

## **Educators Honored for Community-Building and Outstanding Achievements During a Challenging Year**

**Washington, D.C. (October 20, 2021)** — The NEA Foundation announced today that five educators will receive one of public education's highest honors, the Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence. The award recognizes educators for their diligence and dedication to students, colleagues, communities, and their profession. The 2022 awardees are:

- Adriana Abundis Alonso, a master educator at Sidney Lanier High School in San Antonio, Texas, nominated by Texas State Teachers Association.
- Natalia Benjamin, an English language educator at Century High School in Rochester, Minn., nominated by Education Minnesota.
- Chris Gleason, a music educator at Patrick Marsh Middle School in Sun Prairie, Wis., nominated by Wisconsin Education Association Council.
- Kathy Purviance-Snow, a career and technical education/social studies educator at Snohomish High School in Snohomish, Wash., nominated by Washington Education Association.
- Alexandra Castellanos Smith, a Spanish/English as a Second Language educator at Sand Ridge Junior High in Roy, Utah, nominated by Utah Education Association.

"These awardees' stories are as diverse as the communities they serve and the educator profession itself," said Sara A. Sneed, president and CEO of the NEA Foundation. "Their exceptional commitment to their students and school communities, however, is the special quality that connects this year's five honorees and all Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence recipients. We thank Horace Mann for their continued support in recognizing outstanding educators in such an uplifting way."

"Educators are at the forefront of inspiring the next generation of change-makers," said Marita Zuraitis, president and CEO of Horace Mann, a financial services company that has served educators for more than 75 years. "We value the investment all educators make in their students, especially during times of great change. They are the bedrock of their communities, and we are proud to recognize the exceptional contributions and achievements of the recipients of the Horace Mann Award for Teaching Excellence."



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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For more than 20 years, the NEA Foundation and Horace Mann have celebrated outstanding educators from around the country with this recognition. Each 2022 honoree will be featured in a mini-documentary video that will premiere at the NEA Foundation Salute to Excellence in Education Gala and will receive a \$10,000 award.

The NEA Foundation presents the Awards for Teaching Excellence annually, with support from NEA Member Benefits, the Horace Mann Companies, and California Casualty. Educator awardees will be celebrated at the Gala on February 11, 2022. To learn more about the 2022 awardees, visit our website at [www.neafoundation.org](http://www.neafoundation.org).

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**Editor's Note:** Please use our correct name, the NEA Foundation. The "NEA" is never spelled out in our name. It is not the National Education Association Foundation. Many thanks!

#### **About the NEA Foundation**

*The NEA Foundation is a national philanthropic organization that invests in educators' leadership, shared learning and collaboration; supports partnerships and initiatives that strengthen public education; and promotes improvements in public education policy and practice. Find us at [neafoundation.org](http://neafoundation.org), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

#### **About Horace Mann**

*Horace Mann Educators Corporation (NYSE: HMN) is the largest financial services company focused on providing America's educators and school employees with insurance and retirement solutions. Founded by Educators for Educators® in 1945, the company is headquartered in Springfield, Illinois. For more information, visit [horacemann.com](http://horacemann.com).*