



**Montana Teacher Named the National Rural Education Association Rural Teacher of the Year.
The Award is sponsored by the College Board**

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Chattanooga, Tennessee---The NREA announces the selection of Mrs. Joni Carroll as their National Rural Teacher of the Year. The award is sponsored by The College Board, which awards the winning teacher a stipend for their classroom and their personal use during the 2020-2021 school year.

Mrs. Joni Carroll teaches at Cohagen Elementary School in Cohagen, Montana, where she has taught grades K-8 for 14 years, and she is completing her 25th year in education. Mrs. Carroll teaches all subjects in her 1-room Montana school. She currently serves 14 students ranging from all Kindergarten through the 8th grade.

8th-grade student Krystan Hafla states: *"I will always be grateful to her for everything she has done for me and taught me about school and life. She is the kind of person everyone needs in their life."*

The Montana Small School Alliance submitted her application by Executive Director Dan Rask. During her time at Cohagen, *"Her focus has always been on the students and what is best for them. Everything she does from instruction, lunch, and activities is always purposefully planned on how it will benefit the students."*

The NREA Teacher of the Year Team reviewed and interviewed great teachers from across all United States regions. Team leader Allison Nys stated, *"This was a tough decision coming down to two very dedicated educators, and the finalists strongly represented rural teaching at the highest level."*

National Runner-Up:

Minnesota's Ryan Larson, who won the Minnesota Rural Education Associations state teacher of the year, was submitted in June of this year. Ryan teaches in the Dragon Academy within the Pine City Jr./Sr. High School in Pine City, Minnesota. He created and developed the academy after seeing the need for struggling students in his study skills class.

National Semi-Finalists were:

Texas: Emma Buitron, Banquete ISD in Corpus Christi, Texas. Submitted by the Texas Rural Education Association.

Indiana: Julie Evans, Bloomfield School District in Bloomfield, Indiana. Submitted by the Indiana Small and Rural Schools Association.

Nebraska: Laureen Powell, Cross County Community School in Stromsberg, Nebraska. Submitted by the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association.