

Lookadoo has a Bachelor of Science in Education in Secondary Mathematics Education from the University of Central Arkansas at Conway, where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. He also has a Master of Science in Education in Educational Leadership from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. He is licensed to teach math for grades 7-12 and PE and health for grades K-12. Lookadoo also is licensed as a building level administrator and is certified in English as a Second Language. In addition to being named the 2019 Springdale School District Teacher of the Year, Lookadoo holds a National Board Certification in high school mathematics.

At today's assembly, Lookadoo received an additional \$14,000 award sponsored by the Walton Family Foundation. He previously received \$2,000 when named a Regional Finalist and State Semi-Finalist.

His tenure as Teacher of the Year will begin July 1, 2020. During his tenure, Lookadoo 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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