



TEAMWORK FOR EXCELLENCE

**P L A N O**  
Independent School District



## For Immediate Release

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## Texas Instruments Foundation recognizes 2 Plano ISD teachers among 12 local teachers for innovative science, math teaching

DALLAS (September 11, 2012) -- The Texas Instruments (TI) Foundation presented its Innovations in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Teaching Awards today to 12 teachers from four local school districts at a ceremony at TI's Dallas headquarters. This year, the program was expanded to include teachers from Mesquite Independent School District (ISD) along with those from the Plano, Dallas and Richardson ISDs.

The awards honor local secondary math and science teachers who consistently demonstrate quality instruction and build student achievement in the STEM subjects. Each honoree receives \$10,000, of which \$5,000 is directly awarded to the teacher. The other \$5,000 is to be used at his or her discretion for professional development or instructional technology. The grants are awarded through the Richardson ISD Excellence in Education Foundation, the Plano ISD Education Foundation, the Mesquite ISD and the Dallas Education Foundation.

Since 2007, the TI Foundation has invested more than \$600,000 in the STEM Awards to recognize and help retain excellent teachers in North Texas school districts.

"We're glad to be able to extend the program this year and recognize the best from four local school districts," said Sam Self, chairman of the TI Foundation. "Education helps determine the health of our region's economy, and building math and science proficiency is critical to having a future technical workforce for North Texas. We depend on quality, innovative teachers who are directly helping students see the relevance of STEM and succeed in these classes, and that's why we want to applaud the area's finest, most effective educators."

Principals nominate teachers for the STEM awards based on criteria, such as demonstrating and documenting teaching effectiveness, establishing classroom innovation, participating in education activities outside the classroom, and encouraging curiosity and increasing interest in STEM subjects among students. Teams within each district review the applications and make classroom observations. A list of finalists is then submitted to the districts' foundations, and winners are selected.

The 12 TI Foundation STEM Award recipients for 2012 are:

### Plano ISD

- **Julie Baker**, Plano East Senior High School, Plano ISD, who teaches AP biology. Along with classroom teaching, Baker supports the Science Fair program. In the last two years, the number of students participating at her school has tripled, and one of Baker's protégé's was the first place champion in the 2011 International Science Fair.
- **Jennifer Walker**, Rice Middle School, Plano ISD, who teaches math. Whether Walker is teaching on-level, honors or "power" math, she engages her students in hands-on activities to capture their attention and get them to love the subject as much as she does. Walker is a founding member of the AVID site team, mentors students and serves as assistant math department chair.

### Dallas ISD

- **Aaron Baldrige**, Science and Engineering Magnet, Dallas ISD, who teaches AP environmental science and pre-AP biology. Baldrige was ranked first in the state for students passing the AP environmental Science exam and second in the country for minority students passing this exam.
- **Jayda Bathchelder**, L.V. Stockard Middle School, Dallas ISD, who teaches science. Bathchelder came to Dallas ISD in 2008 as a charter corps member of Teach for America, and she was named Alternative Certification Intern of the Year, not only for the state but for the nation. She says "there is not a subject more exciting to teach to young, growing minds than middle school science!"
- **Susan Bourenane**, George Bannerman Dealey Montessori and International Academy, Dallas ISD, who teaches seventh and eighth grade technology/computer. Before teaching, Bourenane worked more than 20 years as an information technology consultant where she helped design online business strategies for several major corporations.
- **Rachel Burnett**, W.T. White High School, Dallas ISD, who teaches algebra and serves as the core math teacher for the school's Engineering Academy. Burnett started her career in Dallas as a software engineer but turned to teaching. Burnett shares her passion for STEM subjects with her students and says she's "where (she) was always meant to be."
- **Molly Freid**, North Dallas High School, Dallas ISD, who teaches math. As a member of the North Dallas Restructuring Team, Freid helped the school win the "Texas Title I Priority Schools grant," a three-year, \$6 million federal grant that will provide technology enhancements and support an Academy of Information Technology and a STEM Academy.
- **Michael Jones**, Molina High School, Dallas ISD, who teaches architecture and digital media. Jones helped construct the Career and Technology Pathways program and has been active in the Response to Intervention design. He provides students "real life" situations, environments and expectations, such as facilitating the design of campus common areas.

- **Veronda Washington**, Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women’s Leadership School, Dallas ISD, who teaches technology and engineering at this all-girls school. Washington took her students to a FIRST Lego League Robotics competition and also has helped them participate in the Future City Competition at UT Arlington. She seeks to overcome stereotypes about women and STEM subjects and hopes to help her students pursue careers in technology and engineering.

#### **Mesquite ISD**

- **Ashley Lopes**, Agnew Middle School, Mesquite ISD, who teaches science. Lopes established a Science Club that meets on Saturdays where she helps students develop a love of science. Her students’ test scores are consistently among the highest in the district.
- **Lisa Ransom**, R.S. Kimbrough Middle School, Mesquite ISD, who teaches science. Ransom’s passion for science and her love of students creates a positive atmosphere that results in success. She has held positions, such as the head of the seventh-grade Science Department and instructional specialist, and was chosen by Mesquite ISD to assist in writing curriculum.

#### **Richardson ISD**

- **Lauren Denison**, Forest Meadow Junior High, Richardson ISD, who taught emerging math and moved to Berkner High School. Denison comes from a family of teachers and says she’s “born to teach.” She’s working on her master’s degree and mentoring three at-risk students in addition to teaching, writing curriculum and leading staff development.

The STEM Awards are just one of many initiatives of the TI Foundation, which has led and supported innovative education programs for decades. Education is the Foundation’s primary philanthropic focus, with grants specifically enhancing STEM education and supporting effective teaching. Workforce projections for 2014 show that 15 of the 20 fastest-growing jobs will require math or science training, and that by 2018 there will be 1.2 million job openings in STEM-related fields, but there will be a shortage of people to fill these jobs.

“A solid foundation in STEM disciplines is more important than ever to the future of innovation and our local economies,” Self said. “We believe teachers help determine the future through their students.”

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**Note to Editors:** Photos from the awards reception will be available September 12.

#### **About the Texas Instruments Foundation**

*The Texas Instruments Foundation, founded in 1964, is a non-profit organization providing philanthropic support for educational and charitable purposes primarily in the communities where Texas Instruments operates. Committed to supporting educational excellence, the foundation works to create measurable, replicable programs and initiatives. The focus is on providing knowledge, skills and programs to improve STEM education and increase the percentage of high school graduates who are math and science capable. More information can be found at <http://www.ti.com/education>*